

**NII AYIKWEI PARKES – CURRICULUM VITAE**  
Nationality: Ghanaian/British | Current Residence: UK

## EDUCATION

**MA Creative Writing (Creative and Critical Dissertation):** Birkbeck College, University of London, 2006

Specialization: Narrative Voice

Dissertation: *Delineating a Space for Multiplicity: incorporating the 'Other' into narratives in English* (Critical), *Afterbirth 25,000 words of a novel-in-progress exploring voice* (Creative)

Professor Russell Celyn-Jones and Julia Bell (co-chairs)

Graduated top of class with **Distinction**

Awarded **Birkbeck Outstanding Achievement Award for Creative Fiction** (2007)

**BSc (Hons) Food Manufacturing Management with French:** Manchester Metropolitan University, 1998

Included second-year study at ENSBANA, Dijon, France (1995–1996)

Graduated top of class with **First Class Honors Degree**

## TRAINING

**Day Course:** *Creative writing in New Communities*, Free Word Centre/University of Essex, 14 January 2010

Focus: Overcoming barriers to participation for refugees, asylum seekers and non-native English speakers and offering participants a safe space whilst exploring potentially distressing subjects through literature

---

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

*The Makings of You*, poetry, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, September 2010

*The Parade*, children's stories, London: Frances Lincoln, September 2010 (under pen name, K.P. Kojo)

*ballast: a remix*, poetry, London: tall-lighthouse, August 2009

*Tail of the Blue Bird*, novel, London: Jonathan Cape, June 2009 (also published in Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United States and Canada)

*Ballast*, poetry, Los Angeles: Achiote Press, November 2008

*M is for Madrigal*, poetry, London: tall-lighthouse, June 2004

*eyes of a boy, lips of a man*, poetry, Accra: flipped eye publishing, April 1999 (also published in the UK, now out of print)

### [as editor]

*South of South*, prose anthology, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press with University of Southampton, September 2011

*X-24: Unclassified*, short story anthology (co-edited with Tash Aw), London: lubin & kleyner, March 2007

*Tell Tales: Volume 3*, short story anthology (co-edited with Julia Bell), London: Tell Tales, June 2006

*Dance the Guns to Silence*, poetry anthology (co-edited with Kadija George), London: AWA, November 2005

*Tell Tales: Volume 1*, short story anthology (co-edited with Courttia Newland), London: Tell Tales, May 2004

*Fourteen Two: Twenty Eight Love Poems*, poetry anthology, London: flipped eye publishing, February 2004

### Fiction/Short Stories

"The Gleaming Ones," *Pulsations*, Fall 2011

"Karl's Gold," *New Welsh Review*, May 2010

"Wood," *Queen's Quarterly*, Spring 2010

"The City Will Love You," *The Liberal*, February 2009

"He Who Is With Me," *To Hell With Journal: East/West*, November 2007

"Socks Ball," *african-writing.com*, November 2007

**NII AYIKWEI PARKES – CURRICULUM VITAE**  
Nationality: Ghanaian/British | Current Residence: UK

“Death of a Girl,” pulp.net, June 2007  
“Scotch Bonnets,” Storyteller Magazine, February 2007 & Ottawa at Home, April 2007  
“Afterbirth,” New Writing Anthology: Volume 15, London: Granta, June 2007  
“Dreaming of Dee Dee,” Mechanics Institute Review, January 2005

**Non-Fiction**

“Textual Chemistry,” article, Wasafiri, 25: 4, November 2010  
“63 Years Later: Cairo Modern by Naguib Mahfouz,” book review, Gently Read Literature, September 2008  
“Ghana Unbound,” article, Index on Censorship, 36 (4), 2007  
“Virgin of the Flames: Chris Abani,” book review, The Liberal, June 2007  
“Sick with the Word,” article, Poetry News, 3 (1), 2003  
“Ursula Rucker Speaks,” interview, ammocity.com, September 2003  
“Why Writers Must Read,” article, Sable Magazine, Summer 2003

**Poetry**

“Lapse,” The Best British Poetry 2011, Salt Publishing, September 2011  
“The Makings of You,” Being Human, Bloodaxe Books, March 2011  
“E Be So,” and “Stripping Yam,” Red Anthology, February 2010  
“Daybreak at Swanlake,” “E be so (Red, Accra, 1980),” “Rich Tea,” and “Lapse,” Wasafiri, 24 (3), 2009  
“re:configuration,” PEN International Magazine, June 2008  
“Zion Train,” Statement, March 2008  
“Day Dreaming,” “Fresh Argument,” “A whine before sleeping,” “Transit,” and “By yourself, boy,” Pendulum: The Poetry of Dreams, January 2008  
“guerrilla love,” and “the first lesson,” Suitcase Love Poetry Anthology, June 2007  
“Rebellion,” The Liberal, May 2007  
“The Fall, 1983,” Poetry Review, May 2007  
“ballast I,” “By yourself, boy,” and “Destination DC w/mom,” Oregon Literary Review, September 2006  
“ballast IV,” Warpland Journal, August 2006  
“ballast III,” The Liberal, May 2005  
“Half-a-Lime,” Di-Verse-City Anthology, January 2005  
“cricket concerto,” Tall Lighthouse Review, November 2004  
“the colour of time,” “pain is a pale thing,” “under the baobab,” and “the promise,” MAG Online, April 2004  
“Jamestown,” The Depot Anthology, March 2003  
“He Walks In Front,” poetism.com, January 2003  
“our revolution,” unpublished magazine, December 2002  
“Ghana by Air,” “Orange Flesh,” “Jazz at 5 am,” “Body Language,” “River Dance,” “Sakumono Magic,” “Phantom wars,” and “Festival,” Wasafiri, 17 (37), 2002  
“Consciousness,” Xephyrus, January 2002

**Plays**

“Walking Waterfall”  
Staged at the Almeida Theatre, London on 1 and 2 August 2008  
Toured in Ipswich, Cambridge, Lowestoft and Peterborough in October 2008

**Online**

“Ants of Accra,” Granta Magazine Online, 2 September 2010  
Available at: <http://www.granta.com/Online-Only/Ants-of-Accra>  
(Accessed: 9 September 2010)  
“No individual ‘fathered’ modern African literature,” Guardian Books Blog, 2 December 2009  
Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/booksblog/2009/dec/02/father-modern-african-literature-achebe>  
(Accessed: 14 June 2010)

**NII AYIKWEI PARKES – CURRICULUM VITAE**  
Nationality: Ghanaian/British | Current Residence: UK

**Radio**

- “Summer Reads Programme.” *BBC Radio Norfolk*, 21 June 2010
- “Ghana Music Awards.” *The Strand*, *BBC World Service*, 7 April 2010
- “Literature in Africa Today.” *The Strand*, *BBC World Service*, 2 January 2010
- “60 Second Idea,” and “Discussions on Pleasure and Religion.” *The Forum*, *BBC World Service*, 27 July 2008
- Guest Host. *The Strand*, *BBC World Service*, 19 July 2008.
- “W. H. Auden – Part 2: Stop All the Clocks.” *Close Up*, *BBC World Service*, 25 September 2007
- “W. H. Auden – Part 1: Stop All the Clocks.” *Close Up*, *BBC World Service*, 18 September 2007
- “Views of Empire: A View from Ghana.” *Views of Empire* *BBC Radio 4*, 16 May 2006
- “Undercurrents: Myth.” (with Margaret Atwood, Karen Armstrong and A.S. Byatt) *Nightwaves*, *BBC Radio 3*, 26 October 2005
- “African Book Club: Book Four – Collector of Treasures by Bessie Head,” *The Verb*, *BBC Radio 3*, 2 July 2005
- “African Book Club: Book Three – Song of Ocol by Okot p'Bitek,” *The Verb*, *BBC Radio 3*, 25 June 2005
- “African Book Club: Book Two – Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Saleh,” *The Verb*, *BBC Radio 3*, 18 June 2005
- “African Book Club: Book One – Changes by Ama Ata Aidoo,” *The Verb*, *BBC Radio 3*, 11 June 2005
- 

**SELECT HONOURS AND AWARDS**

- The Michael Marks Poetry Award (2010) – SHORTLIST
- Norwich Summer Reads (2010) – SELECTED
- The Commonwealth Writers Prize (Euro-Asia Region, 2010) - SHORTLIST
- Caine Prize for African Writing (2009) – HIGHLY COMMENDED
- UK Young Publishing Entrepreneur Award (2009) – SHORTLIST
- Arts Council of England Award (2007)
- ACRAG Award for Poetry (Ghana, 2007) – WINNER
- Birkbeck Outstanding Achievement Award for Creative Fiction (2007) – WINNER
- Guardian Radio *Pick of the Week* (May 2006) – CRITICS’ CHOICE
- BBC Radio 4 *Pick of the Week* (May 2006) – CRITICS’ CHOICE
- Guardian Radio *Pick of the Week* (October 2005) – CRITICS’ CHOICE
- The New Writer Short Story Prize (2004) – HIGHLY COMMENDED
- UK Arts Council Award (2003)
- Davoren Hanna Poetry Competition (2003) – COMMENDED

**RESIDENCIES & FESTIVAL APPEARANCES**

- International PEN Free The Word Festival (Invited Writer, 2011)
- Booktrust (**Online Writer-in-Residence**, 2010)
- Worlds Literature Festival, UEA Norwich (Invited Writer, 2010)
- Edinburgh Festival (Invited Writer, 2009)
- Wigtown Book Festival (Invited Writer, 2009)
- British Council Literary Lunches, Brussels, Belgium (Invited Writer, 2008)
- Absolute Poetry Festival, Italy (Invited Poet, 2008)
- Lancaster Literature Festival, UK (2007)
- Brighton Festival, UK (**Children’s Writer-in-Residence**, 2007)

**NII AYIKWEI PARKES – CURRICULUM VITAE**  
Nationality: Ghanaian/British | Current Residence: UK

Folkestone Literary Festival, UK (2006)  
Baobab Cultural Center, Rochester NY (**Writer-in-Residence**, 2006)  
Austin International Poetry Festival, US (2005)  
Roskilde Festival, Denmark (2005)  
Africa 2005 Associate **Writer-In-Residence**, BBC, London, UK (2005)  
Lancaster Literature Festival, UK (2003)  
V&A Museum (**Writer-in-Residence**, 2003)

## CONFERENCES

“The Education of the Imagination” Worlds 2010 Salon, University of East Anglia, June 21-24 2010  
“Literature and Publishing” (Chair) Black British Perspectives: Performance and Literature & Publishing Conference, Leeds, December 7 2009  
“Sacred and Secular Reformations” (Chair) International Conference on the Sacred and the Secular, University of Southampton, September 19-21 2008  
“The role of small presses in the evolution of Black British literature” *On Whose Terms?* Conference, Goldsmiths, University of London, March 13-14 2008  
Poetry Publishing Panel, Annual UK Black Writers’ Conference, Contact Theatre, Manchester University, October 13 2007.

---

## EXPERIENCE

### Teaching Positions

#### The Arvon Foundation

October 2006 – Date

#### Visiting Lecturer

I teach poetry and fiction – from beginner to advanced levels – to a mix of developing, aspiring as-well-as early-career writers. An example of the week-long 16-hour courses I teach is outlined below:

**Poetry: Voice and Vision** – a course focused on listening for and developing a poetic ‘voice,’ evolving and translating a poetic ‘vision.’ We examine these key aspects of craft and imagination by engaging with multiple literary traditions, individual experiences of the world as well as the music of student-specific linguistic heritage.

#### English PEN (Adult Education Program)

January 2009 – Date

#### Visiting Lecturer

I teach poetry and prose – including creative non-fiction – to aspiring writers who have come to the profession later in life. Typically at least half of the students are using English as a second language – a situation that has its unique challenges and delights, such as exposure to snippets of lesser known writing from other languages.

**Courses:** Introduction to Poetry, Advanced Poetry, Introduction to Fiction, Methods in Creative Non-Fiction

**NII AYIKWEI PARKES – CURRICULUM VITAE**  
Nationality: Ghanaian/British | Current Residence: UK

**Spread the Word (Editorial Programme)**

July 2007 – Date

**Visiting Expert**

As an on-call expert on editing I sat on various panels for Spread the Word and ran two courses on editing – one for trainee editors and another with a group of young writers in the Spread the Word ‘Flight’ development program. I was also one of a team of judges including leading editors Juliette Mitchell (Penguin), Ellah Allfrey (Random House) and literary agent, Peter Straus that moderated Spread the Word’s Novel Pitch contest in 2009.

**University of Southampton, Southampton, UK**

November 2007 – November 2008

**International Writer-In-Residence**

Collaborated with English Department administration to convene an international conference on ‘The Sacred and the Secular’ with writers and academics such as Nadeem Aslam, Kajri Jain, and Robin Yassin-Kassab. Edited an anthology, *South of South* (Peepal Tree), on the theme of migration with work from a range of international writers including, Tahmima Anam, Junot Díaz and Nam Le. Held one-on-one tutorials with Creative Writing BA and MA students and outreach courses in local colleges.

**California State University, Los Angeles, USA**

March 2007 – April 2007

*British Council Writer-In-Residence:* Taught poetry and prose and held one-on-one workshops with MA Poetry and BA Creative Writing students. Assisted Dr Lauri Ramey in mentoring a specialist publishing group that produced Statement Magazine, winner of the 2008 National Program Directors’ Prize for Content.

**Courses**

ENGL 250 Understanding Literature

ENGL 508 Seminar: Writing Poetry

**Birkbeck College**

April 2004 – December 2004

**Editorial Advisor**

As a member of the core editorial team chosen from the Publishing option of the MA Creative Writing degree to select and edit student submissions to the university magazine *Mechanics Institute Review*, I was responsible for giving editorial guidance to two students whose work made the eventual edit of *MIR Volume 2*.

**Administrative Positions**

**African Writers’ Evening**

May 2003 – Date

**Founder and Curator**

I founded the African Writers’ Evening – the first series for African writers outside of Africa – in consultation with the Directors of the Poetry Society after I completed a residency at the Poetry Café. The event has built a solid reputation based on our knack for consistently identifying and featuring talented emerging writers. Featured writers have gone on to be shortlisted for, or to win, the Booker, Orange and Commonwealth Prizes. AWE also curated the first ever African Book Market in Europe and is now resident at the UK’s leading arts venue, the Southbank Centre.

**Unilever**

June 1999 – October 1999

**Editor & Layout Supervisor**

As an additional responsibility while working in a full-time management role, I was asked to apply my experience and skills in literature and oversee the production of the ‘Unilever Foundation for Education & Development’ Brochure.

**NII AYIKWEI PARKES – CURRICULUM VITAE**  
Nationality: Ghanaian/British | Current Residence: UK

**Unilever**  
(Details on request)

August 1998 – December 1999

**Advisory Positions**

**Caine Prize Advisory Council, UK**  
**Council Member**

July 2011 – Date

The Caine Prize awards the biggest annual award for short stories from Africa. I was recruited to the Advisory Council because of my many years of advocacy work for writers from Africa and I serve as a member of the core marketing advisory group.

**The Poetry Book Society, UK**  
**Board Member**

June 2010 – Date

I advise primarily on commercial and marketing aspects of the poetry market on the Poetry Book Society board. Poetry Book Society, founded in 1953 by a group of poetry enthusiasts led by T. S. Eliot, is a unique society, providing information, guidance and discounts on the best contemporary poetry for a wide-ranging community of readers.

**The Arvon Foundation, UK**  
**Council Member**

October 2008 – Date

I contribute to the Finance Committee of the Arvon, the UK's leading charity promoting residential writing courses, helping guide the organization through tricky financial times. On the full council I advise on the writer's perspective in regards to all major initiatives or decisions.

**flipped eye publishing, UK**  
**Founding Director & Senior Editor**

May 2001 – Date

I have grown this small literary publisher from a single poetry title to a list that includes award-winning fiction and poetry. The company was shortlisted for the IPG Diversity award in 2006 and has become recognized as a leader in innovation in the publishing sector in the UK, revolutionizing the approach to publishing chapbooks developing a goal-focused model that has now been mimicked by other publishers.

---

**LANGUAGES**

Fluent in Ga, Akan, English and French. Fundamental knowledge of Italian and Spanish.