



Honorary Doctorate in the Humanities

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has, in the past twenty years, involved herself not only in writing, editing, public speaking, and an increasing online presence, but has also attuned many readers and listeners to the urgency of resisting the colonial stereotypes that cling to representations of African lives. She has written and spoken out strongly against the negative stereotyping of Africans in public media and in popular conceptions. Adichie's first published works were fictional and set in Nigeria *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). More recently *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009, short fiction) and *Americanah* (2013) are either set in America or are transnational in their characters, settings, and themes. Chimamanda Adichie's appeal to a large readership and audience puts her at the forefront of contemporary writers in Africa and worldwide. The growing importance of Adichie's work in academic teaching and research is evident in the generous number of articles on her writings that are published internationally each year. She has hugely impacted African feminist scholarship and African literary studies.

The request to consider Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie for the UJ Honorary Doctorate in the Humanities is made on account of both her contribution to the advancement of the Humanities and the significance of her work to the values of the University of Johannesburg. Adichie is to the current generation of African writers what the second generation of African writers was in the periods of decolonisation and post-independence African literature and culture. Her contribution to the project of decolonisation, both in her literary and extra-literary work, resonates with general readers and young and established researchers across the English and non-English-speaking worlds. Through her intellectual work, she is also the voice of a generation of scholars, which has seen her invited to deliver talks and address graduates abroad. She has continued to make Africa the base for her intellectual work, through her teaching in Nigeria, and this situates her work firmly on the interface of the continent and the world. Her work on Africa and Africans on the African continent and in the diaspora has continued to influence the ways in which the "image of Africa", to cite Chinua Achebe's phrase, is received, reimagined, and, most importantly, valued in and for itself. The University of Johannesburg prides itself on being an international university

firmly situated in Africa and Adichie's work is an example of this vision and mission. Her feminist writing also continues a long tradition in African literary culture, which dates to the '50s. Chimamanda Adichie is a worthy candidate for an Honorary Doctorate at UJ, an institution driving a transformative and decolonisation agenda, and celebrating exemplary and world-leading scholarship.

