

## **TOM MICHAEL MBOYA**

### **PERSONAL**

Nationality: Kenyan  
Languages: Dholuo, Kiswahili, English  
Date of Birth: 22 July 1969  
Marital Status: Married, with one son.

### **ADDRESS**

Official: Moi University African Cluster Center of  
Excellence in African Studies,  
School of Arts and Social Sciences,  
Moi University,  
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KENYA.  
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### **CURRENT APPOINTMENTS**

Professor of African Literatures and Cultures, Moi University, Kenya. (Since 2023).

Academic Coordinator, Moi University African Cluster Center, Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, Moi University, Kenya. (Since 2019).

Visiting Research Associate, African Literature, School of Literature, Language and Media Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. (Since 2012).

### **EDUCATION**

D.Phil. Moi University, Kenya. Literature. 2011. Thesis: *Romancing the Troubled Nation: Okatch Biggy and the Luo of the 1990s*.

M.Phil. Moi University, Kenya. Literature. 1997. Thesis: *The Woman and History in the Novels of Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye*.

B.A. Moi University, Kenya. Literature. 1992. Project Paper: *Irony in O. M. Mtshali's Poetry*.

### Additional Training

Certificate: Strengthening Doctoral Supervision Course. 2020. Awarding Institution: Rhodes University, South Africa.

Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) Item Writing Workshop. 2009. Training Institution: Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC)

## **PREVIOUS APPOINTMENTS**

### University Employment and Appointments

Associate Professor, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Moi University, Kenya. May 2012 to September 2023.

Senior Lecturer, Department of Literature, Theatre and Film Studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences. August 2005 to May 2012.

Lecturer, Department of Literature, Theatre and Film Studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences. July 1998 to August 2005.

Tutorial Fellow, Department of Literature, School of Arts and Social Sciences. March 1996 to July 1998.

Graduate Assistant, Department of Literature, School of Arts and Social Sciences. April 1995 to March 1996.

### Other University Responsibilities and Roles

Academic Coordinator, Moi University African Cluster Center of Excellence. 2019 to date.

Director, Academic Programmes, Odera Akang'o Campus College. 2016 to 2020.

Head of Department, Department of Literature, Theatre and Film Studies. August 2014 to October 2016.

### Visiting Positions and Fellowships

Research Associate in African Literature, School of Literature, Language and Media, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, January 2012 to December 2024.

Visiting Professor, Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS), University of Bayreuth, Bayreuth, Germany, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014 to 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

### Non-university Employment

1992 – 1993. Features Editor, *The Weekly Express*, Eldoret. *The Weekly Express* was a pioneering regional newspaper.

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Wits Africa Residency Fellowship, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2012-2014.

Winner, Short Story Category, The National Literary Awards, 2004. For the short story “These Things Happen”.

Government of Kenya scholarship to study for an M.Phil degree. 1992.

Government of Kenya scholarship to study for a BA degree. 1988.

## PUBLIC AND ACADEMIC COMMUNITY OUTREACH

2021 to date. Member, School Board of Management, Ndenga Secondary School, Siaya County.

2008 to date. Peer reviewer for the journals: *African Studies*, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *Social Dynamics*, *Journal of Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies* and *Maarifa*.

2009 to date. Setter and Moderator, Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) Diploma Teacher Education English (DTE) Examinations.

2008 to date. Member, The Diploma Teacher Education English Panel of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), formerly known as the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), Nairobi.

2007 to date. Member, The Secondary English Panel of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), formerly known as the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), Nairobi.

1998. Editor-at-Large, *Expression Today*. *Expression Today* was a highly regarded human rights journal that also published creative work.

## PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH

### Scholarly Non-fiction

#### Thematic Research Focus

African Postcoloniality, African popular culture, ethnicity in/and the African nation-state/ state-nation, Art and history.

#### Geographic Research Focus

Kenya, Africa.

### Publications

#### Books/ Edited Volumes

2019. *Popular Music, Ethnicity and Politics in the Kenya of the 1990s: Okatch Biggy Live at “The Junction.”* Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019. ISBN (10) 1-5275-2674-7 ISBN (13) 978-1-5275-2674-7.

2000. *How to Find Meaning in Poetry*. Eldoret: Western Educational Publishers, 84pp. ISBN 9966-9679-1-5.

### Journal Articles

2023. "The Kenyan Mwananchi and the National Language: Kiswahili and 'Pili Mswahili' by Moreno Batamba et L'Orchestre Moja One." *Swahili Forum*, Vol. 30 (2023): 183–195. <https://ul.qucosa.de/api/qucosa%3A85798/attachment/ATT-0/>
2021. "Guitar music and cultural identity in Kenya: Benga and Luo identity, c.1955 to c.1980." *Stichproben: Vienna Journal of African Studies*. Number 41/2021, Vol. 21, 83–104. DOI: 10.25365/phaidra.310\_05
2020. "'Music is Sweet when your Praises are sung': Pleasure and Power in the 'Live Band' Music Performances of Ja-Mnazi Afrika in Eldoret, Kenya." *Matatu: Journal of African Culture and Society*. Vol 51 No 1 (2019): 209–223. DOI: 10.1163/18757421-05101004
2019. "'I have a story about Nairobi': narrator unreliability, ethnicity and the imagination of the Kenyan nation in 'Khandpaka' by Awillo Mike and Ja-Mnazi Afrika." *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/02533952.2019.1668616
2019. "'I don't believe anybody will be so unlike other people': Irony and Anxiety about the Nigerian Nation in Chinua Achebe's 'Marriage is a Private Affair.'" *LIFT: The Journal of African Literature, Film and Theatre*, Vol 1 No 1 (2019): 9-18.
2019. "'Men Are Not Taken as Lightly as That': Power and Male Sexual Promiscuity in David G. Maillu's *Unfit for Human Consumption*." *Egerton Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*, Vol 12 (2019): 142-169.
2018. "Rapping with a forked tongue: code-switching and the tribalized Kenya at the end of the twentieth century in 'Otongolo Tyme' by Poxi Presha." *Journal of Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies*, Vol 4 No 2, June 2018: 85–107. DOI: 10.1080/23277408.2018.1462966
2015. "Categorizing 'Riziki' by Ja-Mnazi Afrika: Ethnic Perceptions of Kenyan Popular Music." *Jahazi*, Vol 2 No 1 (2015): 18-23.
2015. "Ethnicity and the Brokerage of Kenyan Popular Music: Categorizing 'Riziki' by Ja-Mnazi Afrika." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol 27 No 2, June 2015: 205-215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2015.1010637>
2014. "Living off the Stony farm: Address and Diasporic Consciousness in 'Shamba la Mawe' by Awilo Mike." *Journal of Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies*, Vol 1 Issue 3 & 4 (2014): 167-177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23277408.2015.1104927>
2013. "The Pained Face in the Cracked Mirror: Postcolonial African Identity in the Form of Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Ocol*." *The Nairobi Journal of Literature: the Journal of the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi*, No 7 (July 2013): 13-23. ISSN 1814-1706.
2009. "Sex, HIV/AIDS and 'Tribal' Politics in the Benga of Okatch Biggy." *Postcolonial Text* Vol. 5, No 3, 2009.

2009. "Articulate Incoherence: 'The Green Leaves' by Grace Ogot as Early Expression of Kenyan Postcolonial Identity." *The Egerton Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*, Vol. VIII, 2009:31-43. ISSN 1021-1128.

2009. "Understanding Kafira: Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City* as a Study of the Vicious Cycle of Brutality in the Modern African Nation-State." *Maarifa: A Journal of the Humanities and the Social Sciences*, Vol. 3 No. 1, 2009: 21-28. ISSN 1816-4382.

2009. "'My voice is nowadays known', Okatch Biggy, *Benga* and Luo Identity in the 1990s." *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa*, Vol. 6 No. 1, July 2009: 14-25. ISSN 1812-5980 (print) 1753-593x (online). <https://doi.org/10.1080/18125980902927776>

2008. "Woman, Rise and be a Man!: The Contradictions of Feminism and Militant African Nationalism in Micere Githae Mugo's *Daughter of my People, Sing!*" *Chemchemi: International Journal of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2008: 157-168. ISBN 1563-1028.

2004. "Powerful Lies, or History as Fiction? A Reading of Ebrahim N. Hussein's *Kinjeketile*." *The Nairobi Journal of Literature: the Journal of the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi*, Number 2 (March 2004): 19-26.

2003. "Writing Herstory: The woman and History in Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye's *Coming to Birth*." *The Nairobi Journal of Literature: the Journal of the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi*, Number 1(March 2003): 34-41.

#### Book Chapters

2012. "The Serious People of 'Raha': The Politics in the Ethnic Stereotyping of the Luo in Okatch Biggy's *Benga*." *Rethinking Eastern African Literary and Intellectual Landscapes*. Eds. James Ogude, Grace A. Musila and Dina Ligaga. New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2012: 265-281. ISBN 978-1-59221-886-8.

2010. "Foreword." *Counterpoint and Other Poems*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 2010: x-xii. ISBN 978 019 573480 5.

2008. (With IddahWandolo) "A Kenyan Intro: Identity Politics in the Opening Formula of a Kenyan Popular music band." *Getting Heard: (Re)claiming Performance Space in Kenya*. Ed. Njogu, Kimani. Nairobi: Twaweza Communications, 2008: 164-174. ISBN 9966-7244-3-5.

1999. "The Concert and the *Mwananchi*." *Emerging Patterns for the Third Millennium: Drama/Theatre at the Equator Crossroads*. Eds. Mwangi, Evan, Tobias Otieno and Opiyo Mumma. Nairobi: KDEA, 1999: 236-253. ISBN 9966-9674-0-0.

#### Fiction and Creative Non-fiction

##### Publications

##### Books/ Edited Volumes

2014. (With Tobias Otieno Odongo and Kelvin Karani) *Journey into Madness and Other Poems*. Eldoret: Utafiti Foundation, 154pp. ISBN 978-9966-26-027-7

2010. (Editor) *Counterpoint and Other Poems*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 163pp. ISBN 978 019 573480 5.

#### In Journals and Literary Magazines

2020. "Policing with a human face" (a personal essay). *Stichproben: Vienna Journal of African Studies*, Number 39, 2020: 137–143.

2015. "Postcard from Johannesburg" (a poem). *The Thinker: A Pan-African Quarterly for Thought Leaders*, Quarter 1 – 2015/ Volume 63: 85.

2014. "Cold Feet" (a poem). *ITCH: A Journal of Creative Expression*, Issue 12: Taboos. [www.itch.co.za/pretext/coldfeet](http://www.itch.co.za/pretext/coldfeet)

2013. "The Letter" (a short story). *Kunapipi: Journal of Postcolonial Writing & Culture*, Vol XXXIV No 1, 2012: 155-161. ISSN 0106-5734.

2013. "Apologia" (a poem). *ITCH: A Journal of Creative Expression*, Issue 11: Manifestoes. [www.itch.co.za/pretext/apologia](http://www.itch.co.za/pretext/apologia)

2011. Postcards from Taon: "Evening, Kondele", "Sunday Morning, Kibuye" and "Dawn, Huruma" (poems). *Postcolonial Text*, Vol 6, No 2, 2011.

#### Book Chapters

2014. "At the End of a Long Day, Nairobi CBD" (a poem). *An Anthology of Short Stories and Poems from East Africa*. Ed. Iddah Aoko Otieno. eBook: Sentia Publishing Company, 2014: 209-210.

2014. "Like Chicken" (a poem). *An Anthology of Short Stories and Poems from East Africa*. Ed. Iddah Aoko Otieno. eBook: Sentia Publishing Company, 2014: 209-210.

2013. "The Bicycle" (a short story). *African Short Stories Vol 1*. Ed. Chin Ce. Warri: African Books Network. ISBN: 978-9-783-60357-8.

2011. "An African Man" (a short story). *The Doomed Conspiracy and Other Stories*. Eds. Barrack Muluka and Tobias Otieno. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2011: 195-211. ISBN 978-9966-25-761-1.

2010. "Communion of Shadows", "The Return of the Rains, Mwanzo" and "Music Man" (poems). *Counterpoint and Other Poems*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 2010: 61-65. ISBN 978 019 573480 5.

#### Unpublished Theses and Other Work in the Public Domain

2011. "Romancing the Troubled Nation: Okatch Biggy and the Luo of the 1990s." D.Phil thesis. Moi University.

2004. "These Things Happen" (a short story). Winner, Short Story Category, The National Literary Awards.

1997. "The woman and History in Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye's Fiction." M.Phil thesis. Moi University.

1992 to date. Articles in the Kenyan press, including the weekly column *Snapshots* in the *Standard on Sunday* (June-September 2013).

1991. "Irony in Mtshali's Poetry." B.A. Project Paper. Moi University.

#### Conference Papers (A Selection)

2023. "Congolese Music and the Kenyan Nation." Paper for Sounding East Africa: Music, Technology and Ideology Workshop, Onomo Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania – 14–17 August 2023.

2023. "Transtextuality in Luo popular music and heritagization: present–ing the past in 'Rossy Pii Mama No.2'/'Adhiambo Sianda.'" Paper for 47th World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), University of Ghana, Legon – 13–19 July 2023.

2022. "Glossolalia, euphoria, and the revision of dogma in 'Berna Obong'o Nyakalaga' by Apostle Darlan Rukih Moses." Paper for Islamic Popular Culture Workshop, Pride Inn Annex, Mombasa, Kenya – 21–23 September 2022.

2022. "Intermediality in/and Popular Music Studies." Paper for Bayreuth Knowledge Lab Plenary: "Medialities", University of Bayreuth, Germany (Online Presentation) – 30 June 2022.

2021. "'Listen to music in times of trouble': Awillo Mike's reconfiguration of benga music during the Covid–19 pandemic." Paper for the 5th Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies Conference: "On Radical Joy", Moi University, Eldoret – 06–08 September 2021.

2021. "'Ukinidiliti mwenzako atanidanlodi': African Oral Literature and Everyday Life in the Information Age." Keynote Address for the 13th International Society for the Oral Literature of Africa (ISOLA) Conference: "Transitions, Transformations, and Translocations in African Oral Traditions and (Re)imagined Boundaries", Kenya National Theatre, Nairobi, 08–10 July 2021.

2021. "Cosmopolitan Music Consumption and Popular Conceptualizations of Nationhood in a Postcolonial African State: Rhumba Night in Eldoret, Kenya." Paper for Vereinigung für Afrikawissenschaften in Deutschland (VAD): "Africa Challenges", (Online presentation) – 07–11 June 2021.

2021. "Uswahili in 'Pili Mswahili' by Moreno Batamba et L'Orchestre Moja One." Paper for the Swahili Colloquium: "Critical Swahili Studies", (Online presentation) – 14–16 May 2021. Video presentation available at: <https://mms.uni-bayreuth.de/Panopto/Pages/Embed.aspx?id=620c50c6-590b-4af6-9a18-ad2d00e8f834>

2020. "Benga and postcolonial Luo identity, 1955–1980." Paper for Moi University African Cluster Centre Workshop, Sirikwa Hotel, Eldoret, Kenya – 29–30 October 2020 – "Music, Identity and History: Reading Kalenjin Popular/Traditional Music."

2019. "'How can I be from bara when I have come from Nairobi?: political fault lines in the popular geography of Kenya." Paper for 32<sup>nd</sup> Swahili Colloquium, Iwalewaha, Haus,

University of Bayreuth, Germany – 31 May – 02 June 2019 – “Pwani na Bara” (Coast and Mainland).

2018. “‘Music is sweet when your praises are sung’: pleasure and power in the ‘live band’ music performances of Ja–Mnazi Afrika in Eldoret, Kenya.” Paper for Moi University – Bayreuth University Symposium, Moi University Main Campus, Eldoret, Kenya – 21 March 2018 – 24 March 2018 – “Power to the People? Patronage, Intervention and Transformation in African Performative Arts.”

2017. “‘Broken’ Kiswahili, ‘tribe’ and the imagination of the nation in the Kenya of the first decade of the twenty-first century in “Khandpaka” by Awillo Mike and Ja–Mnazi Afrika.” Paper for 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Swahili Colloquium, Iwalewahaus, University of Bayreuth, Germany – 26 May – 28 May 2017 – “Mahusiano!: Lugha na fasihi katika maingiliano” (Language and literatures in interface).

2016. “I have a story about Nairobi”: narrator unreliability and the place of “tribe” in the Kenya of the first decade of the twenty-first century in “Khandpaka” by Awillo Mike and Ja–Mnazi Afrika.” Paper for Narrative Enquiry for Social Transformation (NEST) Colloquium, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

2016. “Rapping with a forked tongue: code–mixing and the tribalized Kenya at the end of the twentieth century in ‘Otongolo Tyme’ by Poxi Presha.” Paper for 29<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium, Iwalewahaus, Bayreuth University, Germany, 6 May – 8 May 2016.

2015. “Living Off the Stony Farm: Address and Diasporic Consciousness in ‘Shamba la Mawe’ by Awilo Mike.” Paper for 2<sup>nd</sup> Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies Conference, Makerere University, Uganda, 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2015 – “Textualities of Space: Connections, Intricacies and Intimacies.”

2015. “Living Off the Stony Farm: Address and Diasporic Consciousness in ‘Shamba la Mawe’ by Awilo Mike.” Paper for 28<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium, Iwalewahaus, Bayreuth University, Germany, 31 May – 2 June 2015 – “Linganisha! Mitazamo Linganishi Juu ya Matumizi ya Kiswahili Kiisimu, Kifasihi na Kiutamaduni.”

2014. “Ethnicity as a Significant Element in the ‘Way of Seeing’ Dominant in Early Twenty-First Century Kenya: Categorizing ‘Riziki’ by Ja–Mnazi Afrika.” Paper for the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the African Literature Association, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, 9–13 April 2014 – “Texts, Modes and Repertoires of Living in and Beyond the Shadows of Apartheid.”

2014. “The medium and the message: genre and meaning in *My Life in Crime* by John Kiriamiti.” Paper for workshop held in Moi University, 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> February 2014 – “Autobiography in Eastern Africa: Remembering the Past, Constructing the Self and the Nation.”

2013. “Current Progress and Challenges in Creating Research-Active African Universities: The Case of Moi University, Kenya.” Paper for a workshop organized by the Consortium of Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) Project of the Africa



Population Health Research Center (APHRC), Hilton Hotel, Nairobi, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> September 2013 – “Capacity Development Joint Training Workshop for University Administrators and Faculty: Supporting Research & Postgraduate Programmes in African Universities.”

2013. “The Rise of *Ohangla* Music: Modern Traditionalism in early 21<sup>st</sup> Century Kenya.” Paper for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference of Moi University, Moi University, Eldoret, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013 – “Social, Economic and Technological Transformation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

2013. “‘I don’t believe anybody will be so unlike other people’: Irony and Anxiety about the Nigerian Nation in Chinua Achebe’s ‘Marriage is a Private Affair’.” Paper for “Reflections on Chinua Achebe: A Colloquium”, University of Nairobi, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

2011. “Popular Music and Development: Some Lessons from Okatch Biggy’s *Benga*.” Paper for The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference of Moi University, Moi University, Eldoret, 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> September 2011: “Knowledge Creation and Dissemination for the Realization of Millennium Development Goals.”

2009. “The Serious People of *Raha*: The Politics in the Luo Ethnic Nationalism in Okatch Biggy’s *Benga*.” Paper for Conference at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> October 2009: “Eastern African Literary and Intellectual Landscapes: Rethinking Eastern African Cultural and Intellectual Trans/National Legacies through History.”

2009. “Okatch Biggy, ‘*Raha*’ and HIV/AIDS: The Complexity of Ethnic Nationalism in Post-Colonial Kenya.” Paper for The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference of Moi University, Moi University, Eldoret, 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> August 2009: “Research and Knowledge Dissemination towards the Building of Healthy and Socio-economically Stable Nations.”

2006. “‘Young man, you keep insisting that this is Your thing, and what should your fellow men seduce?’: The celebration of *raha* as response to HIV/AIDS in Okatch Biggy’s *benga*.” Paper for Symposium on Black Intellectual Traditions, Moi University, Eldoret. 27<sup>th</sup> November – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006.

2005. “Identity Politics in the Opening Formula in the Performances of a Kenyan Popular Music Band.” (With Iddah Wandolo) Paper for Kenya Oral Literature Association (KOLA) Conference on East African Oral Literature, Sunset Hotel, Kisumu, 22<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November, 2005 – Our Landscapes, Our Narratives.

1998. “The Concert and the *Mwananchi*.” Paper for The World Congress of Drama, Theatre and Education, Kisumu, Kenya, July 1998 – IDEA ’98: Linking at the Equator Crossroads.

### Current Research Projects

1. Beyond the Digital Return: New Heritage/s, Sustainability, and the Decolonization of Music Archives in South Africa, Ghana, and Kenya.

2. Sounding East Africa: Music, Technology and Ideology.