

Birthright



John Iwuh

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Birthright looks at the Nigeria-Biafra war from the common man's point of view. The illiterates and villagers in the rural areas could not at any time tell why the war broke out. The immediate consequence was the drafting of young men from the villages to join the war, and it was the responsibility of the village heads to enforce it. Ijeogu is a direct victim of this demand. His two sons are already in the army while his third son is betrayed to join the next batch of recruits. Failing to stop him, and coupled with starvation that has made his two daughters vulnerable to temptations renders him mentally unstable. Having lost his sons in the war, Ijeogu demands a "refund" of one son from Nwaka who betrayed his third and last son. Nwaka dismisses this demand as the ranting of a madman. Unknown to him, Ijeogu's senses are alive to Nwaka's lonely home. Capitalising on Nwaka's political engagements, Ijeogu puts Nwanyimma (Nwaka's wife) in the family way. Sadly, yesterday's deluge is yet to produce that expected rainbow. The war in the battlefield now rages in our homes.



John Iwuh taught in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan as a Fulbright scholar (2005-2007) and Igbinedion University 2007-2008. He worked with the Collective Artistes, Performance Studio Workshop, Lagos and designed performances with local and international directors, among other commissioned projects. He also worked as a pioneer manager with The MUSON Centre, Lagos before going into academics. His plays include *The Village Lamb*, winner of ANA/NNDC/JP ClarkPrize 2008, *Spellbound* ANA Runner-up 2009, *Ashes & Daydreams* 2007 (book of poetry), and recently, *Birthright* (2016), and *Eshe* (2016). He is a senior lecturer at Redeemer's University, Nigeria.

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