



January 2006

Volume 5, Number 1

Newsletter of the Schoolcraft College International Institute (SCII)

International Agenda

All Eyes on Africa



This man is wrapped in the traditional indigo cloth of the Tuareg people in the Air region of Niger, whose livelihood depends on farming and the herding of goats and sheep. Millions of people in Niger are currently afflicted with famine conditions that some are blaming on policies imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. For information on the Focus Africa project, turn to page 3 inside.

Photo: T.M. Photos.

Pitch In!

We Need Your Help



The work of the Schoolcraft College International Institute has advanced by leaps and bounds. But as with any successful organization, it relies on the help and ideas of new people. If you haven't become active yet, consider pitching in with this fun and creative bunch of people. For one thing, what other kind of meeting can you attend on this campus and find yourself helping to plan educational activities with people from a dozen different disciplines! Faculty, staff, students, and members of the community are all welcome.

SCII meetings are held roughly once a month, on Fridays at 12-2 pm in room LA-130, with ethnic food provided. Here are the upcoming dates:

- January 20, 2006
- February 17, 2006
- March 17, 2006
- April 7, 2006 (tentative)
- May 12, 2006.

International Agenda

Editor: Randy Schwartz (Mathematics Dept.)

Founding Editor: Donald Ryktarsyk (Business Dept.)

voice: 734/ 462-4400 ext. 5290

fax: 734/ 462-4558

e-mail: rschwartz@schoolcraft.edu

Material contained in International Agenda may be reproduced or quoted provided that the source is credited.

Published once per semester by

International Institute (SCII)
Schoolcraft College
18600 Haggerty Road
Livonia, MI 48152-2696

Archives are available at the SCII website,

<http://www.schoolcraft.edu/scii>

SCII Website Coordinator:
Mitali Chaudhery (English Dept.)

SCII Faculty Chairperson:
Josselyn Moore (Sociology/ Anthropology Depts.)

SCII Administrative Director:
Assistant Dean Cheryl Hawkins (Liberal Arts Divn.)

The mission of the Schoolcraft College International Institute is to coordinate cross-cultural learning opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and the community. The Institute strives to enhance the international content of coursework, programs, and other College activities so participants better appreciate both the diversities and commonalities among world cultures, and better understand the global forces shaping people's lives.

International Certificate Program

The International Institute is pleased to announce that Schoolcraft's International Certificate program will be launched in Fall 2006.

Under this program, students will be able to earn an International Certificate along with their degree or certificate by taking 15 or more credit hours of courses designated as "international". The certificate will signify that the student has taken advantage of learning opportunities to increase his or her awareness of intercultural/ international/ diversity issues.

Eligible courses will be so designated in the Fall 2006 Course Schedule. Each course is required to include the equivalent of a minimum of 2 weeks (out of a traditional 15-week course) of intercultural/ international/ diversity content. Some courses have been determined to be inherently international based on their content and common course syllabus. Instructors may also submit requests to SCII to identify their own section of any other course as international. Watch for detailed information in your campus mailbox.

A subcommittee of SCII will be responsible for reviewing student requests to receive the International Certificate. Periodically, it will submit a list of eligible students to the Liberal Arts Office, where the certificate will be produced and sent to the student.

Our Institute, which launched this initiative, feels that the certificate program will help to highlight and advance the international and intercultural dimension of the Schoolcraft College learning experience. •

The world is a gargantuan place, and everyone has something to hold close. Wealth, fame and power are king in the West. Family and shelter, not material possessions and images, are held closely in the hearts of the people in Africa. Eastern culture celebrates good health and maintains the traditions from long ago. Though each group views one another as strange, it is this kind of diversity that keeps the world interesting.

— Conclusion of one student's in-class essay about values, English 101 with instructor Sam Hays, Fall 2005

All Eyes on Africa in 2006

Africa— a land of many faces and diverse environments. Nearly one billion people and a stunning array of wildlife coexist on this enormous and complex piece of earth. The International Institute invites students and instructors in a variety of disciplines to take a close look at this continent by participating in the Focus Africa project during calendar year 2006.

We have much to gain by studying Africa, which was the birthplace of humankind. Its peoples, cultures, and resources have figured richly in world history. Most recently, the Africans' struggles against colonial enslavement and apartheid are replete with important lessons for our era of rapid globalization. Poverty in Africa, a legacy of underdevelopment and the depredations of global financial institutions, has brought millions of people face to face with famine and with diseases like AIDS and malaria. The planet cannot rid itself of these monstrous problems unless people in the western world gain a deeper, all-around understanding of their roots.

Instructors and their classes can participate in Focus Africa in a variety of ways:

- SCII has built an Africa resources database that already contains well over 200 items (bibliographies, journal and newspaper articles, web links, book reviews, teaching ideas and handouts, and sample student papers). Perusing it will help instructors to brainstorm how they can create materials and assignments related to Africa for their own courses. The database is available on the public drive at U:\International\Focus_Africa\Africa_resources_for_faculty (which is now also accessible on those campus computers that have been designated for use by part-time instructors). All are encouraged to add additional items to the database.
- SCII has arranged a series of campus speakers and films (see schedule at right) dealing with such topics as art and culture, history, politics, racism, underdevelopment, and the environment. Contact SCII chair Josselyn Moore to arrange to bring your whole class to such a presentation. The yearlong series will culminate with a cultural festival, Uzuri Wa Afrika: The Beauty of Africa.
- The campus book discussion group, Pageturners, has selected books about Africa to read and discuss (see schedule at right).
- The GlobalEyzers group invites instructors and students to join the series of discussions that it will be hosting this year on African current events in a global context.
- Sam Hays's roundup of some of the Great Books of Africa (see pp. 12-16) should stimulate further ideas.

Winter 2006 Schedule

Thurs. Feb. 2 6-7:00 pm LA-200	Talk, "Globalization, Neo-Liberalism & African Development" Howard Stein, UM Center for Afroamerican and African Studies
Tues. Feb. 7 11:30-1:30 pm LA-200	Film, "The Gods Must Be Crazy" A culturally revealing comedy set in the Kalahari Desert
Mon., Feb. 13 6:30-7:30 pm Lower Waterman Tues., Feb. 14 12-1 pm L-105 Wed., Feb. 15 1:30-2:30 pm LA-130 Thurs., Feb. 16 6:30-7:30 pm RC-645	Pageturners book discussion <i>We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda</i> by Philip Gourevitch, a <i>New Yorker</i> reporter who reveals how genocide unfolded in 1990's Rwanda
Wed. Feb. 15 1-2:30 pm LA-200	Talk, "Imagining Africa: The Construction of a 'Dark' Continent" John Metzler, MSU African Studies Center
Thur. Feb. 23 1-3:00 pm LA-200	Film, "Out Of Africa" Based on Isak Dinesen's breathtaking memoir of life in rural Kenya circa 1914
Wed. Mar. 1 9-10:00 am MC-200	Talk, "Water Resources in Africa: Availability, Challenges, and Improving Efficient and Sustainable Use" Ernest Ndukwe, SC Geography Dept.
Mon. Mar. 13 1-3:00 pm LA-200	Film, "Roots" First episode of the 1977 dramatic mini-series, based on Alex Haley's research into the life of his ancestors in W. Africa and the impact of the slave trade
Mon., Mar. 20 6:30-7:30 pm Lower Waterman Tues., Mar. 21 12-1 pm L-105 Wed., Mar. 22 1:30-2:30 pm LA-130 Thurs., Mar. 23 6:30-7:30 pm RC-645	Pageturners book discussion <i>Things Fall Apart (1958)</i> by Chinua Achebe, classic novel of a village in colonial Nigeria whose people are torn between appeasing and resisting the British administrators
Wed. Mar. 22 12-1:00 pm LA-200	Talk, "The AIDS Pandemic in Africa" Joan Mumaw, VP, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Wed Apr. 5 1-2 pm LA-200	Talk, "Yoruba Art and Culture" David Doris, UM History of Art Dept.
Tues Apr. 11 11 am – 1 pm LA-200	Film, "Their Eyes Were Watching God" Oprah Winfrey's adaptation (ABC-TV, 2005) of the 1937 Zora Neale Hurston story of an African-American woman's quest for respect and love in 1920's America

Multicultural Events Calendar for SE Michigan

See also the calendars for Focus Africa (page 3) and Global Thursdays (page 6).

Sep. 15, 2005 – Mar. 2, 2006: “Images of Human Rights: South African Prints”, an exhibit featuring 28 fine art prints created by artists representing nine provinces of South Africa. Hand-printed by Jan Jordan, the portfolio was released in 1996 to commemorate the new post-apartheid nation’s Bill of Rights. Charles H. Wright Museum of African-American History, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit.

Jan. 9 – Feb. 3, 2006: “Bolivian Textiles”, an exhibit of works selected from the Bradley Cross Collection. Alfred Berkowitz Gallery, Mardigian Library, Univ. of Michigan, Dearborn.

Jan. 16, 2006: Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. Programs will be held at many local sites. Schoolcraft College will host 50-minute public dialogues all day about race and racism. As backdrop for the discussion, participants will view a short documentary about the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University. Dialogues occur on the half-hour, the first beginning at 8:30 am and the last beginning at 7:30 pm, room MC-110, McDowell Center, Schoolcraft College, Livonia.

Jan. 24, 2006: “African-American Lives” Teacher’s Training Workshop. Hosted by WNET New York, co-producer of this new PBS-TV series. For information or to register, contact Jaleel Bradley at 313-494-5823. Charles H. Wright Museum of African-American History, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit.

Feb. 1 – Apr. 30, 2006: Exhibition, “To Discover Beauty: The Art of Kahlil Gibran”. On loan from the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, this exhibit will feature original artworks by the renowned Lebanese-American writer and artist, Kahlil Gibran. Best known for literary works including *The Prophet* and *Sand and Foam*, Gibran (1883-1931) was also an accomplished visual artist, creating oils, watercolors, and drawings. His work expresses a personal vision, incorporating a religious and philosophical outlook on life, much like that of William Blake with whom he is often compared. Because his approach to love and other subjects is often spiritual or mythological, he is also linked with the Symbolist movement. To celebrate the opening of the exhibit, poet Hayan Charara, author of *The Sadness of Others*, will give a free reading and book signing at 6-8 pm on Feb. 1, followed by a special evening exhibit opening. Arab-American National Museum, 13624 Michigan Ave., Dearborn, MI.

Feb. 6, 2006: Dr. Scott Ellsworth will present, and moderate an open discussion, on the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot. Admission is free and open to the public. 7:30 pm, Campbell Center for Performing Arts, Greenhills School, 850 Greenhills Drive, Ann Arbor.



Imani Winds (Feb. 19)

Feb. 12-14, 2006: “Lebanon & Syria Face the Future”, a conference at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Presenters include As’ad Abukhalil (California State University, Stanislaus), Elizabeth Picard (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris), Patrick Seale (British journalist and author), Lisa Wedeen (University of Chicago), Malek Abisaab (McGill University, Montreal), Suhail Belhadj, Leila Fawaz (Tufts University), Steven Heydeman (Georgetown University), Salwa Ismail (University of Exeter), Eberhard Kienle (Université d’Aix Marseille), Joshua Landis (University of Oklahoma), Richard Norton (Boston University), Volker Perthes (German Institute for International and Security Affairs).

- Sunday starting at 7:00 pm, Rackham Amphitheatre, Rackham Bldg., 915 E. Washington St.
- Monday at 9:00 am-5:00 pm, 1636 International Institute, 1080 S. University Ave.
- Tuesday at 8:30-10:30 am, 1636 International Institute, 1080 S. University Ave.

Feb. 17, 2006: Luncheon presentation, “The Spirit of African-American Artists”. Dorothy Walker, volunteer from the Detroit Institute of Arts, explores the life and times of some of the greatest African-American artists dating from the 19th Century to present day. Part of the Luncheon Series of the SC Women’s Resource Center. \$14 per luncheon; prepaid registration required (call 462-4443 for more info). 11:45 am to 1:30 pm, VisTaTech Center, Schoolcraft College, Livonia.

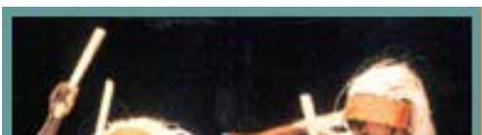


Soweto Gospel Choir (Feb. 19)

Feb. 19, 2006: Concert by Imani Winds, an African-American/Latino woodwind quintet that explores the links between European, African, and American music traditions. Members include flutist and composer Valerie Coleman; Toyin Spellman, oboe; Mariam Adam, clarinet; Jeff Scott, French horn; and Monica Ellis, bassoon. Prior to the performance at 5 pm, join Imani Winds for a talk at 4 pm, both in Pease Auditorium, Cross St. at College Place, Eastern Michigan Univ., Ypsilanti.

Feb. 19, 2006: "Ishangi's Africa". The Ishangi Family African Dancers, an authentic troupe from West Africa, will bring their traditional music and dance performance and authentic storytelling to the stage for another spectacular season in celebration of Black History Month. This all-ages show is part of the Pfizer Family Friendly Series; additional support from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, The Rosebud Foundation, the Benard L. Maas Foundation and LaSalle Bank. Reserved seats are \$12, on sale at all Ticketmaster outlets. Charge by phone at 734-763-TKTS or 248-645-6666 or online at ticketmaster.com. 1:30 pm, Michigan Theater, 603 East Liberty St., Ann Arbor.

Feb. 19, 2006: Soweto Gospel Choir (University Musical Society Global Series). The South African musical phenomenon Soweto Gospel Choir has the rare ability to transcend cultural boundaries and connect with diverse audiences. Formed to celebrate the unique, inspirational and powerful tradition of African gospel music, the riveting 26-member choir, directed by choirmaster David Mulovhedzi, has won support from Nelson Mandela as well as Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, the choir's patron. Its new program, *Blessed*, delivers an inviting, warm and exotic mix of moving traditional South African hymns and traditional Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho gospel songs with honey-toned harmonies, rich interwoven vocal textures and driving rhythmic patterns. Ticket info at <http://www.ums.org>. 4 pm, Hill Auditorium, 825 North University Ave., Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.



Children of Uganda (Mar. 23-24)

Feb. 22, 2006: Curriculum Enrichment Day, SC Nursing Department. Presentations dealing with international and intercultural aspects of nursing, including Assoc. Prof. Nancy Palmer's PowerPoint talk on the two weeks that she and her husband Tom spent last summer providing free medical clinics in Trujillo, Peru. Public is invited. 8:00 am – 12 pm (exact schedule TBA), room VT-550, VisTaTech Center, Schoolcraft College, Livonia.

Feb. 22-24, 2006: 21st annual conference of the Liberal Arts Network for Development (LAND), "Connecting Cultures". Keynote address by former Consul General Stephen Buck, "The U.S. and the Arab World: Perceptions, Policy, and Reality". DoubleTree Hotel, Bay City, MI.

Mar. 23, 2006 at 7 pm and **Mar. 24, 2006** at 8 pm: Children of Uganda (University Musical Society Global Series). Children of Uganda's exhilarating program of East African music and dance features pulsing rhythms, quicksilver movements, powerful drums, lyric flutes, and songs of joy and hope. The 20 young performers (ages 8-18) live together in Kampala, Uganda and combine dance, song, music, storytelling, and costume in an unforgettable performance of the rich cultural traditions of Uganda. Originally founded to teach orphaned children traditional songs, dances, and stories, the Children of Uganda now represent the 1.7 million Ugandan children orphaned by AIDS and war. The dual crises of civil war and AIDS in Uganda pose a serious threat to family and village life that previously nurtured and depended on a rich oral culture. Ticket info at <http://www.ums.org>. Power Center for the Performing Arts, 121 Fletcher St., Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Mar. 25-26, 2006: 34th annual University of Michigan "Dance for Mother Earth" Pow Wow. Tribes gather from throughout the Midwest bringing their native music, dance, crafts, and food. Doors open Saturday at 10:30 am,

continued on next page

Multicultural Calendar *continued from p. 5*

with Grand Entries at 12:00 and 7:00 pm; doors open Sunday at 10:30 am, with Grand Entry at 12:00 pm. Hosted by UM Native American Student Association, UM Chapter of the American Indian Science & Engineering Society, Native American Law Student Association, Native American Public Health Association, Native American Business Student Association, Native American Programming Task Force, and the Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs. More information is available at <http://www.umich.edu/~powwow>. Crisler Arena, 333 E. Stadium Blvd. near Main St., Ann Arbor.

Mar. 29, 2006: Fifth annual Schoolcraft College Multicultural Fair. Featuring more than two dozen country display tables created by our students; on-stage cultural performances every half-hour; and language demonstrations. 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, DiPonio Room, VisTaTech Center, Schoolcraft College, Livonia.

Apr. 7, 2006: Mory Kanté (University Musical Society Global Series). The legendary West African singer and *kora* player Mory Kanté comes from a long line of *griots*, a kind of poet, singer, historian, and journalist wrapped into one, whose role is to tell the stories of families and their native peoples through music. He returns to his ancestral roots and to the traditional sounds and rhythms of the Mandé, an empire that existed in modern-day Guinea and Mali from the 13th to 15th centuries. Originally a *balafon* (wooden xylophone) player, Kanté has developed a unique style on the *kora* (a 21-string lute). His catchy dance music blends the traditional music of his culture with a Western pop beat. Ticket info at <http://www.ums.org>. 8 pm, Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor.

Apr. 9 – Jul. 2, 2006: “African-American Art from the Walter O. Evans Collection”. An exhibit featuring selected works in various media from Dr. Walter O. Evans’s private collection of over 500 objects, regarded as one of the important historical collections of art created by American artists of African descent. Broad in scope, the exhibit’s more than 80 paintings, sculptures and works on paper dating from 1848 to 1997 show the development of African-American art from the Hudson River School up to and including various modernist approaches. An opportunity to learn about some of the most accomplished African-American artists working in the 19th and 20th Centuries including Henry Ossawa Tanner, Edmonia Lewis, Elizabeth Catlett, Aaron Douglas, Romare Bearden, and Jacob Lawrence. Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

Apr. 21-22, 2006: 13th annual conference of the Midwest Institute for International/ Intercultural Education (see page 7). VisTaTech Center, Schoolcraft College, Livonia.

Apr. 25, 2006: Africa Malaria Day, reminding the world of its responsibility to commit the resources needed to control this preventable and treatable disease that kills 1.1 million people each year, most of them children. The day marks the sixth anniversary of the Abuja Declaration and Plan of Action (http://www.rbm.who.int/docs/abuja_declaration.pdf).

Ford-Comerica Global Thursdays

Every Thursday evening through May, Comerica and Ford Motor Company sponsor Global Thursdays at the Arab-American National Museum (13624 Michigan Ave., Dearborn, MI), a weekly series of 8 pm programs and concerts by diverse local and international performers. Tickets: \$10 general admission, \$12 at the door, and \$8 for students or AANM members. More information on the performers can be found at <http://www.theaanm.org> (click on Calendar, then Ford-Comerica Global Thursdays).

Jan. 12, 2006: Hijazz, a high-energy, riveting Arab/Latin jazz ensemble. Directed by Omar Al Musfi, a Syrian-born, multi-talented percussionist now residing in Chicago.

Jan. 19, 2006: Playwright, author, screenwriter, and actor Betty Shamieh will be performing excerpts from her nationally acclaimed plays. A graduate of Harvard University and the Yale School of Drama, she is the author of “Roar”, which premiered off-Broadway and was selected as a *New York Times* Critics’ Pick for four consecutive weeks.

Jan. 26, 2006: Actor Michel El-Ashkar performs a one-man, two-act dramatic presentation of the life of the renowned Lebanese-American writer and artist Kahlil Gibran. In cities around the world, El-Ashkar has been commended for his sensitive and powerful presentation. See the related exhibit (Feb. 1 – Apr. 30 in the Multicultural Calendar).

Feb. 2, 2006: Caribbean recording artist YaTafari electrifies the night with *junkanoo* and *calypso* jazz rhythms inspired by his Bahamian homeland. A fun, festive, and captivating entertainer who will warm hearts with a kaleidoscope of sound, color, and sweet musical beats.

Feb. 9, 2006: Mady Kouyate of Senegal comes from a long line of ancestral *djelys*, or *griots*, the musicians and praise singers of West Africa. Mady is known widely for his playing on the *kora* (a 21-string traditional instrument) as well as *balafon* (wooden xylophone), percussion, and song. He plays songs rich in meaning and culture, carrying out and evolving the traditions of his ancestors.

Feb. 16, 2006: Odetta, the legendary African-American folk, blues, and gospel singer, will grace the stage with her special gifts and signature style that have touched listeners’ hearts for decades. Her soulful and insightful songs have changed lives, moved mountains, and helped to define social justice issues and beliefs since the 1950’s.

Feb. 23, 2006: South African folk artist Vusi Mahlasela skims the styles of folk, rock, and traditional African, with hints of reggae. As an accomplished guitarist, percussionist, composer, and arranger, he offers masterpieces that were at the heart of the struggle for freedom, reconstruction, and reconciliation in the post-apartheid era.

Mar. 2, 2006: SakéSho (French-Caribbean jazz)

Mar. 9, 2006: Maysoon Zayid (Arab-American comedy)

Mar. 16, 2006: Bohola (traditional Irish music)

Mar. 23, 2006: Purbayan Chatterjee (North Indian *sitar* player)

Mar. 30, 2006: Suheir Hammad (Palestinian poet)

Apr. 6, 2006: Markus James (American/Malian blues)

Apr. 13, 2006: Tablado (Spanish *flamenco*)

Apr. 20, 2006: Pierre Bensusan (Arab-American guitar)

Apr. 27, 2006: TBD

May 4, 2006: Tlen-Huicani (traditional folk music from Veracruz, Mexico)

Schoolcraft Hosts MIIE Annual Conference on April 21-22

Make your plans now to participate in the annual conference of the Midwest Institute for International and Intercultural Education (MIIE), parent organization of our International Institute. It will be hosted right here on our campus on Friday-Saturday, April 21-22, 2006, in the VisTaTech Center.

This is a wonderful opportunity for us to exchange ideas and experiences— with colleagues from across the Midwest— about how to deepen the international and multicultural perspective of our courses and programs.

All instructors and other staff are invited to attend, to be moderators of sessions, or to make presentations about their international- and intercultural-related work. The registration fee, normally \$300 for “outsiders”, is cut to \$100 for Schoolcraft personnel at this conference.

In addition to keynote presentations and on-site luncheons, the gathering will include four groups of four concurrent sessions each day. Each concurrent session, typically involving 2-4 presenters, will focus on a theme such as:

- strategies for international or intercultural work within a specific discipline
- experience with overseas study tours or other training opportunities.

This year’s conference will include special emphasis on the impact of globalization and on the growing importance of knowledge about China, India, and Africa. There will also be on-site opportunities for networking, blogging, and media archiving.

For the latest conference outline and the registration form (we also encourage you to forward copies of these to colleagues at other institutions who might be interested), contact Josselyn Moore or visit <http://puma.kvcc.edu/Midwest> .



Hosting this conference is a major honor and opportunity for Schoolcraft. MIIE has 90 institutional members from across the Midwest and beyond, and the conference is likely to draw upwards of 200 participants in all disciplines. Being selected as conference site reflects the successful work of our own Institute, which has been a member of MIIE for over 10 years. The conference is a way to further advance the work of making curricula and programs at colleges across our region more internationally grounded and culturally sensitive, as well as to showcase our College.

Popcorn is from Latin America? A Summary and Reflection

by Alan R. Bennett

Dozens of essays were written by Schoolcraft students last Fall who experienced ¡Viva!, the November 1 cultural fiesta that helped culminate our year-long Focus Latin America project. One of the best papers was the following by Alan Bennett, who was enrolled in an online section of English 101 (English Composition) taught by Prof. Sumita Chaudhery.

The walk toward the VisTaTech Center on the Livonia campus of Schoolcraft College could not have been more per-

fect, or beautiful, on this crisp November morning. With leaves in their midst of change, the journey was surrounded by multicolored trees, whose allure was seductive. Wonderful, aromatic smells filled the air, as the destination became less remote. Nearing the main entrance, the cheerful vibrations of live music enveloped the senses. Entering the VisTaTech Center, the culmination of beauty, seduction, bountiful aromas and sensual sounds beckoned those willing to escape to a world south of the border.

Cheer! Hurray! VIVA! The Schoolcraft College International Institute's "A Celebration of Latin American Cultures", located inside the DiPonio Room, was gushing with all things Latin American. The music and dance, the artwork and poetry, and the popcorn. Popcorn? The organizers of this grand event went to great lengths to showcase accurate clothing and authentic food, but how could "All American" popcorn slip past such a detailed event? Surely, this was an oversight, and only used to entice unassuming passers-by [or so I thought].



A total of more than 700 people attended ¡Viva!, including many classes from Schoolcraft and an AP Spanish class from Walled Lake High School. Much of the food was prepared by Culinary Arts students Claudia Guerrero, Lilly Orrico, and Anamaria Pérez. (Photos: Randy Schwartz)



Headlining the ¡Viva! event was the hot salsa and Latin jazz of Orquesta La Inspiración, a 10-piece band featuring Ozvaldo “Ozzie” Rivera (center) on percussion. Ozzie, who also delivered two presentations about Latin music and culture at Schoolcraft as part of the Focus Latin America project, is a well-known musician and community activist who teaches social work at Madonna University.

Throughout the exhibition area, multifaceted artwork filled partitions and curtains, promoting the passion, curiosity and abstract viewpoint of several talented artists. Different sized canvasses, both near and far, offered a visual kaleidoscope of shapes, hues and tones. Using watercolor, oils and manipulated photography, the quality of expression found within these displays was awesome.

On both sides of the hall, informative displays either spoke of intimate traditions, or illustrated life back home. One table provided interesting handouts promoting the Spanish language. Two surprising facts listed were: “The U.S. is the world’s sixth largest Spanish-speaking country with 19 million *hispanohablantes* (Spanish speakers)”, and “Los Angeles is the world’s second largest Spanish-speaking city”, two truly incredible facts to behold! A second pamphlet was made up of several maps (*mapas*) showing all of the diverse sections of Central and South America, including the Caribbean.

Another table explained the deep, personal traditions behind the Mexican holiday, “Day of the Dead”. As explained in the program handed to all entrants, “On November 1st deceased children are remembered and on November 2nd adults who have died are honored. These souls are welcomed by setting up special altars in homes, churches and cemeteries with displays of their favorite food, drink, pictures, personal belongings and flowers.” One moving display honored a grandfather who loved fishing and alligators. This precious altar spoke of a great man and his heartfelt influence upon his grandchild.

The most interesting fact about the “Day of the Dead” celebration is that it directly coincides with two Roman Catholic Feasts: “All Saints Day” on November 1, and “All Souls Day” on November 2. Both Catholic feast days allowed for prayer and remembrance of those who are preparing to, or have already, entered the kingdom of God.

continued on next page

¡Viva! *continued from page 9*

A complete tour throughout the hall would include brief visits at tables offering a variety of Latin American cuisine. One standout was the station staffed by the eager-to-promote trio from Vicente's. This downtown Detroit, Cuban-inspired restaurant presented two rice-dish samples: a chicken-fried rice, and black-beans with black rice. Generous portions of chicken highlighted the fried rice dish, but the delicious flavors found throughout the black-beans with black rice dish were incredible. This delectable calling card was an invitation for a personal visit downtown very soon.

After absorbing the inspirational melodies of the live music and the visual seduction of the Tango and Salsa dancing, a visit to the seemingly out-of-place popcorn stand was inevitable. Delightfully flavorful, even the popcorn seemed to have a subtle Spanish flavor. Was there a genuine, deliberate reason for its presence? Of course there was. Such details could not go unnoticed.

A simple on-line Google search connecting "popcorn" with "Latin America" located the following: According to the Spring 2000 edition of the *Radcliffe Culinary Times*, author Andrew Smith writes: "Popcorn, a variety of maize domesticated in southern Mexico and northern Guatemala, has a hard outer hull or endosperm. When the kernels are heated, moisture inside con-

Students Give Praise for ¡Viva!

¡Viva! A Celebration of Latin American Cultures was a cultural awakening for me. I have learned some facts about the Spanish culture through my Spanish classes in high school and by going to Spain, and this event shared a lot about more than just the Spanish culture.

— Meaghan Garbutt

"VIVA! A Celebration of Latin American Cultures" has given myself and other visitors a view of different views of life. From the food to entertainment and beliefs, Latin American culture is becoming a fixation in United States culture. What I believe I noticed most about the event was not the performances or the pictures. It was the amount of time and effort that went into putting the event together. It states in the program that it has been a year long project, and putting in that type of effort is the real cause for celebration.

— Lawrence Briones

I really enjoyed my time there and thought it was an excellent presentation of Dia de los Muertos holiday. I also feel that the idea of celebrating a different country's culture every year is an excellent way to open the eyes of Schoolcraft students to other ways of life. I cannot wait to see next year's event, dedicated to Africa.

— Melissa Cude



Audience members couldn't resist taking to the dance floor, especially when Duane Wrenn and Maribel Vasquez of Energetic Soul Studio (Clawson, Michigan) offered group salsa lessons (shown here). Later, Ramu Pyreddy and Jennifer Baltimore from the UM Argentine Tango Club demonstrated how "it takes two to tango".

verts to steam, and pressure builds up until the hull explodes. Though popcorn varieties were grown throughout the pre-Columbian Americas, they were not being cultivated in what is now the United States before the Europeans arrived. U.S. sailors probably took some popcorn from Chile around 1800.” Further, he writes: “With the invention of the corn popper around 1837, popcorn became the United States’ first food fad.”

So, thank you, Latin America. Your traditions, music, passion and culture are deeply appreciated. But most of all, thank you for the popcorn!

At right, a Day of the Dead altar, or *ofrenda* (literally, “offering”), created by Student Activities Coordinator Sherry Springer and her student aids in honor of Sherry’s mother. The lion’s share of funding for ¡Viva!, not to mention student greeters, table decorations, etc., was provided by Student Activities and Phi Theta Kappa.



Students from Andrea Nofz’s Spanish classes as well as Suzanne Baker’s and Josselyn Moore’s Anthropology classes displayed posters and papers on Latin American topics, such as Mexico’s “Day of the Dead” (right), Recipes of Peru, and the great Mexican mural artists. Graduating CGT student Kay Estredo-Hernández mounted an extensive exhibit of her photos and acrylics depicting “life with color, contrast, spice and heat” in her hometown of Maracaibo, Venezuela.



Learning About Africans from Their Great Books

by Sam Hays (English)

At the end of the last century, the Modern Library Board produced a list of “100 Great English Books of the 20th Century”. No African books were listed, even though three African writers had won the Nobel Prize in literature. In reaction, scholars in Africa solicited suggestions and in 2002 produced a list of “Africa’s 100 Best Books of the 20th Century”.¹

Appearing twice on the list is the Nigerian writer **Chinua Achebe**, who is the African author that is probably the best known in the United States and one whom I had already read. (Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Wole Soyinka also appear twice on the list.) Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, and several other novels depicting Nigerian society under colonialism and post-colonialism. (Pageturners, Schoolcraft’s book discussion group, will be hosting discussions of *Things Fall Apart* this March; see schedule on page 3.) In the late 1960’s, shortly after Nigeria gained independence from Great Britain, a civil war broke out in its Biafra region, and Achebe’s own Igbo (Ibo) people suffered a crushing defeat by the Yoruba and Hausa people.

This summer, I examined many other great books from Africa, both fiction and nonfiction, including many from this best-100 list. Below, I have made comments about some of the books that I found most thought-provoking.

A Struggle for Independence

The Poor Christ of Bomba is a novel by **Mongo Beti**. The setting is a Catholic mission in Cameroon in the 1930’s. A zealous French Catholic priest realizes, after 20 years, that his ministry has been compromised by his collaboration with the French colonial government. The colonialists’ oppressive methods inflict fear upon the local people, which drives them to the priest for relief and protection. Thus, wherever the French build roads by “forced labour, conscription, floggings, arbitrary imprisonments”, the priest has found much success; the greater the distance from the road, the greater the failure. The mission has also been undermined by its African staff, who exploit the priest’s cultural blindness for their own monetary and sexual gains. Women in the mission and in the local society prove to be “perfect machines” of exploitation.

Magomero: Portrait of an African Village is a historical and sociological study by poet and scholar



Landeg White. It shows the impact of “Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization” on one village in Malawi between 1859 and the 1980’s. The circulation of money makes incursions against the traditional matrilineal system of land ownership. Under the European colonial system, it is men who must earn money to pay taxes, but they are reluctant to invest in land dominated and owned by their in-laws. An intriguing part of this study is a Christian rebellion under the leadership of John Chilenbwe against the colonial landlords in 1915. Chilenbwe was mentored by Joseph Booth, an American Baptist missionary who formed the African Christian Union with the slogan “Africa for Africans”. At first they sought to form self-reliant commercial groups, but the colonial overlords resisted these efforts. Eventually Chilenbwe and his followers resorted to violent action, and he was killed in the process. Songs and stories of the people are central to White’s research, which follows in the tradition of such works as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie’s *Carnival in Romans* and *Montaillou*, Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, and Anthony F. C. Wallace’s *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution*.

When I read the novel *God’s Bits of Wood* by **Ousmane Sembène**, who is of Senegalese Muslim background, I found it to have an unfamiliar form and was puzzled until I discovered that the author is

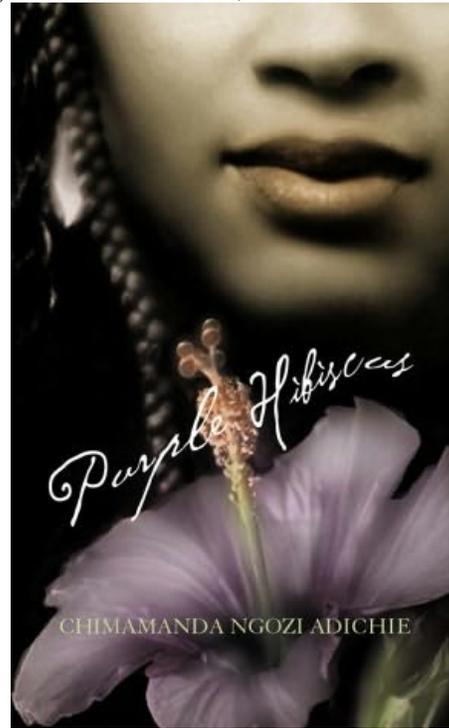
primarily a film director. Sembène is considered the father of African cinema, with such famous films as “Xala” (1974) and, most recently, “Moolaadé” (2004). When I reflected on this novel as a “film”, I was much less puzzled. *God’s Bits of Wood* is based on a railroad strike that occurred in 1947-48, late in the French colonial period. It is a political novel but with a cinematic, story-telling quality. A website of E. Fred Carlisle, an English professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, provides study/discussion questions for readers of the novel, and some analysis of important themes such as social change, the intertwined effects of race, class, and gender, and the politics of language.²

The Zimbabwean writer **Dambudzo Marechera**, in his short story “The House of Hunger”, writes in a stream of consciousness and in what some have called a carnivalesque “the world is upside-down” approach. The writing may be difficult to comprehend or repulsive to digest, but his creation of images and manipulation of diction are striking, and his irony is forceful:

There’s hungry people out there. There’s homeless people out there. There’s many going about in the rags of their birthday suits. And they’re all mad. They’s all got designs... There’s clouds of flies everywhere you go. There’s armies of worms slithering in our history. And there’s squadrons of mosquitoes homing down the cradle of our future. What do we do? Clutch and drown each other, that’s what, and if we can’t do ourselves in properly there’s congregations of missionaries and shrinks to do it, and they have on their side cops and soldiers and Australia and New Zealand and China and the USA and France and the bloody Germans. The poor are not the only ones who’ve got designs! (pp. 59-60)

As he wrote, so he lived. He was expelled from mission school for challenging the colonialist teaching; from the University of Rhodesia for protesting racial discrimination; and from Oxford for allegedly attempting to burn down part of the school. Once, he had a solo protest march against the white government of Ian Smith and had to flee Rhodesia. When his nation became independent Zimbabwe, at the celebration held at the African Centre in London where exiles had come in their patriotic ethnic dress, he arrived in English horse-riding gear as if he were an English lord ready for a fox hunt, a parody of both the English elite and the African nationalists. His life raged for a brief 35 years.

Wole Soyinka is a Nigerian Yoruban who in 1986 won the Nobel Prize for Literature. He has written many plays dealing with Nigerian culture and politics, and has been deeply involved in the country’s political struggles and repeatedly imprisoned. In 1997, while living in exile, he was even sentenced to death by the regime of



Nigerian General Sani Abacha. There was a recent BBC radio presentation of his play “King Baabu”, which comically depicts life under Abacha’s brutal military government. “King Baabu” includes intriguing Nigerian music and a “call and response” between the players and the audience.³

A Grain of Wheat by **Ngugi wa Thiong’o** is a famous novel set in Kenya during the 1950’s when the Kikuyu (Mau Mau) revolted against British rule. The main character is Mugo, a resistance hero. Thompson, the powerful white official, comes to Kenya to replace the Africans’ “irrationality” with “the three principles basic to the Western mind: i.e. the principles of Reason, of Order, and of Measure.” He ends up as commandant of the prison camp for rebels, where he inflicts them with degradation and torture.

The title of the novel comes from a passage in the Bible: “Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24). The first Kenyan resistance leader in the 19th Century had been captured and buried alive face-down in the earth, “a living warning”. Ngugi writes that the blood of such martyrs “contained within it a seed, a grain, which gave birth to a political party whose main strength thereafter sprang from a bond with the soil.” Some of the Mau Mau rebel leaders drew inspiration from the Exodus story of Moses, from Jesus, and from the actions of Gandhi. The plot moves toward the day of independence of Kenya, in which Judas-like betrayal will hopefully be cleansed away.

continued on next page

Great Books of Africa *continued from page 13*

Ngugi has also focused on the oppression of language itself. In his novel *Devil on the Cross*, he affirms that in his native Kenya, the English language is part of a cultural imperialism that “is the mother to slavery of the mind and the body.” One of the book’s characters, Gatuiria, cries out, “Let us look about us. Where are our national languages now? Where are the books written in the alphabets of our national languages?” Ngugi advocates that the language, the stories, and the literature must come from the people and not be drowned out by words coming from the foreign dominating powers. In mid-career, he refused to write anymore in any language other than his native Kikuyu, nor to write any stories that were not rooted in the traditions of his people.

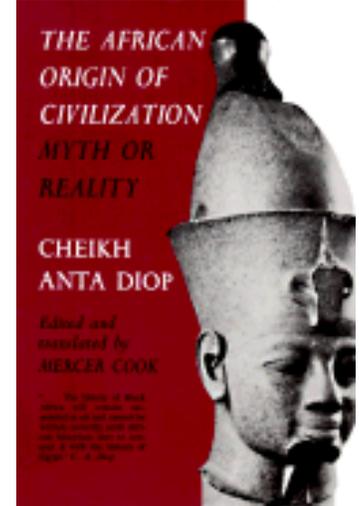
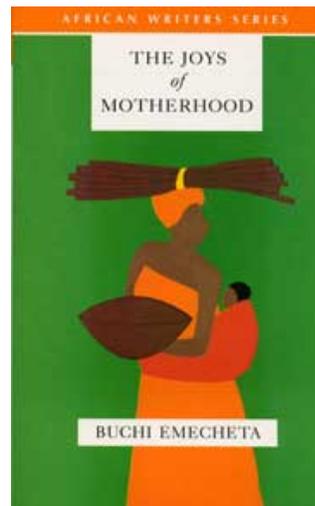
Ngugi was imprisoned in the late 1970’s for writing and performing a play in the Kikuyu language on the injustices of the newly independent government. *Devil on the Cross* was originally written in Kikuyu on toilet paper while he was in prison. When he was released, he left Kenya under the threat of death. After an exile of 22 years, he and his wife Nyambura returned to Kenya in 2004, making a tour on the theme “Reviving the Spirit”. The couple soon met the test of the spirit when they were robbed and beaten in their hotel room, and she was raped. Ngugi’s publisher released the news of an “attempted rape”, for in Kenya acknowledgement of rape brings shame on the husband and the woman. Both Ngugi and Nyambura corrected the news report publicly. “There was rape, not attempted rape. Rape is rape; you cannot baptize it.... We should not let people who do not like what we are doing kill the spirit.”⁴

African Women Yearn to Be Free

I am struck by the emphasis in African literature on the abuse of women, and am also reminded that this critical issue is *global*.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a 28-year-old Nigerian with a recently-published first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, which she started in her senior year of college. The main character is a rigid and powerful man who inflicts extreme physical abuse on his wife and children when they stray from his Christian commands. The novel thrusts this patriarch against more tolerant family members, including his animistic father. With this story Adichie, a practicing Catholic, severely critiques religion for enforcing patriarchal dominance in Africa.

Another Nigerian author, **Buchi Emecheta**, writes with piercing teeth and gouging fingers in her novel *The Joys of Motherhood*. Irony, sarcasm, and anger are her appendages. “When the children were good they be-



longed to the father; when they were bad, they belonged to the mother. Every woman knew this”, she writes. On another page she cries out, “God when will you create a woman who will be fulfilled in herself, a full human being, not anybody’s appendage?” Such protests track Emecheta’s own life, which began with orphanhood, an arranged marriage, immigration to England, and the bearing of five children by the age of 22. Only later did she end her marriage and go on to earn a degree in sociology and prominence as a writer.

The setting for *The Joys of Motherhood* is in Lagos, Nigeria, between the 1930’s and the 1960’s. Lagos, the capital of the British colony of Nigeria, is primarily of Yoruba nationality, while the main characters in the story are from the Igbo minority. The story brings out a sharp contrast between rural chiefdoms and urban life. “Men here [in Lagos] are too busy being white men’s servants to be men”, one says. “We women mind the home. Not our husbands. Their manhood has been taken away from them. The shame of it is that they don’t know it. All they see is the money, shining white man’s money.”

So Long a Letter, by **Mariama Bâ**, focuses on the different reactions of two women in Senegal when their husbands take second wives. The excellent craftsmanship of this brief 90-page novel, written in letter/diary form, is apparent on the very first page:

Dear Aissatou,

I have received your letter. By way of reply, I am beginning this diary, my prop in distress. Our long association has taught me that confiding in others allays pain.

Your presence in my life is by no means fortuitous. Our grandmothers in their compounds were separated by a fence and would exchange messages daily. Our mothers used to argue over who would look after our uncles and aunts. As for us, we wore out wrappers and sandals on the same stony road to the koranic school; we buried our milk teeth

in the same holes and begged our fairy godmothers to restore them to us, more splendid than before.

If over the years, and passing through the realities of life, dreams die, I still keep intact my memories, the salt of remembrance.

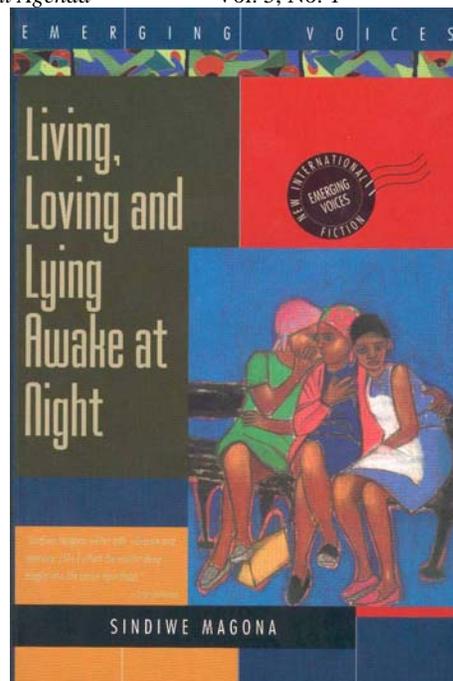
From being a poverty-stricken mother in South Africa who had been deserted by her husband, **Sindiwe Magona** rose to accepting a scholarship to Columbia University. She had stints of teaching and UN translation work before starting a writing career when she was nearly 40. *Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night* is a collection of short stories reflecting her life. The story “Women at Work”, for example, is drawn from her experiences as a maid for several white families in apartheid South Africa. “Now That the Pass Is Gone” focuses on the contrast between the years in which every African— anyone not labeled “colored”, “Indian”, or “white”— was required to carry a pass (something like a permanent national ID card) at all times or face arrest, versus post-apartheid South Africa when the pass was eliminated. Also riveting reading is her two-volume autobiography, *To My Children’s Children* and *Forced to Grow*.

Which Identity for Africans?

I have been mulling over how to define Africa: is it a specific land mass, a race, a culture? I wonder about the European cartographers’ arbitrary geographical limitation of Africa. The comments of **Ali Mazrui**— a well-known African scholar at Binghamton University in New York— are intriguing:

First and foremost was the triumph of European cartography and mapmaking in the scientific and intellectual history of the world. It was Europe who named most of the great continents of the world, all the great oceans, many of the great rivers, and lakes and most of the countries. Europe *positioned* the world so that we think of Europe being above Africa rather than below it in the cosmos. Europe *timed* the world so that the Greenwich meridian chimed the universal hour. And Europe named the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. What is more, it was Europe who usually decided where one continent on the Planet Earth ended and another began. For Africa, Europeans decided that our continent ended at the Red Sea rather than at the Persian Gulf.⁵

But Africa is certainly more than a geographical continent. **Léopold Sédar Senghor**, renowned poet and later president of Senegal for 20 years, was a major proponent of *négritude*, a literary movement that arose in the 1930’s and 1940’s. Senghor argued that the meaning of Africa went beyond the boundaries of the continent to wherever there were people of African descent, with racial origin being the key factor. He also proposed that



the European strength was analysis while the African strength was synthesis. I would say that the *négritude* movement, exemplified by Senghor, advocated something between an essentialist and a metaphorical approach to defining Africanness. A recent review by Lila Azam Zanganeh⁶ focused on the legacy of *négritude* in subsequent Francophone (French-language) African literature.

While teaching in a Detroit public high school in the 1980’s and 90’s, I observed a movement among some of the staff that was based on **Cheikh Anta Diop’s** *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*. So I read the book at that time. Like Senghor, Diop was from Senegal, but his views contrasted with Senghor’s. As an African student in Paris in the late 1940’s, Diop became involved in the crisis of the independence movements of Africa. In this struggle, he focused on “restoring the collective national African personality”. He wrote, “Our investigations have convinced us that the West has not been calm enough and objective enough to teach us our history correctly without crude falsification.”

Diop proposed a scientific historical and linguistic approach. The basic hypotheses that he set out to prove in his book were the following:

- “The ancient Egyptians were Negroes. The moral fruit of their civilization is to be counted among the assets of the Black world. Instead of presenting itself to history as an insolvent debtor, that Black world is the very initiator of the ‘western’ civilization flaunted over our eyes today.”
- “Anthropologically and culturally speaking the Semitic world was born during the proto-

continued on next page

Great Books of Africa *continued from page 15*

historic times from the mixture of white-skinned and black-skinned people in western Asia. This is why an understanding of the Mesopotamian Semitic world, Judaic or Arabic, required constant reference to the underlying Black reality.”

- “The triumph of the monogenetic thesis of humanity (Leaky)... compels one to admit that all races descended from the Black race....”

On the basis of these three hypotheses, his purpose was to “define the image of a modern Africa reconciled with its past and preparing for its future.”

Pan-Africanism, a movement that arose among English-speaking Africans, became the dominant mid-20th-Century answer to the question, “What is Africa?” Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta, the founding statesmen of Ghana and Kenya, respectively, were prominent leaders of the movement, and they built on earlier work by the Anglo-Jamaican Marcus Garvey and the African-American W. E. B. Dubois.

I would say that the definition of Pan-Africanism was stated succinctly by Nkrumah: “We must never forget that they [diaspora blacks] are part of us.” In Pan-Africanist philosophy, “Africa” includes all diaspora blacks worldwide. This definition was later expressed in reggae music by Peter Tosh in his song “African”:

Don't care where you come from
As long as you're a black man
You're an African.

In the 1940's, a key center for the Pan-Africanist movement was the industrial city of Manchester, England. Several restaurants and bookstores there became activist centers for workers and blacks. It was there that Kenyatta and Nkrumah first met, and where the Fifth Pan-African Congress was held in 1945, chaired by Dubois.

Kwame Anthony Appiah is a renowned philosopher currently at Princeton University. His ancestors were Asante nobility in Ghana. His *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (1992) struggles with the question, “What is Africa?” Appiah rejects Diop's and Dubois's position that race is the common factor defining Africa, as well as Senghor's literary *négritude* and Nkrumah's political Pan-Africanism.

Appiah's position on Africa is partly negation. Africans, he argues, have

- no common race
- no common traditions
- no common descent
- no common impulse or striving.

“The truth is that there are no races”, he writes. “There is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us... What exists ‘out there’ in the world— communities of meaning, shading variously into each other in the rich structure of the social world— is the province not of biology but of the human sciences” (p. 45). Yet his position also has a positive thrust. “Africa is various”, he emphasizes (page ix).

Each of us... belongs to a group with its own customs. To accept that Africa can be in these ways a usable identity is not to forget that all of us belong to multifarious communities with their local customs; it is not to dream of a single African state and to forget the complexly different trajectories of the continent's so many languages and cultures. ‘African solidarity’ can surely be a vital and enabling rallying cry; but in this world of genders, ethnicities, and class, of families, religions, and nations, it is well to remember that there are times when Africa is not the banner we need. (p. 180)

Appiah will be pursuing this twin theme of African diversity and unity in a new book *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, to be published later this January by W. W. Norton.

I will close by mentioning some of the other books I have included in my readings:

- *Nervous Conditions*, by Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwe), a novel set in colonial Rhodesia in the 1960's.
- *Abyssinian Chronicles* by Moses Isegawa, a novel set in Uganda from the 1960's to the 1980's
- *The Last Flight of the Flamingo*, by Mia Couto, a novel of post-colonial Mozambique
- *Secrets* by Nuruddin Farah, a novel of the Somalian civil war of the 1990's
- *The Famished Road*, a mythic novel by Ben Okri (Nigeria)
- *Walking through Fire*, the autobiography of Nawal El Saadawi (Egyptian physician, novelist, and feminist dissident).

Endnotes

1. A brief history of the selection process and a complete list of the books are available at <http://africanhistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa100BestBooks.htm>.
2. See his “Ousmane Sembène” web pages at http://athena.english.vt.edu/~carlisle/Postcolonial/ousmane_sembene.htm
3. More information about the play is available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/dramaon3/pip/w75fk/>.
4. Mathangani, Patrick, “They raped my Njeeri, says Ngugi”, *East African Standard*, August 16, 2004, available at <http://www.eastandard.net/archives/august/mon16082004/default.htm>
5. Ali A. Mazrui, ed., *General History of Africa: Volume VIII, Africa since 1935* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 1999), p. 16.
6. “Out of Africa”, *New York Times Book Review* [Section 7], Sunday, June 12, 2005, p. 39.

