

UCLA

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies

Title

Front Matter

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/22h0m6kt>

Journal

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 12(2)

ISSN

0041-5715

Author

n/a, n/a

Publication Date

1983

DOI

10.5070/F7122017161

Copyright Information

Copyright 1983 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

U F A H A M U

AFRICAN ACTIVIST ASSOCIATION
AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

Editor-in-Chief: Kyalo Mativo

Editorial Board: Kofi Afriyie, C. Orlando X. Bonner, Marc Arthur Chery, Pierre Hermann L. Désire, Fassil Demissie, Steve Harmon, Jacqueline Magro, Remi Omodele, Olusegun Oyekunle.

Production Editor: Anita Pfouts

Editorial Advisory Board: J. Ndukaku Amankulor, I.N.C. Aniebo, Louis D. Armand, Kandioura Drame, Teshome H. Gabriel, Niko M. Ngwenyama, Edward C. Okus, Renee Poussiant, Kipkorir Aly Rana, Nancy Rutledge.

Technical Advisor: Alice McGaughey

CONTRIBUTIONS

UFAHAMU will accept contributions from anyone interested in Africa and related subject areas. Contributions may include scholarly articles, political-economic analyses, commentaries, film and book reviews and freelance prose and poetry.

Manuscripts may be of any length, but those of 15-25 pages are preferred. (All manuscripts must be clearly typed, double-spaced originals with footnotes gathered at the end. Contributors should endeavor to keep duplicate copies of all their manuscripts.) The Editorial Board reserves the right to abbreviate any manuscript in order to fit page requirements.

All correspondence--manuscripts, subscriptions, books for review, inquiries, etc.--should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief at the above address.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Individuals in

U.S. and Canada \$8.00/volume(3 issues); or \$3.50/issue.
Overseas*

Africa/Europe/Others \$10.00/volume; or \$4.00/issue.

Institutions (Everywhere) \$12.00/volume.

* *Overseas subscribers should include an additional \$7.50 per volume for airmail postage. Otherwise, copies will be sent by surface mail.*

ISSN 0041 5715.

Copyright 1982. Regents of the University of California.

U F A H A M U

Volume XII, Number 2, 1983

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Contributors | 3 |
| Editor's Quill | 5 |
| Open Letter to Pope John Paul II | 8 |

Articles

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----|
| On Truth In The Arts | Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez | 11 |
| Education For A National Culture | Ngugi wa Thiong'o | 20 |
| Toward The African Cinema | Gilbert Minot | 37 |
| Social Function Of Myth And Epic: Mongo Beti and Ngugi wa Thiong'o | Kandioura Dramé | 44 |
| Dennis Brutus: An Interview | William E. Thompson | 69 |
| Drama In The Political Struggle In South Africa | Elfigio Freeborn Muronda | 78 |
| Contemporary Forms Of Popular Theatre In Haiti | Vèvè A. Clark | 93 |
| Black Image In Cinema And Theatre In America | Grayling Williams | 102 |
| Criticism, Ideology And Society: The Instance of Nigerian Literature | Chidi Amuta | 116 |
| Drama As Popular Culture In Africa | Unionmwan Edebiri | 139 |

Forum

| | | |
|---|-----------------|-----|
| Class Struggle Heightens in Kenya | Horace Campbell | 151 |
|---|-----------------|-----|

Book Reviews

| | | |
|---|--------------|-----|
| Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary | Alfred Kagan | 163 |
| Third Cinema In The Third World | K. Mativo | 171 |

Poetry

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-----|
| In Uhuru Land | Mohamud Siad Togane | 35 |
| The Black Tin God | Mohamud Siad Togane | 68 |
| A Letter To Harlem | Mohamud Siad Togane | 101 |
| When I Considered | Mohamud Siad Togane | 150 |
| In Memory of Walter Rodney | Ali Jumale Ahmed | 162 |
| A Student's Prayer | Menelek A. Sessing | 162 |

Short Story

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----|
| The Warrior | Kyalo Mativo | 174 |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----|

| | | |
|---|---------------------|--|
| <u>Cover Graphics</u> Redesigned By | Diana Leoni (cover) | |
|---|---------------------|--|

Art Work

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|-----|
| Moon-Bride and Sun-Bridegroom | Dan Rakgoathe | 173 |
| Mother And Child | Ebenezer Nii Quarcoopme | 138 |

CONTRIBUTORS

Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez occupies an important place in the philosophy of Marxism today. He studied philosophy and literature at the Central University of Madrid, with special emphasis on literature. He has written mainly on aesthetics. He left Franco's Spain in 1939 to go on exile in Mexico. His main publications include: *Aesthetic Ideas of Marx*; *Aesthetics and Marxism*; and *Ethics, Science and Revolution*.

NGUGI WA THIONG'O is a Kenyan writer internationally known for his uncompromising denunciation of neocolonialism in Kenya. He suffered detention by the Kenyatta Government in 1978 and has since been dismissed from his teaching position as the Chair of the Department of Literature at the University of Nairobi. He has written several novels, plays and essays. His Kikuyu language play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* and his novel, *Petals of Blood*, both denouncing the present political situation in Kenya, were instrumental in bringing about his detention.

GILBERT MINOT studied film at the University of Southern California from which he graduated in 1966. He is presently the Head of the Film Unit of the Republic of Guinea (Conakry), West Africa.

MOHAMUD SIAD TOGANE is a Somalian currently working on a novel entitled: *Diary of a Donkey-Driver*. The poems published in this issue form a part of a presentation for a degree of Master of Arts at Concordia University, Montréal, Canada. Publication is by permission of the author to whom *Ufahamu* is grateful.

HORACE CAMPBELL is the Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

KANDIOURA DRAMÉ, former editor of *Ufahamu*, presently with the Department of French Language and Literature, University of Virginia.

WILLIAM E. THOMPSON has been teaching literature of protest, contemporary poetry, poetry writing and creative writing workshops at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California.

CHIDI AMUTA is a lecturer in African literature at the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

BLASE BONPANE was a Maryknoll Missionary in Central America. He has taught at the University of California and California State University as a specialist on Central America. He is presently a Senior Research Fellow with the Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

UNIONMWAN EDEBIRI, Department of Modern European Languages, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

VÈVÈ A. CLARK, Assistant Professor of African and Caribbean Literature in the Romance Languages Department, Tufts University. Dr. Clark collaborated in a three-volume biography of the filmmaker Maya Deren, author of *Divine Horsemen, the Living Gods of Haiti*.

ELFIGIO FREEBORN MURONDA is a Zimbabwean and a former UCLA graduate student in the Theatre Arts Department. He returned to Zimbabwe in April 1982.

GRAYLING WILLIAMS is a UCLA Law School student.

ALFRED KAGAN holds a degree in Library Science, M.L.S., and served as Assistant to the African Studies Area Specialist, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

ALI JUMALE AHMED, former lecturer at the Somali National University, is now a UCLA graduate student in the African Area Studies program.

MENELEK A. SESSING is a Somali graduate student at UCLA in the African Area Studies program.

GUILLELMO DE LA LUNA, UCLA graduate student in the Theatre Arts Department, is the director of Teatro Primavera, Inc., a Mexican-American cultural organisation.

MALICHA DELONE, a former UCLA student in the Theatre Arts Department, now works for Midnight Special, a progressive bookstore.

DIANA LEONI, designer and artist, makes regular contributions to *Ufahamu*. Her cover illustration is a drawing of an art work in liquid steel entitled: "Wounded Buffalo," by Lucas Sithole, produced in the UCLA African Studies Center magazine: *African Arts*, Volume XI, Number 2, 1978.

DAN RAKGOATHE is a well-known South African artist whose exhibitions have spread across the globe. He is currently a graduate student in the Art Department at UCLA.

EBENEZER NII QUARCOPOME is a graduate student in the UCLA Art Department.

EDITOR'S QUILL

On circumstantial evidence, this issue is guilty of a traditional theme: literature. We need not apologise for it were it not for the propensity of art to predominate over science. On the basis of time alone, art could be regarded as "older" than science, if paleolithic stone engravings and cave "paintings" are any evidence. In his infancy "man" was expressing his thoughts in art even before he could "think," which suggests that whatever it was that made him "artist" was not a consequence of thought, but something more directly related to physical survival. Looked at this way, art comes closer to human life than science; but the dichotomy is an artificial one and needs a philosophical investigation. We have assigned this ungrateful task to Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, the world-renown Mexican progressive thinker, to introduce the theme.

In his article, "On Truth in the Arts," Adolfo shows that science and art stand in relation to one another in respect to the difference in essence of the subject matter they express. Science delineates the universal, while art represents the particular in truth. The reason for this is that art does not fall within the category of propositions, except when exact elements of it are used to produce an effect of propositions, which can then be determined with the exactitude of science. The business of art is to represent reality at a new level, i.e., without imitating it; and the total sum of this representation amounts to a statement on social reality. Therefore, concludes Adolfo, true art is, in the final analysis, realist art, inasmuch as it prepares the groundwork for scientific propositions.

With that formal introduction, the debate is thrown to the floor. The first speaker is another well-known writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o from Kenya. In "Education for A National Culture," Ngugi agrees with Adolfo in relating culture to a people's present social needs. As far as Africa, and indeed the whole of the Third World is concerned, education should prepare people for a social life. Man is part of nature, like the rest of the animals, but he differentiates himself from these by the act of producing his material sustenance. This necessitates a creation of appropriate social values, through literature, under which social production can take place for the benefit of the society as a whole. Any education which leads to a falsification of a people's culture, denigrating their indigenous cultural particularities and elevating individualism in the highest traditions of social Darwinism, must be cast aside as harmful to the African cause. Education in Africa should aim at mental, physical, economic and technological fitness while maintaining a fighting stance in defence of the African dignity.

Gilbert Minot, in "Toward the African Cinema" explains how this is being done in film. Emphasizing Ngugi's point about edu-

education, Minot points out that through documentaries and feature films, the African cinema should produce "a positive image of Africa on the screen." It is only by elevating African customs and the social values corresponding to these, that an African personality in film can emerge to establish itself as the criterion by which to judge African films, and therefore, the African reality. This is what Ousmane Sembene, the foremost African filmmaker, has been doing. Drama can play a similar role, as Elfigio Muronda proves in "Drama in the Political Struggle in South Africa." As a special weapon, drama in South Africa has necessarily targeted its artistic bullets at that most hideous system known as Apartheid. And talking of Apartheid, the South African Boers have banned *Ufahamu*, Vol. XI, No. 3, a special issue on the inhumanity of that system. Our response is simple and direct: AMANDLA!

Tying together the substance of African art and literature, Kandjioura Dramé in "Social Function of Myth and Epic: Mongo Béti and Ngugi wa Thiong'o," draws a close parallel between myth and epic as integral elements in the African literature. What binds the two writers together is their depiction of the African people as being competent to construct their society as they see fit without unsolicited "guidance" from without.

But not everybody agrees with Adolfo's interpretation of art. Chidi Amuta, on "Criticism, Ideology and Society," is one such "dissident." For Chidi, Roland Barthes and Wole Soyinka seem to have the right ideas about the essence of the African art. "Marxism," according to Chidi constitutes "masks" in the African context, because Marx and Engels were "racists." As the saying goes, we are all entitled to our views, and the more honestly these are expressed, the better for Africa in the long run.

The tragedy of the African continent today is best expressed by Mohamud Siad Togane in his poem: "In Uhuru Land." Quoting Ngugi wa Thiong'o, he writes: "A black man is not safe at home; a black man is not safe abroad." This forces the black man to hide behind appearances of all shapes, from "Stable Kenya" to Canadian passports. These are the real masks reflecting the African social dislocation. But, Africa is a giant with the potential to solve her problems. She may be wounded now, as the cover design of this issue illustrates, but her strength is inexhaustible and, in time, she will stand up and walk.

Finally, the forum section of this issue carries two articles on the Kenyan political drama; one on "Class Struggle in Kenya," by Horace Campbell, analysing the events leading to the Kenyan malaise. The other, written in Swahili under the title, "Pambana," which means the same thing, addresses itself to the same subject from inside the country. "Pambana" is honoured by the Kenyan government as "seditious material," and "anonymous." But we wanted the Kenyan people to know what is going on in their own country,

and to remind the world that the Kenyan government is still holding prominent lecturers and parliamentarians in detention. These include Al-Amin Mazrui, who is sick with asthma, Willie Mutunga, David Mukaru Ng'ang'a, George Anyona, John Khaminwa, Edward Oyugi, Kamoji Wachira and others. *Ufahamu* readers could write to the president of Kenya, urging him to release his political prisoners. Letters and other forms of appeal should be addressed to:

His Excellency President Daniel arap Moi
State House
P. O. Box 30510
Nairobi, Kenya,
with "Your Excellency" for salutation.

And, while on the subject of letters to the powers that be, Blase Bonpane, a Catholic missionary, writes to the Pope telling His Holiness what He saw in Central America, during His recent visit to the area, but failed to perceive. The letter is an inspiring example of the new breed of Central American priests who have taken to the pulpits to preach the gospel according to social justice. We take our hats off for the courage it takes to tell His Holiness that His infallibility does not preclude His being wrong and misinformed.

K.M.

OPEN LETTER TO POPE JOHN PAUL II

from

Blase Bonpane

Your Holiness:

I wish to address you today in the same spirit that St. Anthony of Padua addressed his bishop saying, "I am speaking to you with the mitre on!"

You have just completed a trip to Central America. It was a bold and courageous venture and I am certain of your good intentions. It was obvious, however, that you are isolated and severely misinformed on the dynamics of the area. Poor advice has separated you from the people of God and the march of history. As a result, you have contributed heartily to the destabilization of Nicaragua and the further advance of United States intervention in Central America.

You visited a family in mourning. That family is called Nicaragua. Some twenty of the finest of Nicaragua's youth had just been murdered by an invasion force which was trained and paid for by the United States. You walked into the home of the deceased, you ignored the bodies in front of you and to the scandal of the faithful you publicly chastised a prominent hero of the Sandinista Revolution, Father Ernesto Cardenal. History will not forget your attack on one of Latin America's best known literary figures, on the Minister of Culture of Nicaragua, on a saintly priest, a poet and a model for the faithful.

Even were you so mistaken as to consider Father Cardenal as the prodigal son of the gospel, you might remember that Jesus spoke of a father who ran up to his son and embraced him. Contrary to the example taught by Jesus you publicly chastised this holy man and you publicly embarrassed him in front of the Nicaraguan people. You were wrong to do this, Your Holiness.

You did not chastise the murderer of Archbishop Romero; you honored him. You did not chastise the fanatic murderer who is head of state in Guatemala. You did not chastise any of the officials of the United States who plot, plan and carry out murder each day.

Holy Father, your conduct toward Father Ernesto Cardenal was a scandal and you owe him a public apology. He knelt at your feet to honor you and you dishonored him.

It was curious indeed to hear you oppose the concept of a popular Church. You seemed to interpret the matter as "alternative

church." Are you unaware of the practice of democracy and people's power down through the centuries? Would you have tried to silence the faithful of Milan as they demanded the selection of Ambrose as their Bishop? They demanded in the same way as the Nicaraguans, Popular Power. Ambrose had not been consecrated, he had not been ordained, he had not even been baptized when he was chosen by the people to be their Bishop. Would you have said to the people of Milan, "Silence!"

You did not shake your finger at Cardinal Mario Casariego of Guatemala. This Prince of the Church has been comfortable with the savage Guatemalan government for many years. This Cardinal reminds us of the prelate which Michaelangelo chose to paint in hell. See the Sistine Chapel. When the Guatemalan Army denounces a priest, Cardinal Casariego denounces that priest. When the Guatemalan Army kills a priest, the Cardinal is apt to question the apostolate of that priest. Again and again this scandalous prelate has said by his actions, "We have no king but Caesar!"

As the senior Churchman in Central America, it was probably Casariego who gave you your information on the saint of Central America, Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero. I would expect Casariego to tell you that the Archbishop was killed because he was a communist. I say this because at the time of our expulsion from Guatemala this same tragic Cardinal Casariego referred to us as, "communists and anti-Christ's."

Were you not so misinformed about the life and death of Archbishop Romero you could not have reacted to his death with such coldness and lack of attention.

Holy Father, should Jesus Christ walk the streets of El Salvador today, He would be crucified as a communist. Anyone who is truly incarnate with the poor of Central America is called a communist.

But you, Holy Father, came to Nicaragua to criticize the educational system of that government. Where was the Pope when the people of Nicaragua were illiterate? If their education would have depended on the Pope they would still be illiterate. Their illiteracy was very political but we did not hear complaints from the Vatican about the politics of their illiteracy. Why do you choose to complain about the politics of their literacy? Where was the outcry from the Vatican as the people of Nicaragua died of polio and parasites? But we hear complaints now...now that polio has been removed from Nicaragua by new people and a new government.

Sincerely, Your Holiness, I believe your vision has been clouded by the poison of the atheistic capitalism. The poor of the earth are simply not going to tolerate this institutionalized

violence any longer. The Nicaraguans believe that health care is a right in a developed economy, they believe that education is a right and they also believe in the freedom of religion and the separation of Church and State.

The new person of whom St. Paul spoke now lives in Nicaragua. Father Ernesto Cardenal is such a person. Had your mind not been so poisoned by misinformation about him you could have learned more about the new person.

This new person does not make distinction between male or female, Jew or Greek. This person does not worship the gods of money and power. This new person sees the whole human race as family, loves all children as one's own and identifies with the common good of all. This new person has the discipline to turn the other cheek when slapped in the face but knows that no one has permission to be passive before the rape and murder of one's family or the diabolical presence of United States napalm, white phosphorous and genocidal helicopters.

This new person, Your Holiness, makes history. History is not the prerogative of Popes and Kings. Those who are faithful to the past do not repeat the past. Those who are unfaithful to the past repeat the past with its ignorance and malice.

The new person, Your Holiness, can make a value judgement. The two sides in this conflict are not the same. One side represents the rich which Jesus said would have as much chance of getting into heaven as a camel passing through the eye of a needle. The other side represents the poor of which our Blessed Mother said: "The Lord has shown the strength of his arm; he has swept away the high and mighty. The Lord has set kings down from their thrones and lifted up the humble. The Lord has satisfied the hungry, and sent the rich away with empty hands."

Your Holiness, you met the future in Nicaragua and you failed to recognize it. You were as one of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, you failed to recognize Jesus in Father Ernesto Cardenal, you failed to recognize Jesus in the Nicaraguan people. On the contrary, you insulted them and their miraculous achievements. May you now recognize them in the breaking of the bread.

Respectfully,

Signed, Blase Bonpane