

UFAHAMU

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UFAHAMU
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Cover Art: Woman wearing a garland of red HIV-awareness ribbons to spread HIV-prevention message. Photographed by J. Shadid, USAID, Mali

***ufahamu-n.* [Swahili] understanding**

Ufahamu, UCLA's multidisciplinary Africanist student journal, seeks contributions that challenge broadly accepted conceptualizations of African studies. Since 1970, *Ufahamu* has maintained its original vision of creating a forum for protest against the increasingly Western-dominated and exclusionary African studies establishment. The journal continues to publish the work of those marginalized by the academic press — Africans, people of African descent, students and non-academics. Together with our readers and contributors, we reaffirm our commitment to create intellectual linkages and feature current critical views.

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Lawrence Kubanga studies full time, seeking a Masters of Arts degree in Development Studies at the University of Botswana. He is a teaching assistant in the Department of English at the same university. His research interests include poverty alleviation, rural livelihoods and development theory and practice.

Editor's Introduction

Covering Africa six years into the new millennium remains a particular challenge. Although it can seem that (bad) news about Africa dominates the headlines, the reality is that Africa remains the least covered region in world. Furthermore, according to one study, close to 75 percent of the coverage of Africa in the media is negative.¹ Recent high profile visits by celebrity-activists only demonstrate both the paucity of information on Africa and the specific viewpoint that the media prefer to perpetuate about the continent, i.e., a continent mired in poverty in need of salvation from would-be Western saviors.

Coverage of the recently concluded Football World Cup in Germany provides a counterpoint to these trends. African teams and players of African descent led the media charge against widespread European racism against dark-skinned players. Despite no African team making it past the quarterfinals, African fans brought a joy and dignity to the event. More importantly, the respect and camaraderie on display between the players from different continents was obvious. Though a sporting event, the World Cup has much to teach the West about engaging with Africa. Instead of patronizing the continent, economic and political relations between the West and Africa need to become mutually beneficial, embracing the idea that both sides have much to learn from each other. Our mission at Ufahamu is to provide a counterpoint to the negative perceptions of Africa that too often are perpetuated by the Western media.

¹ Schraeder, Peter and Brian Endless. 1988. "The Media and Africa: The Portrayal of Africa in the *New York Times* (1955-1995)," *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*. 26(2): 29-35.

In this issue of *Ufahamu*, we continue to publish diverse perspectives on life on the continent. We begin with a special contribution from an old friend and contributor to *Ufahamu*, Professor Ali Mazrui. After hearing about our previous special issue dedicated to Dunstan Wai, Dr. Mazrui offered us a special tribute to Dunstan that initially was delivered as a memorial lecture at the World Bank. We are grateful to Dr. Tijan Sallah of the World Bank (another former contributor) for giving us permission to publish this lecture in our pages. We call attention to the impressive special forthcoming collection of essays entitled "Africa's Governance and Development: Visions, Re-Visions and Reflections, Essay in Memory of Dunstan Wai" that Dr. Sallah is editing, which will feature a version of Dr. Mazrui's lecture as well.

In addition to this special tribute, we are proud to feature several works by students at UCLA. Joachim Jack Agamba writes about the embedded memory of the slave trade in northern Ghana, a region often thought of as removed from the tragedy of slavery. Joachim, who hails from Ghana, conducted original interviews with individuals from different ethnic communities and provides a compelling overview of their different perspectives on the slave trade. Hadja Tall contributes a biographical sketch of the controversial West African Muslim leader, Al-Hajj Umar Tall. Hadja is from the Tall lineage herself and provides an insider's view on her historic ancestor. Nathaniel Kendall-Taylor who is pursuing his Ph.D. here at UCLA has written a compelling piece arguing for a more holistic understanding of epilepsy in Africa based on his field research in rural Kenya. And Nahrain Al-Moussawi has written a review of the film *Silimandé (Tourbillon)* by the Burkinabé director, Pierre Yameogo. We have also included a work by Nicholas

Makana, who writes about Kenya's post-independence development policy, situating it within the dominant paradigms established by the Western intelligentsia. We close with a focus on HIV/AIDS in Africa, including a special review essay that examines recent trends in the literature on HIV in Africa by Patricia Costa and a short poem by Lawrence Kubanga that reflects on this subject.

Kim George
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REFLECTION

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