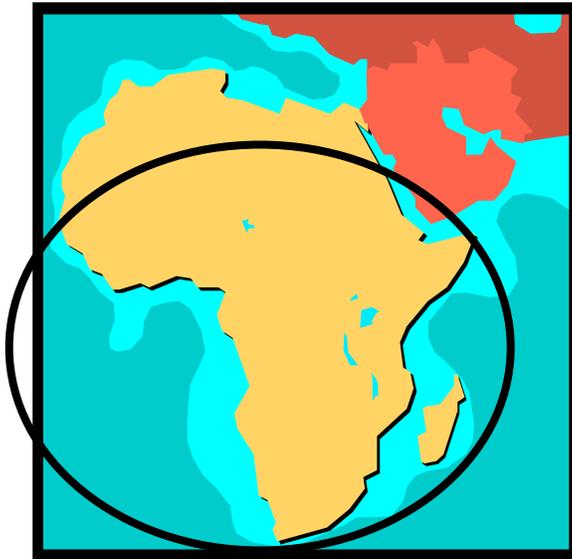


PEOPLES OF (SUB-SAHARAN) AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR



(Can you identify by name and location this cloth and what its significance is?)

Fall 2005



CLASS PERIOD -- M, W, F 10-10:50 AM, 100 Clough

PROFESSOR-- Susan Kus

OFFICE-- 105 Clough

OFFICE HOURS – M, W 9-10 AM, T 9:30-10:30 AM or by appointment

Riddles are often used by African storytellers to test the awareness of their audience and to stir up interest. Try your hand at this Yoruba riddle and this Malagasy one. (We will discuss them later on in the term.)

*We call the dead - they answer
We call the living - they do not answer*

#####

*What do you attend to first?
Your loincloth falling down,
Your in-laws at the door¹,
Or the milk that is boiling over²?*

¹ Upon marriage your in-laws necessitate much care and attention to maintain social relations.

² Milk is a rich and precious food. Raw milk needs to be boiled before it can be consumed.

The best way to acquire knowledge is to actively seek it rather than passively absorb it, for that reason you will be doing a number of short research exercises and reports as well as several longer papers. We will also be sharing the fruits of our labors in classroom presentations. You will also be required to view a number of films outside of regular class time.

This course can be roughly divided into three sections.

Section I -- in this section we will try to gain a general understanding of African geography, prehistory, history and culture. There will be little assigned outside reading for this section. Instead you will be asked to do a short exercise on geography and ecology, and two small reports, one on early African states and one on the history of African civilizations and African contact with the Near East and with Europe. You will also be asked to become familiar with an African culture of your choice and to prepare a paper and class presentation on this group.

Section II -- anthropologists are not only ethnographers, but they are also ethnologists, posing and attempting to answer theoretical questions. In this section we will explore some of the classical theoretical questions that have been posed (primarily by British and French anthropologists) in reference to African historical and ethnographic data. We will also be discussing the topic of European colonial activity in Africa. You will be given a take home essay exam covering the materials in this section. During this time you will also be initiating research on a final paper topic of your choice.

Section III -- in this section we will explore a number of additional topics, including literature and film, that seem particularly relevant to appreciating contemporary Africa and its populations.

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Class attendance and class participation are very important if you wish to take an active interest in your education and move along the path to enlightenment. Late papers and assignments will not be accepted, except in the case of very extenuating circumstances. In such a case, permission to turn in an assignment late must be obtained **in person** from the instructor **before** the assignment due date. Such late submissions carry an automatic grade penalty.

Failure to adequately complete any assignment or to take any exam will result in a failing grade for the course. Absences and/or failure to participate in class can lower your grade. In the case of 4 absences a grade of "D" will be assigned for class participation. 5 absences will receive a grade of "F" for class participation. In the case of 6 or more absences, a failing grade as a rule will be assigned for the course. You are asked to self-report on absences. Upon returning to class after an absence, you should sign the attendance notebook with the date of the absence(s) and the reason for the absence.

Incompletes are not normally given in this class. In the rare case where an incomplete may be in order, the student must obtain permission from the instructor **in person** and complete all paper work for the Registrar **before** the final day of the course.

GRADING

Class part., exercises, and Africa Watch.....	10%
Report 1.....	10%
Report 2.....	15%
Research Paper 1.....	20%
Exam	15%
Article Resume.....	5%
Final Research Paper.....	20%
Final Exam	5%

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bohannon, P. & P. Curtin	<u>Africa & Africans</u>
Ngũgĩ, Wa Thiong'o	<u>Decolonising the Mind</u>
Bâ, Mariama	<u>So Long a Letter</u>
Dettwyler, Katherine	<u>Dancing Skeletons</u>
Jackson, Michael	<u>Paths toward a Clearing (out of print) –will read select chapters</u>

RESERVE READING

Blair, Dorothy

“The birth of Negritude” in African Literature in French: A History of Creative Writing in French from West and Equatorial Africa, Cambridge: Cambridge U, 1976, pp. 22 - 23.

Fortes, Meyer

“Kinship and marriage among the Ashanti” in African Systems of Kinship and Marriage, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and D. Forde (eds.), London: Oxford University, 1962, pp. 252-284.

Fernandez, James

"Edification by Puzzlement" in Explorations in African Systems of Thought, Bloomington: Indiana University, 1980, pp. 44-59.

Gluckman, Max (1)

“Rituals of rebellion in South-east Africa” in Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa, London: Cohen & West, 1963, chapter 3.

Gluckman, Max (2)

“The logic in witchcraft” in Custom and Conflict in Africa, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1955, chapter 4.

Kus, Susan

“With an anthropologist’s eye and a mother’s regard: Some thoughts on body, language and metaphor. Paper presented to the Academie Malgache, Fianarantsoa, May 14, 1999.

Llewelyn-Davies, Melissa

“Women, warriors, and patriarchs, “ in Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History, McGee, R. J. & R. Warms (eds.), Mountain View, Ca.: Mayfield, 1996, pp. 414- 429.

Raharijaona, Victor and Susan Kus

“Where to begin a house foundation: Betsileo mpanandro and the (re) creation of tradition, in in L'extraordinaire et le quotidien: Variations anthropologiques, C. Allibert and N. Rajaonarimanana (eds.), Paris: Karthala, 2000, pp. 135-144.

Raharijaona, Victor, Clarisse Rasoamampionona and Susan Kus

“‘Aza Fady, Rakelimalaza’: The spirit and the letter of (some) Betsileo Customary Law.” Paper presented to the Academie Malgache, Fianarantsoa, May 14, 1999.

Senghor, Léopold Sédar

Selections (“‘Black Woman,” “To the American Negro Soldiers,” and “Congo”) from Selected Poems, New York: Atheneum, 1964.

Chapters from

Shell-Duncan, Bettina. and Ylva Hernlund (editors)

Female "circumcision" in Africa : culture, controversy, and change, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000

Terray, Emmanuel

“Historical materialism and segmentary lineage-based society” in Marxism and “Primitive” Societies, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972, pp. 93-186.

Vaillant, Janet

“Paris”, Chapter 3 in Black, French, and African: A Life of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1990, pp. 64 - 86.

COURSE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

(readings are to be completed on or before the assigned days)

B & C = Bohannan and Curtin, Africa and Africans

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LECTURE TOPIC</u>	<u>READING</u>
Aug 24	Introduction Choose report topics #1 (due Sept 9 th) Exercise 1 assigned	
Aug 26	Geography and prehistory Exercise 1 due Choose report topic #2 (due Sept 21 st)	(B & C chapters 1-3)
Aug 29	Geography and Prehistory (cont.) (begin reading <u>Dancing Skeletons</u> complete by Sept 28)	(B & C 10)
Aug 31	Geography and Prehistory (cont.)	
Sept 1	"Mastering a continent" (Iron and Agriculture)	(B & C 11)

Sept 5	LABOR DAY	
Sept 7	History	
Sept 9	Report 1 presentations & History Research paper 1 topic chosen by this date (due Oct 3 rd)	
Sept 12	History (Caravans of Gold/Kings and Cities)	(B & C 12-13)
Sept 14	History (cont.) Film -- Yeelen TBA	(B & C 14)
Sept 16	History (cont.)	
Sept 19	History - the Indian Ocean	
Sept 21	Report 2 presentations Film - Kieta TBA	
Sept 23	Language and Culture	(B & C 4-5)
Sept 26	Language and Culture (cont.)	(B & C 6)
Sept 28	Discussion of <u>Dancing Skeletons</u> Film - Silence of the Forest TBA	
Sept 30	Language and Culture (cont.)	
Oct 3	Research Paper 1 presentations	
Oct 5	Research Paper 1 presentations (cont.)	
Oct 7	Ethnographic traditions	Fortes
Oct 10	African political systems (British Traditions)	(B & C 7-8); Gluckman (1)
Oct 12	African political systems (Marxist traditions) Film - Masaai Women TBA	Terray
Oct 14	African political systems (Marxist traditions cont.) Research paper 2 topic chosen by this date	Llewelyn-Davis
Oct 17	FALL RECESS	
Oct 19	African systems of thought	(B & C 9); Gluckman (2), Fernandez
Oct 21	African systems of thought (cont.) ("Dancing with death"- film segment)	Jackson (chapters. 6 & 7)
Oct 24	African systems of thought (cont)	Jackson (chapter 8)
Oct 26	African systems of thought (cont.) Film - Finzan TBA	Raharijaona & Kus
Oct 28	African systems of thought - FGM (begin reading Ngũgĩ to be completed by Nov 7 th)	Individual chapters assigned from shell-Duncan & Hernlund
Oct 31	Colonialism	(B & C 17-18)
Nov 2	Colonialism (cont.) (begin reading Bâ to be completed by Nov. 14 th)	Vaillant, Blair, Senghor
Nov 4	Colonialism (cont.)	
Nov 7	Contemporary Africa	

	Discussion of Ngûgî, <u>Decolonising the Mind</u>	
Nov 9	Discussion of Ngûgî cont. (Take home exam handed out)	
Nov 11	NO CLASS - replaced by exam	
Nov 14	Discussion of Bâ, <u>So Long A Letter</u> Choose individual article due Friday	
Nov 16	Contemporary Africa Film - Zan Boko TBA	(B & C 19-20)
Nov 18	Contemporary Africa (article resume due for class discussion)	
Nov 21	Madagascar	Kus
Nov 23	THANKSGIVING	
Nov 25	THANKSGIVING	
Nov 28	Madagascar Film - Angano, Angano TBA	
Nov 30	Madagascar	Raharijaona et.al.
Dec 2	Final Research Paper	
Dec 5	Final Research Paper	
Dec 7	Final remarks	
FINAL EXAM - Due Monday, December 12th at 1 PM		



Africa Watch

We will take turns keeping abreast of the news on Africa that comes to us through the New York Times and The Commercial Appeal and from the BBC (British Broadcasting system) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm> and RFI (Radio France International) <http://www.rfi.fr/> on the web. We will probably be surprised at what does and does not reach the U.S in terms of news from sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar.

Each Friday during the last 10 minutes of class, two individuals from the class will be responsible for reporting to us, independently, what news they have found from (1) the Commercial Appeal and the New York Times and from (2) the BBC and RFI on line during the week. We will keep the information and clippings in a notebook so as to observe trends over the semester.

Week beginning	BBC and RFI	Commercial Appeal and New York Times
	name	name
August 29 th		
September 5 th		
September 12 th		
September 19 th		
September 26 th		
Oct 3 rd		
Oct 10 th		
Fall Break	*****	*****
Oct 24 th		
Oct 31 st		
Exam week	*****	*****
Nov 14 th		
Thanksgiving week	*****	*****
Nov 28 th		

PEOPLES OF AFRICA

Exercises

One way to begin to know a geographical area is to be able to visualize it geographically. The following are a series of short exercises to help you and I become more familiar with the continent of Africa. They should be completed for the second class period. You might want to work in small groups on these exercises. **Please be considerate of other members in the class** and do not check out, misplace, etc. useful books and atlases. Here is a good site to find out some of the information on countries, capitals and physical features
http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/African_Geography.htm

MAP I -- Color in the map indicating the major climatic and vegetation zones of the African continent.

MAP II -- Locate the following features

Rivers - Nile	Volta	Ubangi
Blue Nile	White Volta	Vaal
White Nile	Black Volta	Limpopo
Niger	Betsiboka	Kasai
Congo	Mangoky	Kwango
Zambezi	Great Ruaha	Cuanza
Gambia	Benue	Sankuru
Senegal	Orange	Fish
Lualaba		

Lakes - Victoria	Nyasa
Malawi	Tana
Rudolf	Chad
Tangayika	Mweru
Alaotra	

Mountains and other features -

Mt. Kenya	Zanzibar	Mecca
Mt. Kilimanjaro	Timbuktu	Canary Island
Mt. Cameroon	Comoro Islands	Kalahari
Karthala	Mafia	Cape Verde
Lamu	Great Rift Valley	Cape of Good Hope
Pemba	Madagascar	

Map III -- Find the most recent map that you can of Africa. Name and locate the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. On a separate sheet of paper list the capitals of these countries.

For each of the following geographical divisions obtain figures on land mass and population -
 - the continent of Africa, Madagascar, Nigeria, Mali, France, Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, Belgium,
 and Germany.

COUNTRY	SIZE	POPULATION
AFRICA		
MADAGASCAR		
NIGERIA		
MALI		
FRANCE		
GREAT BRITAIN		
SPAIN		
PORTUGAL		
BELGIUM		
GERMANY		

** While doing the research for this assignment, if you discover any interesting facts, are struck by any features on the map, or have any questions that come to mind, please note them down and bring them to class

COMMENTS

PEOPLES OF AFRICA

Report 1

All cultures are highly complex systems, but if we take the Western-centric notions of socio-political complexity (state organization and “civilization”) into account, then Africa, it can be said, has repeatedly witnessed complex socio-political development throughout its history. There is, of course, the well-known example of Pharaonic Egypt, one of the earliest examples of state formation in the world. There are at least 5 areas in sub-Saharan Africa that witnessed complex state organization: (1) Eastern Sudan, (2) Western Sudan, (3) Interlacustrine area of East Africa, (4) Bantu States of East Africa, and (5) Madagascar.

Choose a state from one of the areas listed below and answer the following questions. Where was this state, empire, or kingdom located? During what time period was it in existence? Give a brief description of what researchers know about its organization and history and material culture. What have been suggested as reasons for its origin and florescence? What have been suggested as reasons for its downfall? What can this particularly state contribute to our understanding of state origins in terms of the questions we ask and the explanations we seek?

Your report should be 4-5 typed pages and should include a map and a bibliography. You should be prepared to give a 5-7 minute presentation to the class on **Sept 9th**.

The following lists are NOT comprehensive.

(1) East Central Sudan -- **Kanem-Bouru**
Hausa

(2) Western Sudan -- **Ghana** Ife Yoruba
Mali Oyo (later origins --
Songhai **Benin** **Ashanti**
Wolof Mole-Dagbane Dahomey)
Mossi Nok

(3) Interlacustrine Area -- **Buganda** **Burundi**
Kitara-Bunyoro Karaswe/Karangwe
Rwanda/Ruanda

(4) Bantu State of East Africa --
Luba Rozwi
Lunda Ovimbundu
Lozi **Kongo (Congo)**
Malawi Loango
Tyo **Monomotapa (Mwanamutapa)**
Zulu

(5) Madagascar -- Sakalava (Menabe)
Imerina (Merina)

PEOPLES OF AFRICA

Report 2

Choose one of the following topics on African history and prepare a 6-7 page typewritten report and a 10 minute class presentation for **September 21st**.

* (1) As anthropologists we immediately recognize the fact that Africa did not come into existence when “discovered” by Europeans, and African history did not begin with Portuguese explorer accounts. Nevertheless, European contact did have major and oftentimes disastrous consequences for Africa and Africans. The most obvious and tragic effect of European contact with Africa that comes to mind is the slave trade. Rather than survey the entirety of the slave trade in Africa, focus on the story and statistics of Gore Island in Senegal.

* (2) One side of the horrendous slave trade focused on the Atlantic. Another side of the slave trade was found on Zanzibar and focused on the Indian Ocean. Investigate the story and statistics of this slave trade.

* (3) Even TRIVIAL PURSUITS uses Stanley’s famous quote, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”, and there is a Hollywood movie starring Spencer Tracey that recreates the history of this encounter. What is the story behind this quote and episode in history? In discussing this episode it might be interesting to focus on Stanley and Livingstone as representing two types of European/American relations or interests in Africa: sensationalist-explorer and missionary-zealot. Since most of the information on this historic episode is probably written by Europeans and Americans, it will be interesting to see what information, if any, can be found about the Africans who assisted and/or accompanied these two individuals.

(4) In the history of relations between Africa and Europe we usually consider Africans as colonized and the Europeans as the colonizer. Yet the situation was reversed earlier in history when black Africans played an important role in the Moorish (Arab-African) conquest, the political control, and the cultural life of Moorish Spain. Find out more about this period.

(5) What political, economic, and technological reasons explain Europe’s sudden interest in Africa in the 15th century, that is, how and why did Africa become another stage where internal European relations were played out at the expense of non-European populations?

* (6) “Liberia owes its origins to the movement aimed at the abolition of slavery and slave trade prevailing in America around the turn of the 19th century. In 1818, representatives of the American Colonization Society crossed the Atlantic in search of African land to which freed slaves could be repatriated,” (African Survey by Best and de Blij, p. 194.) It would be interesting to learn more of the history and early results of this “experiment”. What is the current situation in the country?

(7) Chancellor Otto von Bismarck of Germany organized a conference in Berlin to which were invited 14 European powers and U.S. representatives. The conference took place between November 15, 1884 and February 25, 1885. The purpose of the conference was to establish the ground rules for the future exploitation of the “dark continent”. The popular press referred to the conference as the “Scramble for Africa”. What was the reason for this conference, what “ground rules” were laid out, and what were the results concerning subsequent European intervention in sub-Saharan Africa?

* (8) Westerners have constantly tried to deny Africa the history of its accomplishments. the site of Great Zimbabwe is one example of such an attempt. This archaeological site is one of the most impressive

ruins anywhere in the world. Why do some individuals deny the indigenous African origins of this site, and why do some still claim that the “mystery” of the Great Zimbabwe is still unsolved? What is current archaeology have to say about this site?

* (9) Where is Timbuktu, and “what about it”?

* (10) To what does the term “Swahili” apply? Explain.

(11) The history of East Africa abounds in exotic place names such as Mogadishu, Sofala, Lamu, Kilwa, Pemba and Zanzibar. Such names conjure up images of flourishing centers of population, trade and learning. For centuries before Europe made contact with Africa, the East African Coast was linked to an incredible international system of material and intellectual exchange. What do we know about this network?

(12) Where are the Comoro Islands? What do we know of their history and culture?

* (13) According to the anthropologist, Gluckman: “In 1816 Shaka, chief of the Zulus, began a series of conquests that eventually disrupted a third of Africa.”

Thou that are great as the sky!
Thou that art great as the earth!
Thou that art great as the mountains!
Thou that art black!
Thou that art vast as the sea!
Thou who growest while others are distracted!

Gluckman offers this as a translation of a Zulu poem in praise of Shaka. Who was this Shaka and what did he do?

* (14) The Dutch Boer arrived in South Africa and “trekked” into the interior. Today, they continue to celebrate their heritage in the fashion of Western cowboys and homesteaders in the U.S. That is to say, it is a celebration of “man” conquering a vast untamed wilderness. And what of the American Indians? Today, in the U.S. we realize the problem with the myth of the “empty” western wilderness. Was South Africa “empty” when the Dutch and the British arrived? What became of the “bushmen”, the Khoisan?

* (15) Around 300 A.D. the king of what is now northern Ethiopia accepted Christianity and Ethiopia claimed to be the oldest surviving Christian state in the world. What do we know about the history of Christianity in this country and its contemporary form?

PEOPLES OF AFRICA

Research Paper 1

8-10 pages (suggested length) typewritten, 15 minute class presentation for **October 3rd**.

Choose an African cultural group you want to know more about (e.g., the Watusi, the Zulu, the !Kung). You must speak to me about your choice by **September 9th**. Your paper and presentation should cover the following two major themes.

(1) Give a mini-ethnography of this group. That is, give a short history of this group if it is known, its geographical and environmental context, its language, its subsistence base, its social and economic organization, etc.

(2) Discuss some aspect of this group's cultural organization that fascinates you or has fascinated anthropologists or discuss some theoretical question that anthropologists have asked (and possibly answered) with reference to the ethnographic data on this group.

(3) Investigate the contemporary situation of your group.

Article resume

For **November 18th** you should prepare a 2-3 page resume of a recent (within the last 3 years) article of your choice on African culture or history from a professional anthropological journal (e.g., American Anthropologist, Current Anthropology, American Ethnologist, Ethos.) You should be prepared to discuss this article in class in a seminar format.

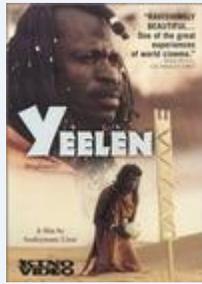
FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

8-10 pages (suggested length) typewritten, 10-15 minute class presentation for **December 2nd**. Choose a topic concerning African culture or history that you want to explore. The topic must be discussed with me by **October 14th**.

Some sample topics:

- ecotourism in Africa
- traditional medical practices in Africa
- female genital mutilation
- resistance, rebellion and survival -- a specific case study of resistance to European incursions or independence movement (e.g., Mau Mau)
- spirit possession
- the influence of African art or music on European and American art forms
- how a poet can become the president of a nation (Senegal)
- Tanzania's experiment in socialism
- women merchants and traders in West Africa
- some aspect of Islam in Africa
- contemporary African novelist and/or poet
- independent Christian churches in Africa
- Aids in Africa

FILMS TO BE SEEN DURING THE SEMESTER



This adaptation of an ancient oral legend from Mali, is one the most acclaimed and widely seen African films ever made. An Oedipal story mixed with magic, *Yeelen* is as visually stunning as anything from Hollywood.

Set in the powerful Mali Empire of the 13th century, *Yeelen* follows the journey of Nianankoro, a young warrior who must battle the powerful Komo cult. Nianankoro's greatest enemy is his own father, a dangerous and corrupt wizard who uses his dark magic to try and destroy his son. Traveling over the arid Bambara, Fulani and Dogan lands of ancient West Africa, Nianankoro eventually comes face to face with his father in a final fatal showdown. Cissé's extraordinary use of landscapes and light produces a

unique and striking cinematic style.

Critical Acclaim

"Ravishingly beautiful...One of the great experiences of world cinema" -- Shelia Benson, *The Los Angeles Times*

"Conceivably the greatest African film ever made...should make George Lucas green with envy...not to be missed" -- Jonathan Rosenbaum, *The Chicago Reader*

Keita: The Heritage of the Griot Film Notes

French title: *Keita! L'héritage du griot*
Burkina Faso, 1994, 94 min.; Dir. Dani Kouyate
In Jula and French, with English subtitles

Film Plot Summary:

"*Keita* introduces Americans, young and old, to one of the most important works of African oral literature, *The Sundjata Epic*. The film frames its dramatization of this legend within the story of a contemporary young African's initiation into the history of his family. When a *djeliba*, a master griot or bard, arrives mysteriously at the home of Mabo Keita to teach him 'the meaning of his name,' boy and griot are inevitably brought into conflict with his Westernized mother and schoolteacher, who have rejected African tradition. "The griot reveals to Mabo the story of his distant ancestor, Sundjata Keita, the 13th century founder of the great Malian trading empire. It describes the events leading up to Sundjata's birth as the son of the ugly, hunchbacked second wife of a Mande king. Sundjata is crippled at birth by his father's first wife, who fears a prophecy that he will displace her son as king. The film tells the story of how, from these unpromising beginnings, Sundjata first walks and gradually acquires the strength, wisdom and occult powers he will need to fulfill his destiny as one of the great leaders of African legend." (courtesy of California Newsreel, distributor)

LE SILENCE DE LA FORET

(The Forest)



VHS only, 93 minutes, Caberoon / Central African Republic / Gabon, 2003, In Diaka, French and Sango with English subtitles

This film, the first from the Central African Republic, takes us inside the world of the "pygmies" or more properly BaAka. A well-intentioned school reformer, disgusted by the corruption in his country, attempts to bring modern learning to what appear to him as the last remaining "noble savages." But these superbly adapted rain forest hunter gatherers want none of his knowledge.

FINZAN: A DANCE FOR THE HEROES

- Country : Mali
- Producer/Director: Cheick Oumar Sissoko
- 1990, 115 minutes
- In Bambara with English subtitles



Film notes

FINZAN is an impassioned cry for the emancipation of African women. It is one of the boldest examples of socially engaged filmmaking to come out of Africa in recent years. Malian director Cheick Oumar Sissoko has skillfully designed a film which raises the most urgent issues of rural life in a style accessible to every villager.

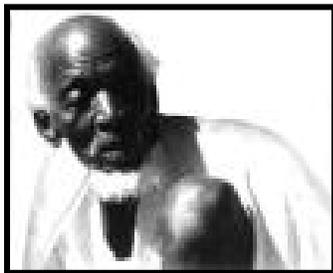
The film tells the story of two women's rebellion. Nanyuma, a young widow, refuses her brother-in-law, the village fool, when he asserts his traditional right to "inherit" her. Fili, a young girl sent from the city by her conservative father, is brutally "circumcised" by the village women who are scandalized that she resists the age-old custom. These two women's desire to control their own lives threatens the traditions of male supremacy in the village. Customs which had bound the community together now serve to drive out these women--one into exile, the other possibly to her death.

Sissoko satirizes his self-satisfied male characters by introducing broadly drawn stock characters from traditional Malian "street theatre." He weaves these into a painfully realistic story of a village tragically unable to free itself from the past.

"An important African film, with great power, honesty and compassion... An enriching discovery for any American audience." - Louis Malle

"Mature, moving, and magnificent... Brings the fight of women for their dignity and freedom to the level of Greek tragedy." - Bérénice Renaud

"Finally, a feature film from Africa which examines the changing roles which women are claiming for themselves. It succeeds in examining tradition and change - from the woman's point of view." - Abena Busia - Rutgers University



ZAN BOKO

Gaston Kaboré's film **Zan Boko** explores the conflict between tradition and modernity, a central theme in many contemporary African films, such as [Keita](#) and [Ta](#)

[Dona](#). It tells the poignant story of a village family swept up in the current tide of urbanization. In doing so, **Zan Boko** expertly reveals the transformation of an agrarian, subsistence society into an industrialized commodity economy. **Zan Boko** is also one of the first African films to explore the impact of the mass media in changing an oral society into one where information is packaged and sold. The film provides viewers with a unique opportunity to see our own televised civilization through the eyes of the traditional societies it is replacing.

CRITICAL COMMENT T

"Zan Boko says everything that needs to be said about an endangered way of life."

New York Times

"The critical camera becomes an instrument of resistance in the face of the technocrats... Zan Boko tells the story of modern Africa."

Cahier du Cinema

**ABOUT
THE
FILM**



Angano...Angano... pioneers a new approach to ethnographic filmmaking, at once scrupulously non-interpretive yet deeply evocative. The central character in **Angano...Angano...** is the oral tradition itself, passing down the wisdom of the ancestors - the "ear's inheritance" - through myths and folktales. Venerable storytellers recount for the camera and their listeners the founding myths of Malagasy culture. The filmmakers do not dramatize these tales; rather they document storytelling itself by placing it in its social and geographical context. The tales flow into and out of stunning shots of the daily Malagasy life which gave birth to them and which they in turn explain.

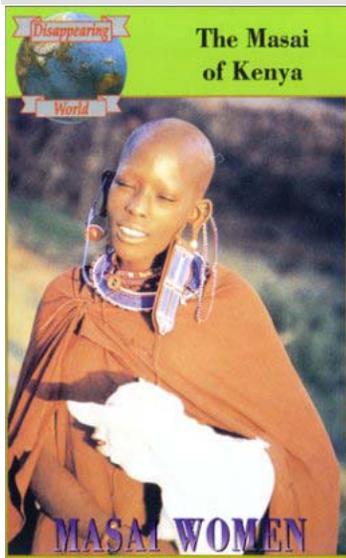
CRITICAL COMMENT

"'Tales...Tales...'" says the opening interviewee, and our ears perk up. This film offers plenty of good stories...Absorbing and highly recommended."

Video Librarian

"A splendid film...Images of fantasy and reality are evoked by the words of personable storytellers."

Harold Scheub, University of Wisconsin



The Masai are cattle herders in the Rift Valley of East Africa. Cattle are the focus of wealth for tribe. The Masai are patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal. The video follows the lives of women in this male dominated society. The roles of girls as companions of the warriors, a newly married woman moving to her husband's compound, and elder women at the coming of age ceremony for their sons are featured. Women do not own cattle, but control cattle for their sons who are not yet adults. Women's mythology supports the position of women. The anthropologist for the video is Melissa Llewellyn-Davies.

<http://www.usd.edu/anth/courses/a110/masaiwom.html>