

and its replacement by what Dr. Jordan calls the “neoliberal” paradigm, the banking system has been so thoroughly corrupted by the power of drug money and the necessity to compete for the business of the illegal drug traffickers, that the financial “overworld” has become a powerful, integrated component of the global drug business.

Fifth, that the major cultural and civic institutions of society are committed to combatting the drug trade. Here again, Dr. Jordan delves into the history of such figures as Aldous Huxley and H.G. Wells, to show that many of the

most powerful cultural institutions of the West have been captured by the advocates of drug abuse. The music industry has been transformed into a powerful propaganda agency for every form of sensual gratification, including illegal drugs.

Thus, today, through the financial and propaganda efforts of such figures and agencies as George Soros, the Drug Policy Foundation, and the Cato Institute, there is a full-scale mobilization to build public support for the legalization of drugs.

All of this, Dr. Jordan situates within

an all-out onslaught against the democratic-republican form of the nation-state.

The final paragraph of *Drug Politics* summarizes Dr. Jordan’s argument better than anything this reviewer could compose:

“In order to control, if not solve, the international drug trafficking problem, inadequate assumptions about the war on drugs need to be replaced with a diagnosis based on the globalization of the neoliberal paradigm. A proper diagnosis is a precondition for progress.”

—by Jeffrey Steinberg

Africa: Balancing the Stories

Home and Exile is the latest book by African novelist Chinua Achebe, a collection of three lectures he delivered at Harvard University in December 1998. As in others of his lectures, essays, and novels, Achebe’s purpose is to bring to the world’s cognizance the truth about the people of Africa—a truth not found in newspaper analyses, or the “ant colony” studies produced by the cultural and social anthropologists. Rather, he aims to bring into focus what it means to be a human being born and living in sub-Saharan Africa over the course of the last 50 to 70 years—specifically, in his own Nigeria.

This is no mean task. First of all, most Africans who write about Africa are not admitted into the realm of Western culture, for the most part because they are African. The most influential writers on Africa, it would seem, are Westerners, such as the highly political historian Basil Davidson. Or, one finds on the shelves of bookstores and libraries under the category of Africa, the “classic” books written by former colonialists or travelers, such as Elspeth Huxley, famed author of the *Flame Trees of Thika*. It is the latter writer whom Achebe examines in this lecture series.

Huxley had harshly dismissed one of the first novels to emerge from Africa in 1952, Amos Tutuola’s *The Palm-Wine*

Drinkard, and, with a flick of the wrist, dismissed all African art in the process, as likely to “never reach the heights,” as lacking any noble qualities, and as being “possessed by spirits and the spirits are malign.” This aesthetic assessment, Achebe points out, is coherent with Huxley’s view of the African person in general. “Here is a sample from *White Man’s Country*,” he says, “one of her non-fiction works: ‘perhaps it may be, as some doctors have suggested, that his brain is different: that it has a shorter growing period and possesses less well-formed, less cunningly arranged cells than most Europeans—in other words, that there is a fundamental disparity between the capabilities of his brain and ours.’”

Achebe notes that “these opinions were not invented by Huxley. She took them ready-made out of well-worn European folklore about Africa, to support her case that Kenya indeed belonged to the white man.” Huxley even went further, writing that “this country [Kenya] had belonged neither to the black man nor the white, but to the wild animals, and now they were being dispossessed.”

The importance of Huxley and other Western literary luminaries whom Achebe has exposed over the years is that, if they are the gatekeepers of Africa’s entry into the world community

of cultures, then the voice of the real African human being will remain buried—just as the very lives of so many millions of Africans throughout colonialism, up through today, have so remained.

Not A Simple Story

Exposing such overt racism as Huxley’s, however, is not Achebe’s mission, but only preliminary to it. He is not an anti-colonialist enraged. His tone is not one of anger, but that of a man simply stating an undeniable fact: This view of Africa and of Africans must be exposed and



Home and Exile
by Chinua Achebe
New York, Oxford University
Press, 2000
115 pages, hardcover, \$18.95

found to be unacceptable by all civilized human beings. Otherwise, Achebe's undoubted outrage at such racism is totally overshadowed by his love of humanity and of his own people.

Achebe's mission is justice—a justice that will enrich us all. If the literary racism Achebe has found in such authors as Huxley is but a literary corollary to the white colonialist occupation of Africa, then the true independence of Africa requires the emergence of the truth, the truth as seen by Africans from within Africa. In his third lecture, called "Today: The Balance of Stories," Achebe states his own mission: "My hope for the 21st [century] is that it will see the first fruits of the balance of stories among the world's people. The 20th century, for all its many faults, did witness a significant beginning, in Africa and elsewhere in the so-called Third World, of the process of 're-storying' peoples who had been knocked silent by the trauma of all kinds of dispossession. I know that such a tremendously potent and complex human reinvention of self—calling, as it must do, on every fac-

ulty of mind and soul and spirit; drawing as it must, from every resource of memory and imagination and from a familiarity with our own history, our arts and culture; but also from an unflinching consciousness of the flaws that blemished our inheritance—such an enterprise could not be expected to be easy. And it has not been."

That has been Achebe's life work, not simply carried out to redress a terrible wrong, but by using the art of literature to bring forth the universal truth of Africa. As a reader of Achebe's works will discover, the story is not simple but extremely complex. Don't look to Achebe to glorify all African culture and relegate to the trash bin the Western culture of "dead, white males." Don't look to Achebe to reject Christianity, while exposing the bitter divisions and conflicts the imperialist-framed evangelization of Africa wrought. Don't look to Achebe to defend Africa's neo-colonialist rulers who accepted the compromise of corruption as being simply victims of imperialist norms. Don't look to Achebe to reject the old culture and

ways, in favor of total absorption into a universal Western civilization, as some exiles have done. Don't look to Achebe for simple answers. But look to this noble writer if you seek to navigate through the swirling and treacherously shifting waters of Africa with a compass that is truly human.

Poetic Elegance

Achebe's passionate commitment to the universalization—if you will—of the African spirit and history, has made him one of the finest writers in the English language. His short stories and well-known novel *Things Fall Apart*, convey the truth with a concise precision and elegance of structure that make these works poetical. These are books that should not only be on the reading list for "Africa Studies" courses, but should be required reading for courses in modern English literature.

Achebe has been nominated five times for the Nobel Prize for Literature—it is about time he received a recognition long overdue.

—Linda de Hoyos

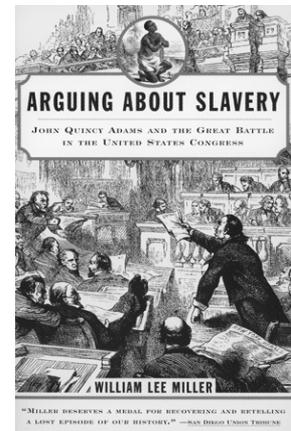
Standing Shoulder with 'Old Man Eloquent'

This book by Professor Miller is a rare and delightful volume of American history. Rare in that it is about an almost forgotten, yet incredibly important, period in this nation's development. Even rarer, and therefore delightful, is that it is a passionate and truthful attempt at conveying that importance.

First published in hardcover a few years ago and now available in paperback, *Arguing About Slavery* covers the period of the critical debates on slavery between 1835 and 1848; as Miller accurately puts it, debates that were "nation-defining." This is the period in which Southern slaveholders, and their Northern allies, used the so-called "gag rules" in the U.S. House of Representatives, to silence slavery's critics, sparking a battle for free speech and the right to petition which these tactics provoked. The

leader of this fight was John Quincy Adams, the only American President to ever return to the Congress after leaving the White House.

What makes this book so enjoyable to read is that, unlike so many academics, William Miller has captured the spirit of this period, and the absolutely unique role that it played in shaping the character of the anti-slavery fight, and thus the future of this nation. There is a wonderful tension and excitement, as we watch the battle unfold. There is also an awe-inspiring admiration for Adams, who almost singlehandedly, defined the issues in this fight from the highest, most principled standpoint. A great deal of this comes from Miller's liberal use of excerpts from the debates themselves. Through these, in his own words, we also develop a love for "Old Man Eloquent," as Adams came to be known, as



Arguing About Slavery:
John Quincy Adams and the
Great Battle in the
United States Congress
by William Lee Miller
New York, Vintage Books, 1998
577 pages, paperback, \$17.00