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## UNIVERSITY REPORT

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GWYNETH HENDERSON:

In this week's 'University Report' from Ghana an American talks about his work in Nigeria on traditional masks and masquerades and their socio/political symbolism - and controversy in Tanzania that is political in more ways than one.

It has frequently been said and I think with justification that Tanzania is politically the most interesting country in Africa because of President Nyerere's policies of African Socialism. Certainly I found - when I visited Dar es Salaam - great interest in, and enthusiasm for Tanzania's politics and policies - and perhaps it is inevitable then that at some stage the University's Department of Political Science was going to come under fire if only because it is teaching the subject most near and dear - at the moment - to a great many people. Well come under fire it has in a big way, in recent months!

To begin with the University branch of the Tanzanian African National Union - TANU Youth League put out a statement which included charges like this - that the department "has for long been the headquarters of reaction in Tanzania" - that political science as taught at the University "represents nothing but the ideological subversion of the minds of our youths, who are supposed to be the leading core of our revolution", and there was plenty more besides - and the Youth League was strongly supported by a TANU study group. Needless to say these statements caused some consternation in the Department of Political Science - and today Dr. Anthony Rweyamamu, head of the department answers some of the charges. First that his department is American orientated and dominated and thus unsuited to Tanzania and her aspirations as a socialist country.

DR. A. RWEYAMAMU:

It is true the United States dominates the social sciences today. This is fact. Sociology, economics, political science, public administration and all these main social science subjects mostly are advanced in terms of research theories and teaching materials in the United States. But saying that political science is mostly in terms of new ideas dominated by American

- DR. A. RWEYAMAMU: political influence does not necessarily suggest that the previous science we teach at the University of Dar es Salaam is a carbon copy of what they teach in the United States. Over the last two years, that I have been the head of the Department of Political Science we have made constant efforts to review our syllabus to provide localised materials so as to make political science relevant to Africa in general and to Tanzanian problems and aspirations in particular.
- GWYNETH HENDERSON: Dr. Rweyamamu. Another major charge laid was that nowhere in the political science syllabus for teachers was the Department teaching its education students about the Arusha Declaration - which is after all the basis of Tanzania's socialism - Dr. Rweyamamu had this to say about the charge in conversation with Mansoor Ladha.
- DR. A. RWEYAMAMU: The course that I think is being referred to starts with one paper which specifically focuses on strategy of national development. In fact, if you look at the last paragraph of this syllabus the first compulsory course for the first year is an assessment of policies and strategies of development I'm quoting such as Tanzania's socialism and self-reliance, that are being pursued by each of the three African states. Now I don't see what else one could mean by the sentences I just quoted in the context of Tanzania, if it is Arusha Declaration in all the major TANU policies which are followed.
- MANSOOR LADHA: But is the document, Arusha Declaration as such, is the whole document being discussed as part of the political science course.
- DR. A. RWEYAMAMU: Precisely, because the document is a teaching material.
- GWYNETH HENDERSON: It begins to seem as if the TANU Youth League and the University are talking about different things - the Youth League it seems are asking for political education for students in their national aspirations - and the University department is teaching - not surprisingly - the academic, internally comparative discipline of political science - that is, all different types of political theory and practice. Perhaps it is that both functions are necessary - but that political education is properly the function of TANU - as indeed TANU claims it is - but that political science as a discipline is an immensely important academic subject - and that no country can afford to cut out the comparative study of political theory and practice from its future civil servants, politicians, leaders and so on.
- In fact it seems that some of the controversy that has arisen is over a misunderstanding about the Dar course in Development Studies vis a vis political science. Three years ago the University instituted a

GWYNETH HENDERSON:

a compulsory course for all students intended to educate them in all the facets concerned with man in society - and of course it has a strong socialist/political content. Well with some one thousand five hundred students it's been difficult to organise development studies - and the Department of Political Science has been suggesting that it should therefore be organised on a faculty basis rather than on a whole university basis. The TANU Youth League saw this suggestion as a blow to development studies and said in their statement "this department (i.e. that of Political Science) found nothing better than to champion the recent brazen struggle against development studies and to question the right of teaching ideology at the University". Dr. Rweyamamu had this to say about development studies.

DR. A. RWEYAMAMU:

Development studies were started some three years ago, I was also there when it was started, it was supposed a communal course. Presumably intending to show students that this thing we call political science, economics, sociology are intellectual compartmentalisation of knowledge. But in the final analysis education is intended to expand the students knowledge so that he can be of service to society. Society is something complex. So development studies originally was intended to show students that all these disciplines are dealing with money and society. Then came the Arusha declaration and then it became necessary within this exercise to put in more ideological content, and it is here where the dispute starts because one of the problems is that making development studies a common course for some fifteen hundred students facing the problems of space of teachers. So my own impression is that the development studies has had problems not because teachers have been bad per se but it is difficult - we are dealing with such numbers. And some of us can teach more effectively in smaller groups. Now we do not negate against the nationality of development studies, but some of us are arguing that it may be better organising development studies on a faculty basis rather than on a university basis, and it is these type of discussions which some of us have raised which have caused confusion and because they misunderstood our intentions.

GWYNETH HENDERSON:

Dr. Anthony Rweyamamu - head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Dar es Salaam. And the discussion, no doubt, continues on the Hill. But now from the current socio-political scene to the traditional in Nigeria. To the rich traditions of masks and masquerades and their symbolism among the Afikpo people of the East Central State. The social importance of this tradition is, of course, immense in many parts of Africa and yet there are still so very few detailed studies available that the comparative work that I would like to see is not yet

GWYNETH HENDERSON: a reality! However at least soon Professor Simon Ottenburg's study of the Afikpo will be available! Professor Ottenburg belongs to the Department of Anthropology at the University of Washington in America, but last academic year he was visiting Professor at the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon - and as I said his study area that he's recently been writing up into book form is the Afikpo! According to Professor Ottenburg the Afikpo have some twelve basic styles of masks with about thirty-six different combinations and twelve different dances and plays that are used with them. Christine Oppong talked to Professor Ottenburg for us in Accra and she asked him first how this latest study fitted in with the rest of his work on the afikpo which was as a social anthropologist.

PROFESSOR OTTENBURG: Well I've published a book on the system of descent at Afikpo you have a rather complicated system of matrolineal descent and patrilineal descent and I have a book coming out this December on the political system, village leadership and of adjudication, how the cases are tried and so on, and this work that I have been doing this year should complement it. I work through the social organisation, I worked through the social structure, I am on a busmen's holiday, as one might say now. I am playing around, I was not trained in the field of art, I was trained as a social anthropologist to try to integrate ideas of art with ideas of society. I'm not really moving away from them but I am going to handle them in perhaps a little different way than they have been done in the past - hopefully,

CHRISTINE OPPONG: Could you tell us a little more about the masking tradition?

PROFESSOR OTTENBURG: Well the plays are very variable there. We have one which is a kind of calypso event in masks in which young men dress up very often as elders in black ugly masks, or as beautiful women in a white fine mask with a sort of womens' type of costume and they act out and they sing out events which have occurred in the village or in neighbouring villages in the last year or the last few years, they are satiric, they are critical, they criticise the elders for being selfish and not thinking of the needs of the village; they criticise females for not acting as women, because the Afikpo have very strong ideas as to the place women have in society. They criticise people who are greedy, people who eat too much at feasts, people who won't share their money with other people and they name them. They name the persons and if you're in the audience you're supposed to take this as a sort of joke and not really be angry. Now that is one kind of satiric play - another is a masked parade of maybe one hundred to one hundred and fifty young men who are masking and are walking from village

PROFESSOR OTTENBURG: to village and the ones in front are the oldest style costumes, the very traditional costumes and as you go towards the back the more modern, more recent kinds and at the rear you have people dressed up as school boys, as missionaries with appropriate masks, sometimes with a pit-helmet, sometimes carrying a briefcase or a walking-stick and in the front you have almost goblin-like characters with net-masks and there are a lot of net-masks at Afikpo, and raffia and kind of hopping around in a sort of ghostly fashion. And the parade is almost a history of the transition of Afikpo from an older tradition to a modern emphasis on scholarship, religion and things like that.

CHRISTINE OFFONG: So what kind of social functions would you say these dramas have in the village life?

PROFESSOR OTTENBURG: Well some of them serve the function really of critical release, a release of tensions, of criticisms. The young man could never criticise their elders in public in the way they can criticise them at one of these plays when they are masked, because when they put on a mask they are a spirit, they're no longer believed to be a person, although everybody knows who that person is. But the parade is kind of symbolic of the history of the Afikpo. It stands for a kind of sense of totality of time in the community. And also these events are very much community affairs. They plays plus the audience in any one village make up the total community and it has the sense of identity with the village which is lacking perhaps in its own theatre. We go to a play and the audience is all strangers and we don't know the actors and we leave at the end of it and we never talk to them and wenever see the other people in the audience.

CHRISTINE OFFONG: Have there been many similar studies published?

PROFESSOR OTTENBURG: There have been a couple of them. There's been some work by Robin Holton on the Ijaw people in Southern Nigeria and another fine study by Marcell Riebl on the Dogon, but we really lack many of these good detailed studies, particularly, I think, we lack some conception of how the African perceives the masks and his dances and plays. Much of the analysis has tended to be a sort of external and outside point of view, a European or American point of view, of African art.

CHRISTINE OFFONG: Have you got any fixed research and writing plans for the near future?

PROFESSOR OTTENBURG: Yes. I want to continue in the study of art and masking and I want to stress very much trying to get further into the African's own view of his own art. What kind of concepts he uses, what sense of taste, what he thinks is good, what he thinks is bad, ideas about beauty and form. Africans very often see art as more integrated. We tend to separate the music, dance, carving and analyse them separately, but Africans tend to see them as a sort of totality of movement and action and I want to try to get at the African point of view of it. There has been very very little written on that, and I'm hoping to work in a few years on Upper Volta, possibly in Bobo territory, but maybe somewhere else, I don't know yet.

GWYNETH HENDERSON: Professor Simon Ottenburg - last year's visiting Professor in the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, was talking to Christine Oppong just before he left Accra for his home University of Washington. And so to end of another 'University Report'.

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