
“The Africans” and academic libraries

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A new PBS series on a timely topic.

The Africans,” a nine-part television series that will air on most PBS stations beginning in October, will likely generate requests for information about Africa in many academic libraries. Those libraries with established Africana interests and collections policies serving institutions with Africa-related curricular and research programs are no doubt well prepared. For many libraries, however, the challenge to respond to increased interest may be great. This article elaborates on ALA’s efforts to inform libraries about the series and to make some practical suggestions to those libraries that may wish to pursue Africa-related library programs or strengthen Africana library resources. The following suggestions are not intended to be comprehensive or to focus on the development of in-depth research collections.¹

First, some comments about the series itself. It was produced by WETA/Washington, D.C., and the British Broadcasting Corporation, with major funding provided by The Annenberg/CPB Project. Additional funding came from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Public Broadcasting Service, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.² The series will focus on the “triple

heritage,” three major factors that have shaped contemporary Africa: Africa’s own traditional heritage, the impact of Islam, and the impact of the West. The host of the series is Ali A. Mazrui, internationally known professor of political science at the University of Michigan and research professor at the University of Jos in Nigeria. Born in Kenya, Mazrui, who holds a doctorate from Oxford University, taught for ten years at Makerere University in Uganda before coming to Michigan. He is a prolific, sometimes controversial, scholar and lively commentator whose analyses frequently stimulate considerable academic debate. Response to his 1979 BBC Reith Lectures published as *The African Condition* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980) is a good example of this.

Along with this series have come three publications including a 68-page *Viewer’s Guide: The Africans* (Washington, D.C.: Greater Washington Educational Telecommunications Association, 1985), which contains an introduction to the theme of each episode and suggested related readings both from the series texts and from other works. Also in the *Viewer’s Guide* are a number of appendices including maps, basic statistical and historical data, a biographical index, and a bibliography of about 175 titles relevant to the series. *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, by Ali A. Mazrui (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986), and *The Africans: A Reader*, edited by Ali A. Mazrui and Toby K. Levine (New York: Praeger, 1986), are the texts that accompany the series.

¹Africana refers to all materials relating to Africa, regardless of the place of publication. African imprints refer to those titles published in Africa. For a comprehensive survey of Africana, see Hans E. Panofsky, *A Bibliography of Africana* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975).

²“The Africans” is also part of a college-level course that includes the series, a reader, and a study guide. Credit will be offered by colleges and universities throughout the country. Interested

faculty and students may call (800) 532-7637 for information.



Cr: John Chiasson

A healer in a Doep ceremony in Senegal.

The ALA Public Information Office created a library information packet about the series that was sent to about 14,000 academic and public libraries in July. Included in the packet are a poster, promotion ideas, program suggestions, and a bibliography.

Among the program suggestions that academic libraries might follow up on is the organization of media programs. The five titles described by Irene Wood of *Booklist* in "Selected Films & Video" included in the packet—*The Discarded People*, *Generations of Resistance*, *Living Africa: A Village Experience*, *Moving On: The Hunger for Land in Zimbabwe*, and *Six Feet of the Country*—are all worthy of careful consideration. There are, however, many others to consider. Whether a library is interested in screening Africa-related films or building its collection of film and video resources, there are a number of helpful guides. David Wiley's *Africa on Film and Video, 1960-1981: A Compendium of Reviews* (East Lansing: African Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1982) is a comprehensive reference tool offering information about 700 films and videotapes from over 100 distributors. All of the entries summarize content and many provide excerpts from reviews. Nancy J. Schmidt's *Sub-Saharan African Films and Filmmakers: A Preliminary Bibliography* (Bloomington: African Studies Program, Indiana University, 1986) provides access to over 1,600 books and articles focusing on films and filmmakers coming from Africa south of the Sahara. Many libraries will find *Films and Video Resources About Africa Available*

from the University of Illinois Film Center (1985) especially helpful not only because of its film listings but also because it includes Louise Crane's important "Some Guidelines for Evaluating and Using Films and Other Visual Media about Africa" (pp.1-5). This publication is available at no cost from the University of Illinois Film Center, 1325 S. Oak St., Champaign, IL 61820. In addition to those large and well-known distributors who handle Africa-related films, there are less widely known distributors that offer important film and videotape lists such as the Southern Africa Media Center, 630 Natoma St., San Francisco, CA 94103, and Mypheduh Film Library, 48 Q St., N.E., Washington, DC 20002. When considering a film, it is important to remember that films set in Africa, however popular they may be (for example, the recent *Out of Africa* and *The Gods Must Be Crazy*) are not necessarily films from which one will learn about Africa. (Before screening *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, the review by Toby A. Volkman in *American Anthropologist* 87 (1985):482-84 is recommended reading.)

Another suggestion from the packet of interest to some libraries regards displays. Many displays will feature African art or textiles. Displays that do will be most successful when they also include references to publications that will help the viewer understand the cultural, intellectual, and technological context from which the works have come. A particularly important reference tool with useful annotations for this purpose is Janet Stanley's *African Art: A Bibliographic Guide* (New York: Afri-

cana Publishing, 1985). A beautifully illustrated 35-page pamphlet that would also be helpful is Susan M. Vogel's *Aesthetics of African Art* (New York: Center for African Art, 1986), available for \$6.95 (plus \$3.00 postage and handling) from the Center for African Art, 54 E. 68th St., New York, NY 10021.

Also included in the packet is an annotated bibliography of 75 titles organized in broad subject categories by Hazel Rochman of *Booklist* (this is the same bibliography that has appeared in the July/August *American Libraries*; a modified version for young adults appears in the September *Booklist*). This bibliography lists titles in print that along with the bibliography in the *Viewer's Guide* can serve as important first steps for assessing a library's Africana collection.

At institutions where the television series is being offered as a course, these two bibliographies may suffice short-term needs. However, a good Africana collection, no matter how small it may be or how limited the resources allocated to it, needs ongoing and careful attention. It is important that the collection be current, be inclusive of the arts, humanities and literature as well as the social sciences, be representative of scholarship and thought about Africa published in Africa as well as in North America and Western Europe, and not be overly "crisis" focused—many titles on drought, political instability, refugees, South Africa, for example—at the expense of other areas.

Retrospective bibliographies that in the past proved useful in assessing and building Africana collections in many libraries such as the American Universities Field Staff's *A Select Bibliography: Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America: Cumulative Supplement, 1961-1971* (New York: American Universities Field Staff, 1973) and Peter Duignan and Helen F. Conover's *Guide to Research and Reference Works on Sub-Saharan Africa* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1971), have not been revised. For a current overview of Africana covering the broadest possible spectrum and adding considerable depth to the Rochman and *Viewer's Guide* bibliographies, Jean E. Meeh Gosebrink's "Bibliography and Sources for African Studies" in *Africa*, 2nd edition, edited by Patrick O'Meara and Phyllis M. Martin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), is recommended. This bibliography provides broad interdisciplinary coverage for a large number of titles grouped into about 35 headings such as general reference sources, statistics and women, as well as the arts, economics, history, and political science. Each division contains references to serial bibliographies, bibliographies, journals, and monographs. Access to additional titles through in-depth subject and area bibliographies can be achieved by consulting Yvette Scheven's *Bibliographies for African Studies, 1980-1983* (Oxford: Hans Zell, 1984). Previous editions also by Yvette Scheven are *Bibliographies for African Studies, 1976-1979* (Waltham: African

Studies Association, 1980) and *Bibliographies for African Studies, 1970-1975* (Waltham: African Studies Association, 1977), selected by *Choice* as one of the best reference works of 1978. Indiana University Press frequently includes substantive bibliographies in its African Studies monographs. Some recent examples in addition to Gosebrink include the bibliographies compiled by Hans E. Panofsky in *African Independence: The First Twenty-Five Years*, edited by Gwendolen M. Carter and Patrick O'Meara (1985), by David L. Easterbrook in *International Politics in Southern Africa*, edited by Carter and O'Meara (1982), and by Gosebrink revised for the 2nd edition by Easterbrook in *Southern Africa: The Continuing Crisis*, edited by Carter and O'Meara (1982).

Although Gosebrink does list select journal titles in the bibliography in *Africa*, a more comprehensive serials-only source to consult is Janet Stanley's "Africa" in *Magazines for Libraries*, 5th edition (1986), edited by Bill Katz. Helpful annotations are provided for about 70 titles.

Africana pamphlet literature and newsletters are available from many sources. *ASA News* (the African Studies Association's news publication) can provide helpful direction in this area. Some sources include: Africa Fund, 198 Broadway, New York, NY 10038; American Committee on Africa, 198 Broadway, New York, NY 10038; International Defence and Aid Fund, P.O. Box 17, Cambridge, MA 02138; United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, United Nations Secretariat, Room 2775, New York, NY 10017; TransAfrica, 545 8th St., S.E., Washington, DC 20003; and the Washington Office on Africa, 110 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002.

Another source that brings together both a select list of monographs as well as inexpensive pamphlets, serials, audiovisual resources, curriculum guides, and organizations that publish pamphlets and newsletters is *Third World Resource Directory*, edited by Thomas P. Fenton and Mary J. Hefron (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984). The directory includes both area and subject divisions. The subject division, including such topics as human rights, transnational corporations, and women, also contains Africana references. For libraries wishing to focus special attention on publications relating to issues of social justice and economic policy, this work is recommended.

Reviews of current Africana will be found in many issues of *Choice*, but it is important to remember that *Choice* reviews are limited to publications available for sale or distribution in North America, thereby excluding large portions of Africana, particularly African imprints. *Choice* does review, however, some African imprints of multinational publishers such as Heinemann and Longman, and titles of the very important South African publisher, Ravan Press, which are distributed in the United States by Ohio University Press. *Choice* coverage of Africana sometimes extends



Otumfuo Poku Ware II, asanthehene (king) of the Ashantis in Ghana.

Cr: Anna Tully

into its review essays. Recent examples are Reed Coughlan's "Ethnicity and the State: Five Perspectives," *Choice* 23, no.3 (1985):409-18, and Deane W. Ferm's "Third World Liberation Theology: A Bibliographic Survey," *Choice* 22, no.9 (1985):1446-59.

TLS: The Times Literary Supplement frequently reviews Africana and is readily available in many academic libraries. *TLS* occasionally publishes Africana news items such as Christopher Hitchen's "Zimbabwe Notes," *TLS*, December 13, 1985, p.1426, which describes two publishers of literary and social science titles that would be of interest to many library collections: Mambo Press and Zimbabwe Publishing House.

Reviews are also found in many scholarly journals. Some, such as the *American Historical Review* and *World Literature Today*, group reviews of Africana into separate sections. Reviews in African studies journals such as *Africa Today*, *African Affairs*, *African Arts*, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *Journal of African History*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, *Research in African Literatures*, and *African Studies Review* (the journal of the African Studies Association) can also provide direction. *ASA News* includes lists of new publications in almost every issue, but no reviews.

A review journal that could be helpful to many libraries is *Third World Book Review* (published by Third World Communications, Kwame Nkrumah House, 173 Old St., London, EC1V 9NJ, England). *Third World Book Review* offers a third

world perspective in its Africana reviews focusing on titles primarily, but not exclusively, in political economy and related social science disciplines. A journal focusing entirely on African imprints is *The African Book Publishing Record* (published by Hans Zell, 14 St. Giles, Box 56, Oxford, OX1 3EL, England). In addition to reviews, this quarterly journal contains brief articles about publishing in Africa and a bibliography of recent African imprints arranged by subject, country of publication, and author.

Acquiring English-language African imprints is not always as difficult as one might expect. Some countries, such as Nigeria, offer a real challenge. But for others, such as Kenya or Zimbabwe, for example, some publishers' titles can be received without great difficulty. As mentioned earlier, multinational publishers' titles are frequently available through the publishers' North American offices. Also, Ravan Press is distributed by Ohio University Press, which offers a separate catalog of the Ravan Press titles it distributes. A not-for-profit distributor, Third World Publications Co-op, Ltd. (151 Stratford Road, Birmingham, B11 1RD, England), publishes a catalog featuring titles from about 10 Eastern and Southern African publishers which it stocks in Britain. B.H. Blackwell also stocks in Oxford titles from a number of Eastern and Southern African presses and will attempt to obtain titles from other publishers upon request. African Imprint Library Services (410 W. Falmouth Highway, Box 350, Falmouth, MA 02574)

offers approval plan and blanket order plan programs for African imprints.

Many libraries may want to consider expanding their sources for current events information on Africa. Gosebrink contains a current events section and the annotations in Stanley's contribution to *Magazines for Libraries* will be useful here as well. Of special interest in this category are the U.S. publications *Africa News* (biweekly) and *Africa Report* (bimonthly), the British publications *Africa: An International Business, Economic, and Political Monthly* and *West Africa* (weekly), and the Kenyan publication *Weekly Review*. *Africa Report* and *Africa: An International Business...* are both indexed in *Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin* while *Africa News* is indexed in *Alternative Press Index*.

The Archives-Libraries Committee of the African Studies Association is the focal point of activity for Africana librarians in the United States.³ Some of this Committee's efforts are of wide interest and have been published in the *ASA News*. For example, "The Lonely Africanist: A Guide to Selected U.S. Africana Libraries for Researchers," by Corinne Nyquist and Leon Spencer (*ASA News* 17, no.4 (1984):15p. insert) describes 18 Africana research collections focusing on practical information useful both to visiting scholars and those who would like to make use of such collections through interlibrary loan. This has also been published as a pamphlet and is available from the African Studies Association, 255 Kinsey Hall, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90024, for \$2.50, including postage and handling.

Other efforts associated with Archives-Libraries Committee activities include Nancy J. Schmidt and Ernest J. Valenzuela's "Checklists for Updating Holdings on Africa in Community College Libraries," *ASA News* 19, no.1 (1986):45-49, and a series of lists of recent reference works—Phyllis Bischof and Yvette Scheven, "Africana Reference Works 1980 and 1981," *ASA News* 15, no.3 (1982):41-46, Phyllis Bischof, "Africana Reference Works 1982," *ASA News* 16, no.3 (1983):19-24, Phyllis Bischof, Joseph J. Lauer, and Mette Shayne, "Africana Reference Works 1983," *ASA News* 18, no.2 (1985):36-42, and Phyllis Bischof, Joseph J. Lauer, and Mette Shayne, "Africana Reference Works, 1984-85," *ASA News* 19, no.2 (1986):18-28. Another organization of interest is the Cooperative Africana Microform Project (CAMP) administered by the Center for Research

Libraries. CAMP's extensive holdings are described in the *CAMP Catalog: 1985 Cumulative Edition* that was sent to all CRL member libraries earlier this year. All CRL members may borrow CAMP materials. Minutes of both the Archives-Libraries Committee and CAMP meetings are published regularly in *Africana Libraries Newsletter* along with considerable other Africana information. Beginning with no.45 (March 1986), free subscriptions are available by writing to The Editor, *Africana Libraries Newsletter*, E660 Main Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.

Librarians seeking advice and assistance with Africana in general or relating to the PBS series "The Africans" specifically are encouraged to contact one of the U.S. Department of Education-funded National Resource Centers for African Studies. Some of the Outreach Coordinators at these centers may be involved in planning activities for "The Africans." Africana specialists in the university libraries at these centers are also available to offer advice regarding Africana. These centers are:

African Studies Center, 270 Bay State Road, Boston University, Boston, MA 02215; (617) 353-7303.

African Studies Center, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024; (213) 825-3779.

African Studies Program, University of Florida, 470 Grinter, Gainesville, FL 32611; (904) 393-2183.

African Studies Program, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1208 W. California, 101 Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 333-6335.

African Studies Program, Indiana University, Woodburn Hall 221, Bloomington, IN 47405; (812) 335-6825.

African Studies Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824; (517) 353-1700.

African Studies Program, Northwestern University, 630 Dartmouth St., Evanston, IL 60201; (312) 491-2598.

African Studies Center, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305; (415) 497-4824.

African Studies Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706; (608) 262-2171.

Center for African Studies, P.O. Box 13A, Yale Station, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520; (203) 436-0253.

Editor's note: The author is 1986/87 chair of ACRL's Asian and African Section and has served terms as chair of the Cooperative Africana Microform Project and the African Studies Association's Archives-Libraries Committee. ■ ■



³The 1986/87 chair of the Archives-Libraries Committee is Gregory A. Finnegan, 104 Baker Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH 03755. For more information on the activities of this committee, see David L. Easterbrook, "International Library and Archival Cooperation: America," in *African Studies: Papers Presented at a Colloquium at the British Library*, edited by Ilse Sternberg and Patricia M. Larby (London: The British Library in association with SCOLMA, 1986), pp. 153-60.

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