

# Scholars Debate on African Literature

By Sam Okello

African scholars are causing an intellectual debate on the use of indigenous African languages in African art, according to a recent issue of Race and Class Magazine. However, some scholars believe that African literature should be written in a "homogeneous" language that is understandable and shared by almost everybody. Such a belief is brought forward by virtue of the fact that in the past, African writers have published their literature in languages such as French and English. These writers have gained good international reputation for their literary work. For instance Nigerian playwright, poet and novelist Wole Soyinka last week became the first African to win the Nobel prize for literature in its 85 year history.

But the alarm that arises among certain scholars is that literary work should be based on an African source. The

scholars maintain the idea that a non-African language cannot retain its "African mould content". As a result African writers in English are considered to belong to their own sub-cultural category rather than to the African literary tradition.

A Kenyan novelist, Ngugi wa Thiongo passionately expresses the idea of promoting ethnic languages through their use in literature as an act of consequent promotion of positive national image and pride.

Ngugi says "to neglect our languages, and blindly grab those of foreigners is tantamount to blasphemy ... People without their own languages are but mere slaves."

Another Kenyan writer, Gecau espouses the line of report on Kenya which he quotes: "tribal identity can have many positive aspects. It has been a major element in the HARAMBEE movement which has contributed so much to Kenya's development

effort. Furthermore tribal identity is reinforced daily by the use of tribal languages, folklore and folk music, continued geographic tribal clusters, eating habits and food preferences, burial ceremonies

and so on. These tribal aspects of social life are Kenya's positive cultural heritage and are rightly encouraged by the organization and display of tribal dances, folk music and art ..."

Gecau concludes that since language is the fundamental vehicle of any culture, cutting off cultural development from its linguistic roots will lead to a lack of vitality to an artificial product.

## THE ANNUAL SKI BASH

For the fourth year in a row, a bus load (maybe two busses this year) of party crazy, skiing and non skiing UPEI students will be taking Quebec City and Mount Ste. Anne by storm.

The UPEI SKI BASH, over the years has maintained a reputation, not only in Charlottetown, but also at Mt. Ste. Anne. Bartenders both at the hill and in the clubs of the city have recognized the UPEI partiers from previous years. It looks like UPEI is going to maintain its reputation again this year as the trip is already proving to be one of the biggest and best yet.

The group will be staying at the three star hotel Clarendon (stumbling distance from the popular Vendridi 13) in the heart of Old Quebec City. A shuttle bus will depart every morning (not too early!?) for the 30 minute ride to Mount Sainte-Anne — recognized as one of the best ski resorts in Eastern Canada. If you don't have your own equipment, don't worry. A group rate of \$35 (skis, boots, and poles) per person for the week has been arranged. And if you don't ski (don't worry, you won't be the only one) ski lessons will be available.

At the end of the day join

the crowd for liquid refreshments at the bottom of the hill bar. For the many people who have been on previous year's trips, the 1-3 hours daily party has proven to be the highlight of the trip. Anyone that says UPEI doesn't have school spirit has not seen the students support the school in acrobatic dance floor competitions. Groups from many other campuses, from all over eastern and central Canada, have actually been jealous of the spirit and party capacity exhibited by the group from Prince Edward Island.

Everyone's stamina is tested  
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