



W. E. B. DuBois

Racist Confrontations in Africa

Vandy student reflects on study abroad experience



By: Danielle Gantt
STAFF WRITER

I have been called a “nigger” in Africa. Not that I endorse the term “nigger” or its “nigga” derivative, but one might think that being called a nigger in Africa, of all places, might not be the worst thing in the world. I didn’t think that the word would be used to bring me down here; I didn’t think it would sting as much. But, it was and it did. It even hurt worse, because I *was* in Africa. As I walked away from a possible confrontation, I wondered how in the world I ended up in Africa labeled a nigger.

Trying to decide where to study abroad was no difficult decision for me. Before the representative at the study abroad office could finish asking me, I confidently interrupted “South Africa!” I had wanted to go to Africa ever since taking African-American Studies in high school and reading Chinua Achebe’s “Things Fall Apart” and as an African-American and Diaspora Studies major, South Africa, a country fresh out of the Apartheid era, called out to me. What better place to study racial relations than in South Africa? What better school to attend than Stellenbosch University, the birthplace of the notion of Apartheid?

My instincts proved right. As I headed towards Stellenbosch, I caught glimpses of the “real” South Africa: a dark, depressed township sat right across the highway from the airport. It was shocking. I’m sure people could look out of their shacks and see the construction being done on the airport, while they were resigned to living in houses made of scrap metal. This township went on for miles, right on up the highway all the way to Stellenbosch, about a twenty minute drive. It’s this dichotomy between beauty and ugliness that is heartbreaking to me. Kayamandi, the township in Stellenbosch where I volunteered at a pre-primary school, smells of cigarettes, burning rubble, dirt, feces and eye-stinging urine, but it is right in view of the most beautiful wine vineyards and mountains topped with snow. It’s a cruel joke.

In South Africa, all of the managers are White. All of the service attendants are Colored



“The worst incident occurred when my friend and I stopped in McDonald’s one night after leaving a club. We were standing in line, looking at the menu, when I was suddenly passed on my right by a young White male moving swiftly and with obvious conviction. He then put his hand deliberately up my friend’s dress and kept moving as if his gross violation was welcome and acceptable. My friend thought it was me joking around, but she turned and looked at the horror on my face and knew that it was no joke.... They had a security guard throw him out but that didn’t seem like enough though. I was in Africa and I just witnessed my friend assailed sexually” (Danielle Gantt, A&S senior, reflects on her study abroad experience).

(a mix of White, Black, and Asian ancestry and a social class above Blacks during Apartheid), and all of the dish washers, cooks, gargagemen are Black. I have seen a few disheveled White men, but all of the homeless people I see sleeping outside or begging for money are Black. Everyone that lives in Kayamandi is Black except for a few Whites living there for “religious reasons.” The clubs are unofficially segregated too. There are two Colored clubs and the rest are White clubs. There is even a club that is notoriously racist, and although when we walked by they were unabashedly blaring Flo Rida and T-Pain’s “Low,” we had already been warned by friends not to try to go in. Walking by this very establishment is where I was called a nigger. My friends and I still make it out to the Colored clubs and for weeks, after a night of fun, we’d go to McDonald’s, which is usually the only restaurant open so late at night. Being homebred Americans, late night McDonald’s isn’t just a meal-- it reminds us of home. However, now, I avoid McDonald’s at night at all costs. McDonald’s, the symbol of America abroad and my home away from home in Africa, has ironically been the place where I’ve learned the most brutal lessons about South Africa, as well as the rest of the world around me.

The worst incident occurred when my friend and I stopped in McDonald’s one night after leaving a club. We were standing in line, looking at the menu, when I was suddenly passed on my right by a young White male moving swiftly and with obvious conviction. He then put his hand deliberately up my friend’s dress and kept moving as if his gross violation was welcome and acceptable. My friend thought it was me joking around, but she turned and looked at the horror on my face and knew that it was no joke. We yelled out in protest and confronted him directly. Of course, he denied our allegations, but it was clear to the managers that he had done it. They had a security guard throw him out but that didn’t seem like enough though. I was in Africa and I just witnessed my friend assailed sexually.

None of the White people around us corroborated our story that night, although they had to have seen him do it. His friends didn’t apologize or even bother to come up with excuses for his outrageous behavior. They didn’t do a thing to help us; however, they did sing. They sang a song about McDonald’s in Afrikaans, the language that mostly White people speak here. They sang it at us. They sang about Big Macs and fries and made sexual and obscene gestures with their hands,

rubbing themselves all over. They performed for us, and my friend’s eyes weld up with tears. “Can we go?” she asked, but I told her that we couldn’t. If we would have left, they would have won. The all-Colored staff gave us some free cheeseburgers, as if to apologize for their countrymen.

As disturbing as this event was, it sadly was not the first free bag of cheeseburgers I had received from the McDonald’s staff for an incident. Overt racism here has shown me the depth of the problem worldwide. They have the same myopic criteria for physical beauty that plagues the Black community in America: straight, long hair, light eye color, and fair skin.. The sad thing is, the Black and Colored students I talk to here look toward America as a paradigm for racial relations, and they are disappointed when I tell them that we suffer from the same problems, just less obvious. Yet, despite all the wrong I have experienced, I have strangely still managed to fall in love with this country. I value these experiences. My encounters have made me think on a larger scale. I feel worldly, and I finally understand what connects me to Africa. It’s not ancestry or my skin tone. It’s because I am a part of some bigger movement against ignorance, intolerance, and injustice.

Speaking Out

By: Ashley Oliver
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Only a mere three blocks from the epicenter of the political universe, for the evening of October 7th anyway, many Vanderbilt students gathered at the Black Cultural Center to come together and watch the 2nd Presidential Debate between the Democratic candidate Senator Barack Obama from Illinois and the Republic candidate Senator John McCain from Arizona, hosted by Belmont University. The Belmont debate was in town hall fashion, wherein each candidate took questions from a live audience of undecided Nashvillians as well as from citizens via internet submission.

Most of the students who attended the viewing party were Obama supporters who were donning buttons, carrying signs, and generally enjoyed the infectious excitement of having the presidential candidates in the Nashville area. To be clear, the overwhelming support for Obama was in no way indicative of a monolithic turnout; everyone present seemed to have extremely different reason for backing the Senator. “Obama stands for early childhood education and teacher retention, which I can’t help but agree with,” said engineering senior Beville Nicholas. “Obama stands for a change in the economic situation our country is stuck in,” remarked freshman Jameson Sackey.

Though the TV crews eventually packed up their cameras and the presidential candidates finally made their departure, the political enthusiasm on Vanderbilt’s campus did not subside. Many students have and will continue to make their mark this election season through a myriad of means. Wes Anderson, A&S senior, engaged in voter registration through his fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated and A&S junior TaCara Harris, through Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated plans to act on her sorority’s national initiative to “Take Five” to the polls on Election Day. Freshman Nate Marshall acted as an election judge in Chicago during primary season and A&S junior Angelica Ibezim goes to Obama headquarters weekly and volunteers through phone banking and visibility. Vanderbilt students certainly realize how monumental this debate was and they will continue to take active roles to see to it that the candidate who is the best for the job emerges as the victor on November 4th.

See DEBATE pictures, pg2

Debate Cont. from pg 1



Top Picture: Michael Krouskop.
Bottom Pictures: Talented Tenth Staff

Upcoming Events at the BCC

October 23-December 3

Black Student Life at Vanderbilt Photography Exhibit
8:00am-5:00pm Daily, Black Cultural Center
Presented by Dr. Rosevelt Noble.

October 24, Friday

Reparations, Race and Politics: A Discussion and Dialogue
Dr. Jeff Menzise will serve as respondent and moderator.

October 28, Wednesday

"Don't Scare the White People"

11:30 am, Lost In The Ivy: Brown Bag Discussion Series, BCC Auditorium

This series examines Black student life at Vanderbilt University from a variety of perspectives.
Refreshments served.

O'Brien and Students Weigh in on Race in America and at Vanderbilt

By: Janelle Stokes
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Journalist and CNN Special Investigation contributor, Soledad O'Brien explored the question of what it meant to be Black in America in the context of a post Martin Luther King Jr. era that was to be compiled into a brief television segment.

After performing eighteen months of extensive research and interviews with Black men, women, and their families from various geographical, social, and economic backgrounds, the extensive documentary "Black in America" was created to chronicle their experiences.

The documentary couldn't have premiered at a more opportune period in history due to the constant discussion of race, politics, and the upcoming election.

"We had no idea that Barack Obama would have the prominence that he has, we had no idea that so many race issues would be capturing the nation's attention," said O'Brien in a July 2008 interview with Blackvoices.com.

The documentary sparked several conversations that transcended racial, geographic, cultural, and economic boundaries. However, O'Brien found that the experiences of Blacks in America are too broad to draw one conclusion.

"At the end of the day our goal was to start a dialogue, a lot of conversations about some of the things we raised in the documentary," said O'Brien. "The success we had in this documentary was that people across the board, Black people, white people, all people, were interested and really engaged in a well told [and] important story."

Junior Sandra Wadeer watched "Black in America" after hearing about it from her father

and classmates. Wadeer was intrigued by the discussion of Black women in the workforce who marry white men due to their increased presence in the workplace over Black men who are disproportionately at the end of the earning spectrum.

"It struck me in a weird way because I don't think a Black woman should have to settle for a white man because he's at the same status as she is," said Wadeer. "They shouldn't be so closed minded at the end of the day."

However, Wadeer thought that overall the documentary did not present any new information to her. "It didn't give me some type of hope for the future, it was just reiterating things that I already knew."

Sophomore Kyle Walker watched the documentary this summer with his parents and thinks that being Black and at student at Vanderbilt is a difficult principle to explain.

"Even though this school is predominantly white it almost feels like it's pretty even [numerically] because of the people that I hang out with," said Walker who socializes with a mostly Black crowd. "We naturally get in our own groups." Seeing a familiar face in the classroom means much more to Walker than just socializing because of the disproportionately small number of Blacks [especially Black males] in college to whites.

"It's good to be here as a Black male because Vanderbilt is a high ranking school so it's nice to see people of my ethnicity."

O'Brien will explore the experiences and solutions to the issues and racial disparities raised in "Black in America" in a second documentary.

Voter's Guide

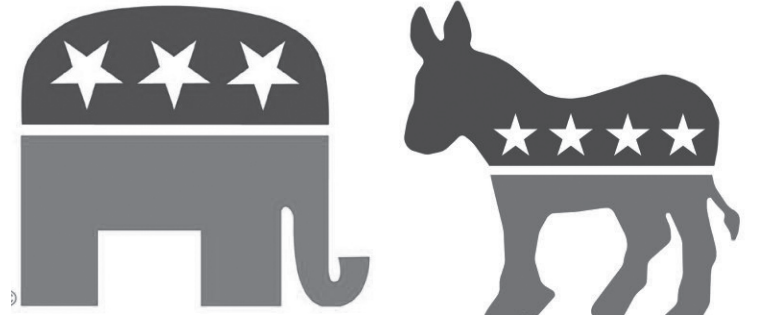
Tip #1: Know the issues and where you stand. Visit the websites:
www.barackobama.com
www.johnmccain.com

Tip #2: VOTE!!!
Let your opinion matter.
If you do NOT vote, do NOT complain.

Tip #3: NO campaign paraphernalia on Election Day!
By the court of law, you can be turned away from the polls if you are wearing campaign paraphernalia, candidate support buttons, t-shirts, stickers, etc. on Election Day.

Tip #4: Don't forget your voter's registration card.

Tip #5-10: Re-read Tip #2!!!



BLACK FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

Tony N. Brown, Ph.D.



Birth date:
September 9, 1969

Place of Origin:
Southeast Washington, D.C., only child of Linda Nicholas.

Educational Background:

- B.A. from the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore in 1991
- Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1998

Highlights of Career:
Dr. Brown worked as a Research Associate at Monitoring the Future (MTF) before completing a two year postdoctoral fellowship at the Program for Research on Black Americans (PRBA) both located in the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at The University of Michigan.

He joined the Vanderbilt University faculty in fall 2001 and is currently an Associate Professor of Sociology. His research interests include the mental health impact of race-related stressors, ethnic/race socialization, the conceptualization of mental health, and psychiatric epidemiology. His approach to these topics is informed by critical race theory and mainstream social psychological theories. In recent work, he examined the psychological costs of racism for blacks as well as the mental health benefits some whites receive because of racism. Dr. Brown is actively involved in extramurally funded projects that investigate whites' racial attitudes, racial identity, and how poor physician-patient communication contributes to continuing health disparities.

Other Interesting Facts:
Dr. Brown is the Faculty Head of Hank Ingram House in The Commons and is married to Chase Lesane-Brown, a Research Assistant Professor of Psychology and Human Development in Peabody College.

Ressurrected

From the Desk of the
Editor-in-Chief

William Edward Burghardt Dubois published an immensely influential article entitled "The Talented Tenth" amid his illustrious career as a scholar, writer, and activist. In this article, he wrote of an extraordinary collection of Black men and women who uplifted the Black race by being catalysts for progress and for change.

This article is especially pertinent for Vanderbilt University, a hub of forward thinking and higher learning dedicated to diversity and discovery, yet at times altogether ill-equipped for the racial conflicts and concerns that arise in its confines. The Black student's transition to this university serves as a prime example. Pride and elation cascade upon first reading the Vanderbilt acceptance letter, much as it does to students of any demographic, background, and creed. It affirms that all the hard work, extracurricular activities, and strong academics paid off.

However, for many Black students this jubilation is soon colored with a certain degree of apprehension after they sit through the first few minutes of their first class and realize their face is the only one of color. This is often followed by a developing deep-seated desire to actively disprove the ignorant preconceived notions. But this proves incredibly difficult to conquer when we find that we are fighting an uphill battle as mass media oft times effectively worsens perceptions of Blackness. There is more emphasis on Black entertainers than scholars. There is more emphasis on Black men getting jail sentences than the ones getting Ph.D.s. Not to mention modern day Jezebels, Sapphires and Sambos that incessantly find their place on our television, movie, and computer screens. The icing on the cake would have to be the scathing quips offered by those few audacious HBCU friends challenging our decision to go to a predominately White university rather than a historically Black college. For Black students at Vanderbilt issues like these are pervasive as well as persistent as the years progress.

During my college years, I have witnessed many charged local, national, and campus controversies (e.g. You Greek, Me Greek scandal, 2005; the infamous Jena 6 case, 2006-2007; the racist blogs displayed on Juicycampus.com, Spring 2008), all of which have brought race to the forefront. As Commodores, we are discomfited by such events and astonished that such ignorance still exists to allow these events to spring up and propagate. Yet, they are real, and will endure and fester until there are able-minded individuals, such as the Talented Tenth, willing to lead in provoking constructive thought and awareness.

This is the reasoning behind Talented Tenth's rebirth. Many have asked why resurrect The Talented Tenth. I always answer why not. Why not provide a scholarly venue to discuss the matters of race? Why not provide a venue to showcase the Black cultural events that sometimes go unnoticed? Why not provide a venue which focuses on cultural diversification and awareness? This publication is not an attempt to segregate Black writers from non-Black writers; it is an attempt to direct attention to the issues of the African Diaspora. This is not to diminish the current student media groups; they were founded upon different principles and have their own goals that they set to accomplish. The Talented Tenth should be looked upon as an addition to the array of media groups on campus, and we welcome every race, ethnicity and creed to participate and support. Our hopes are to open up minds and provide cultural awareness through topics of news, opinion, entertainment and arts, as well as lifestyle and culture. The Talented Tenth welcomes you, the reader, as we seek the viewpoints and uncover the events that emerge in the African Diaspora.

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OPINION POLICY

We at Talented Tenth appreciate any thought provoking comments and opinions that you feel would be beneficial to our readers. Any letters sent needs to be well written, cohesive, and contain logical arguments to any claims made. Submissions that do not meet these requirements and are nameless will not be considered. Once submitted, all articles become property of the Talented Tenth and are subject to editing as the editor-in-chief deems necessary. Please submit to vandytalentedtenth@gmail.com

A Day Late: A Dollar \$hort

By: Kadoria Ivory
STAFF WRITER

I have noticed that late night perusal of Black Entertainment Television, or BET, imposes upon viewers a disproportionate amount of advertising commercials, compared to comparable entertainment channels. From a financial standpoint, it is abundantly clear that BET airs more commercials because advertisers help shoulder the costs of running its business. Likewise, businesses advertise their products on this channel because they believe they will have a high margin of success with the particular demographic to which this channel caters, African Americans.

Considering this reality, African Americans should use these economic dynamics to their advantage. Everyone may not all be able to utilize his or her political power, considering the age requirements on and red tape surrounding voting; however, everyone can use his or her purchasing power to tell American businesses — and thus American society — that

African Americans are tired of being considered second-class citizens. Considering that America revolves around the almighty dollar and the haves and have-nots, African Americans should use their salaries to show big business what they will and will not stand for.

However, instead of exercising the economic "vote", African Americans exhibit an uninformed and impulsive consumerist culture. A prime example of this is African-American support of the Cristal liquor empire. Recently, this company was cited as saying that they did not welcome the type of "attention" that the rap industry brought to their brand. Furthermore, despite initial boycotts of the brand, spearheaded by rapper Jay-Z, African-Americans continue to be among the top consumers of this and other alcoholic beverage brands that do not even patronize African-American communities (msnbc.msn.com). In dollars and "sense," this says that being able to drink or

consume a certain name brand is worth more than the dignity of the race.

African Americans would be better served by refraining from supporting businesses that are inhospitable to African-American interests and, instead, save and invest so that their money will grow. Other ethnic groups in America, particularly Asian Americans and Middle-Eastern Americans, save more money than all other ethnicities in the United States. They also own a larger portion of the entrepreneurial enterprises in this country when compared to the relative numbers of their population. Why can't African-Americans follow these patterns and share in this same success, bearing in mind that our population is much more numerous than that of both Middle-Eastern and Asian citizens combined? Let's not let the reason for continual economic and political oppression be lack of financial savvy.

Getting out of the Bubble and Revisting the Festival

By: Angelica Ibezim
COPY EDITOR

This year's African Street Festival proved to be an entertaining, educational, and inexpensive opportunity to escape "the Vandy Bubble" in order to interact with the Nashville community. For the twenty-sixth consecutive year, Nashville enjoyed the benefits of hosting the premier celebration of African culture in the Southeast. Always held the third weekend of September at Tennessee State University, the African American Cultural Alliance presents a weekend-long celebration of African history, music, art, and philanthropic causes. Both parking and attendance are open and free to the public in an effort to promote cultural awareness and unity.

The Festival kicked off on Friday, September 19 at 6pm with an international music block party featuring DJs spinning various genres of music from hip hop and old school soul to the sounds of Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Saturday, the 20th, and Sunday, the 21st, were all-day affairs. Starting at 12pm, guests visiting the AfricanExpo Pavilion enjoyed karaoke panels, poetry revivals, and seminars on diverse topics such as language and history. Throughout the day, music artists, dance theatre troupes and featured performers filled the stages. Perhaps the biggest draws of the weekend were the street vendors, featuring crafts and wares created and brought in by local Nashville natives or brought from the motherland. With over seventy vendors, there was a wide selection of beautiful jewelry, clothing, soaps, art, and music for shoppers to purchase.

Aside from the vast array of entertainment provided, the African American Cultural Alliance conducted two charity drives, which added a more purposeful aspect to the festival fun. Attendants were asked to support the Rosca House Orphanage in Johannesburg, South Africa by donating dictionaries and school supplies as well contribute to the Children of the Spirit of Truth School and Orphanage in Haiti by donating flip flop sandals to prevent the contraction of scabies.

To convince Vanderbilt students to make the trek to TSU next year, it may be compelling to know that Vanderbilt's own Black Cultural Center is one of the event's sponsors. Also, members of the Black Student Alliance (BSA) and African Student Union were in support of the event throughout its course. Members of the Political and Economic Empowerment Committee of the BSA emphasized the importance of political engagement by registering guests to vote for the upcoming presidential election.

Poetry Corner

"MY ABC'S"

By: Eric Brown
STAFF WRITER

If words were people would
they speak their mind
About how the sentence is truly
blind
Of how the paragraph is acting
towards the rest of the page
That it won't turn over, it's stubborn
in rage

So now a single letter won't let
the ink write a letter
So you can't communicate with
another feller
So now instructions can't be
typed for someone to take a
look
They say it's two sides to a story,
but you can't open the book,
take a look, at a situation
You can't even say "situation,"
without the proper dictation

So now words like "humble-
ness" and "meekness" won't
even exist
All I can say is nothing 'cause
words don't even exist

So instead of you, being ahead
of you
Let dumb words be dead to you
Cause they make dumb sentences
which don't need a hook
And before you know it, you've
wrote your ignorance into a
book

So don't abbreviate your attitude
before a person proves failure
Because what you don't know is
you represent your own Letter

Race and Health

By: Jakevia Green
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As African Americans, we constantly hear about health disparities affecting our race. Year after year, we are at the top of the lists for new incidences and deaths for sexually transmitted diseases and infections, cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. One can easily point to the disparate circumstances surrounding our race and socioeconomic classes as sole reasons for this, but are these things truly to blame? What are we doing collectively and even on an individual basis to contribute to these alarming statistics? For years, we have been going to health fairs, listening to doctors, viewing documentaries, and even witnessing the trials and tribulations of family members and friends who have battled with certain diseases, but when are we going to incorporate into our lives what we've been exposed to repeatedly?

According to statistics gathered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) less than ten years ago, African Americans accounted for 13% of the U.S. population for more than 50 percent of all new incidences of HIV infections reported annually; the age-adjusted death rate for all cancers was 25.4% higher for blacks than for white Americans; the diabetes age-adjusted death rate for blacks was more than twice that for white Americans; and the age-adjusted death rate for heart disease and stroke respectively was 30.1% and 41.2% higher for black than for white Americans. Because the statistics for our incidences of illness have been on the rise year after year, one can only imagine how much these numbers have escalated this year and how far they will continue upward if something is not done.

Awareness in October

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Brain Injury Awareness Month
- Blindness Awareness Month
- Depression & Mental Health Month
- Family Health Month
- Family Sexuality Education Month

Fall Fashion Takes a Trip Around the World

By: Courtney Towner
STAFF WRITER

Don't let the cool autumn air put the freeze on your wardrobe. Keep your college style updated and fresh to keep looking great. Take an international exploration and combine elements of fall fashion staples with what's already in your closet.



Bonjour Paris.

Ladies, mixing textures and patterns work effectively to create a French look that does not take itself too seriously.



"From Russia with Love" or in this case, with a new wardrobe.

This fall, men will be decked out in duds reminiscent of their Russian counterparts.



Chunky knit sweaters, fur coats, and edgy black leather jackets help to achieve an essence of rugged refinement.

Black apparel and accessories instantly transform any outfit to become authentically Parisian. A cozy knit sweater dress with a beret works great for day trips to the café (or library).

Toughen up feminine silhouettes with edgy black biker boots and wide black belts. A fitted blazer is key for dressing up or dressing down.



Though you will be the epitome of sophistication interjections of tweeds, plaids, and quirky hats, leave room for this style to be manipulated into a fashionable look that is all yours.

These pictures are compliments from nymag.com (bottom) and style.com (top).

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SPECIAL THANKS TO THE BLACK CULTURAL CENTER FOR SPONSORING THIS ISSUE!!!