



9-13-2011

## Introduction of Kwame Anthony Appiah

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### **Recommended Citation**

Green, Jonathan, "Introduction of Kwame Anthony Appiah" (2011). *Remarks and Messages*. 2.

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**Introduction of Kwame Anthony Appiah**  
**Jonathan D. Green**  
**President's Convocation**  
**13 September 2011**

Dear Friends:

It is a sincere honor to introduce Dr. Kwame Anthony Appiah, the Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University as our speaker for this year's President's Convocation.

At our opening convocation two and a half weeks ago, I encouraged the first-years to become Emerson's paradigmatic scholar. We have no better model of what Emerson idealized than Prof. Appiah. As Emerson wrote, "He is to find consolation in exercising the highest functions of human nature. He is one, who raises himself from private considerations, and breathes and lives on public and illustrious thoughts. He is the world's eye. He is the world's heart."<sup>1</sup>

Our speaker whom *Foreign Policy* named to its list of 100 top global thinkers and *Forbes* placed on its list of the world's seven most powerful thinkers has been a leading voice in the ethical quandaries tied to the interconnected issues of culture, economics, and humanitarian aid. Likewise, with Henry Louis Gates, he has done much to lead public discourse on the concepts of race in a modern world, and he is a leading successor of Hegel as a cosmopolitanist. Appiah explains that we are obligated to each other beyond shared citizenship, and we must become informed of the beliefs and traditions of others in order to value them fairly.

Born into a binational family and living between two worlds, Ghanaian and Brit, and now living in the United States, Dr. Appiah knows of what the composer, Mahler spoke when he called himself three times a foreigner, and yet he is a citizen of the world. It is through these distinct experiential and disciplinary lenses that he will speak to us this evening on Cosmopolitanism and our summer reading, Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*, a poignant set of short stories of cultural identity, isolation, and detachment in post-colonial India and the Indo-American diaspora.

Interestingly, Prof. Appiah's maternal grandfather, Sir Stafford Cripps played a significant role in the negotiations for Indian independence. In life, as in *Interpreter of Maladies*, cosmopolitanism is not only intercultural, but also intergenerational.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Appiah.

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<sup>1</sup> Emerson, Ralph Waldo: *The American Scholar*. 1837.