BOOK REVIEWS

Great Ideas for Teaching About Africa. **Misty L. Bastian and Jane L. Parpart (eds.). Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999. 243pp. paper: $29.95.**

As the title promises, this book is full of great ideas for teaching about Africa. The nearly two dozen contributors (and, presumably, the target audience) constitute a fairly narrow group--those faculty teaching courses about Africa at North American universities--and yet they provide a broad range of approaches to teaching about Africa. As the editors acknowledge at the outset, the book focuses on practical, rather than philosophical, issues confronting teachers of African studies. As the editors also note, the book comes at a time when area studies are increasingly under attack, with more localized or more global programs preferred. What the book reveals, however, is that the current state of African studies teaching is alive and well, and that African studies methodologies--in particular--interdisciplinary and innovative--are at the academic forefront.

The book covers a wide range of disciplines, including anthropology, art, history, political science, religious studies, foreign languages, and geography. It devotes several chapters to using the arts--film, literature, music--as resources for teaching, and several more to broaching controversial subjects and current issues in the classroom--the African slave trade, ethnicity, HIV/AIDS, female circumcision, gender and development, making and keeping peace in Africa. Appropriately, the book devotes an entire section to the use of new technology in the classroom--describing an array of inventive ways of teaching Africa through technology. These include creating a web-based African art exhibit, assigning web quests to learn the map of Africa or disentangle the details of the crisis in the Great Lakes, linking technology and theory by using the internet for the very latest country specific information.

Great Ideas for Teaching About Africa raises a series of compelling issues for North American teachers of Africa. The book reinforces the need to introduce students to primary documents as historical sources and reminds of the importance of embedding into their historical and cultural contexts such controversial issues as female circumcision or even ethnicity. It recommends putting students at the center of their learning: for example, through the use of student-designed development projects that address gender inequity in an African country or role-playing exercises around HIV/AIDS or real life legal battles. The book emphasizes the imperative of exposing American students to African voices--those of musicians, filmmakers, artists, novelists, historians, religious leaders, intellectuals and more.

The speed with which information technology is developing dates some of the specific references in this 1999 book. Indeed, the outstanding websites for general information on Africa now number in the dozens and include the following:

http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v4/v4i2reviews.pdf

- African Human Rights Resource Center:
  http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/africa/index.html
- African Index: http://www.africaindex.africainfo.no/
- Africa News Now: http://www.africanewsnow.com/
- Africa Policy Information Center: http://www.africapolicy.org/index.shtml
- Africa South of the Sahara: http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/guide.html
- African Political Resources: http://www.agora.stm.it/politic/africa.htm
- Columbia University African Studies:
  http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/indiv/area/Africa/
- H(istory) - Africa: http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~africa/
- University of Pennsylvania African Studies:
  http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/AS.html.

This is to say nothing of the country specific or subject specific sites which number in the hundreds. In addition, there are now literally dozens of African daily and weekly newspapers online. Similarly, many international organizations, non-governmental organizations, African governments, political parties and social movements, regional organizations, and research institutions and universities have impressive and informative websites. These provide students (and researchers and scholars, of course) with immediate, invaluable resources once only available at well endowed libraries or in country. They give us all an access to Africa once available to far fewer people.

The many contributors to this volume repeatedly invoke the same challenge when teaching about Africa at their universities: "The teaching of Africa is simultaneously a struggle to overcome centuries of 'filling in the gaps' and a struggle to tear down distortions and misinformation in order to rebuild knowledge" (p. 204). *Great Ideas for Teaching About Africa* provides a wealth of ideas for tackling this and related challenges.

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Comprehending and Mastering African Conflicts: The Search for Sustainable Peace And Good Governance. **Adebayo Adedeji (Ed.). New York: Zed Books, 1999. 377pp. Paper: $20.00.**

Over the last four decades, Africa has experienced some of the most violent civil wars and other sorts of systemic violence. These conflicts have earned Africa the unique and unenviable image of a continent in retreat and perpetually at war with itself. Military insurgencies have caused regional destabilization and dramatically increased the number of failed states in Africa. In addition to jeopardizing development efforts, this raises doubts as to the nature and viability of post-colonial African state [1]. Several normative issues have emerged from the study of these internecine conflicts. First, they have raised anew the importance of state legitimacy [2]. Second,

they have brought forward disturbing questions about the concepts of territorial sovereignty and statehood, given the fact that the juridical statehood attained with decolonization has proven inadequate[3].

In *Comprehending and Mastering African Conflicts*, teams of African scholars (based in those countries principally affected by these conflicts) examine the multidimensional causes with the eyes of observer-analysts. This volume combines the proactive policy research efforts of the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies with the products of an international conference on African conflicts. It includes the critical assessments of country research teams in five of the conflict areas and a selection of papers, allowing for closer comparison of the many difficult situations on the continent.

Conflicts in Africa are more striking for their causal similarities than differences. While most conflicts in Africa share a number of underlying causes, the researchers identify political leadership at the root of all African conflicts. This does not exculpate some "externally initiated and funded development strategies such as structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) [that] have been a major contributing factor in the emergence of conflicts and/or in their exacerbation" (p. 12). In fact, economic conditions of most of these African countries account for the success of African elites and politicians, since in Africa "it is generally believed that political power means success and prosperity, not only for the man who holds it but for his family, his birthplace and even his whole region of origin" (p. 44).

This book is a proactive, policy-oriented search for the root causes of African conflicts. While highlighting some common obstacles to redressing African conflicts, it posits that "until the root causes of conflicts have been fully comprehended and addressed, they cannot be mastered and that the mastery of conflicts is imperative to achieve lasting peace and good governance in any country" (p. 7). Strategies for the way forward are discussed in Chapter Seventeen. Among other recommendations, the contributors propose a moratorium on the importation of arms, governmental decentralization, and democratization through constitutional arrangements. The various chapters also emphasize the importance of thorough and in-depth knowledge of these conflicts amongst the international community. As the editor points out, the "superficial understanding of both the uniqueness and complexity of African conflicts and of the tendency on the part of the donors to view Africa's problems through the lenses of western countries and societies accounts for their inappropriate policy prescriptions about peace" (p.17).

The book's qualitative research base makes it invaluable to international policy makers and students of policy development, as well as scholars in political science, history, anthropology and other disciplines concerned with solving Africa's seemingly intractable conflicts. I also highly recommend it to African public office holders and politicians who have turned Africa into a continent where forward and backward movements frequently equal zero.

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Notes

1. See Makau wa Mutua, "Putting Humpty Dumpty Back Together Again: The Dilemmas of the Post-Colonial African State" (1995) 21 *Brooklyn Journal of International Law* 505.
2. See generally, E.K. Quashigah & O.C. Okafor (eds.), *Legitimate Governance in Africa* (Netherlands: Kluwer, 1999).
3. See Makau wa Mutua, "Why Redraw the Map of Africa: A Moral and Legal Inquiry" (1995) 16 *Michigan Journal of International Law* 1113 at 1114.

Imposing Wilderness: Struggles Over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa. **Roderick P. Neumann. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1998. pp.271. cloth: $35.00.**

With his recent book *Imposing Wilderness,* Roderick Neumann joins a growing number of political ecology scholars in exploring the causes of dislocation of Africans and conflict between nature preservation and traditional land use patterns. His central argument is that we need to locate the origins of these conflicts in fundamentally contradictory notions of the "natural" African landscape and the appropriate role of humans in that landscape. Neumann argues that Europeans--the British and Germans in particular--conceptualized "nature" as being free from people and human-caused change. By removing people from the landscape, it becomes natural (and worthy of viewing by white tourists). Humans belong in the landscape only in so far as they are conceptualized as primitive-hunters and gatherers, not agriculturists or herders. These ideas led European conservationists to promote the dislocation of Africans--in Neumann's case, the Meru of Tanzania--for game preserves and later national parks. In making his post-structuralist argument, he uses historical documents and interviews with local residents. *Imposing Wilderness* is a brief and clearly written account of the rise of protected areas from the early colonial period through the post-independence period.

For the colonial period, at least, his argument is convincing. But if we apply Neumann's logic to post-independence Tanzania, we might expect a return to a more African conception of land use. In fact, only after independence does the Tanzanian state turn the Mt. Meru area into a national park. Clearly, first world influence did not disappear with independence and, arguably, pressures from the World Wildlife Fund and others played an important role. Neumann suggests, moreover, that the creation of national parks in the post-colonial period might have been promoted by linking notions of what it meant to be a modern nation-state and wilderness preservation. As he presents it, this argument feels a bit *ad hoc* and remains undeveloped.

This book follows many of the themes that Neumann developed in an outstanding series of articles that have contributed to the development of the political ecology school. Some of these articles have been the mainstay of graduate courses in political ecology for nearly a decade. In part because of these articles, however, this book covers relatively little new ground. The book's main interest lies in a set of theoretical ideas and empirical points rather than a coherent whole.

One particularly interesting assertion he makes is that, during the colonial era, arguments over game preserves and national parks were primarily disagreements between conservationists in the metropole-in London-and colonial administrators living in Tanzania. Conservationists saw the landscape as wild and primitive and worthy of preservation while colonial officials worried that moving more Africans off the landscape would only create unrest and destabilize British control over the territory. Absent from these discussions were Africans. Ultimately, conservationists won, suggesting that ideas at the metropole were more important than colonial administrative needs.

Neumann makes an interesting empirical observation as well when he notices that Meru property rights slowly eroded rather than being taken explicitly in one fell swoop. The state and local residents constantly negotiated and renegotiated property rights. Some of the local residents' rights disappeared at the hands of capital city decision makers as land protection was beefed up repeatedly several times during the twentieth century. But much of the negotiation went on at the local level, between park administrators and guards, often independently and in contradiction to legislation and high-level administrative rules. For example, the legislation that created Arusha National Park explicitly maintained a right-of-way for local residents through the park, yet in recent years local park officials have closed the path to residents.

Although this continual negotiation is clearly important for the maintenance of any Meru access rights, *de facto* or *de jure*, the logic of particular administrative developments and the erosion of local rights seem to have more to do with economic or administrative incentives of the state than with European notions of nature. Similarly, local claims to the national park lands and resources and protection from marauding animals that destroy crops seem to have clear economic foundations. Neumann frequently reaches for political economic or state building explanations, yet he leaves these explanations undeveloped both empirically and theoretically. Political economy is clearly central to his story, even perhaps undermining premises, but we don't really learn about the linkages between the political economy and conflicting notions of nature and land use. Still, Neumann covers vast territory and this book is a pleasant read, but one is left with a desire for more theoretical development and empirical detail.

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"We Women Worked So Hard": Gender, Urbanization and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956. **Teresa A. Barnes. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999. 256pp. paper $24.95; cloth $59.95.**

Teresa Barnes' work is one of several recent studies on colonial Africa that places women at the center of history as initiators and actors who carved out opportunities, jobs, and dwelling places in urban areas rather than simply reacting to the impositions and limitations colonial officials and African patriarchs imposed on them (Tripp 1989, Geiger 1997, Bozzoli 1991, White

1990). Where she breaks new ground is in locating African women's urban strategies within a larger framework of social reproduction and nationalist activities. In colonial Zimbabwean society, white settlers sought to reduce Africans to farm and mine laborers, social reproduction often became a political act. She argues that African women in colonial Harare were part of a long-term political movement that had "elements and initiatives in common with political nationalism" but was different enough to warrant separate consideration (p. xviii). In the desire for social reproduction, or "to transmit something African into the future," both African men and women played a role. African women figured prominently, though, by trying to create an environment in which they could live with their families and take advantage of some of the independence urban living had to offer (p. xix). While African men often desired to live with their families, they were much more ambivalent about the increase in women's freedom that often accompanied urban residence.

Drawing on colonial documents and what she terms "substantial excerpts" from oral interviews conducted in 1988-89 with Ms. Everjoice Win, Barnes traces the shifting relations of power during two and a half decades (1930-1956) of women's residence and work in colonial Zimbabwe. She argues that these years are particularly important because by the beginning of the period, colonial officials had clearly demonstrated a desire to restrict Africans' options as wage earners in the urban economy. Over the ensuing decades, however, African women found a way to carry their identities and families into the future within this context.

Barnes' work makes several important contributions to the wider body of literature on the African colonial experience. The first is in defining and describing how some women in colonial Harare differentiated themselves from others. Arguing that Western notions of class do not apply to the area under study, she presents the categories that her interviewees described for her. Those at the top of the social hierarchy lived "properly" or were "well-known" and succeeded within colonial urban society. These women had "material assets that others lacked: a husband, a house, perhaps education" and enjoyed, as a result, "elevated social status" and relative safety and security (p. 23). Access to land and housing in order to engage in a business and raise a family were the most critical element here and by far the hardest to secure. Only a few managed to circumvent laws and gain independent access to land. Usually such access devolved from marriage to a man. In this situation, some women sought to proclaim the validity of lobola (dowry or bride price) and patriarchal control of the family to ensure the health and well-being of their family.

Being officially married, Barnes argues, was the essential ingredient for achieving status and respectability in colonial Harare. The majority of women, though, were not married "properly" and had mapoto (temporary marriages) relationships in which they provided domestic and sexual services to a man in return for accommodation, food, and domestic goods. These liaisons were formed without consent of the families and within them women accumulated their own property and some of the men's as well, challenging African notions of social reproduction. Others opted for independence but paid a price in terms of social marginalization. These women often engaged in activities like prostitution and beer-brewing. At the bottom of the social ladder, prostitutes by the 1950s had lost their own names and used those of famous prostitutes from the 1920s and 1930s; they were anything but "well-known." In Barnes' work, the two activities of beer brewing and prostitution, so salient in other works on

urban women (White 1990, Akyeampong 1997, Bujra, 1975, 1977) do not appear front and center, because she is more concerned about the kinds of work that African women viewed as promoting the healthy reproduction of African society

Second, in contrast to Schmidt's work in early colonial Zimbabwean history, the author argues that African and European men were not in alliance against African women during the period under examination. She contends that in the 1930s there was no complicity between the colonial state and African men to control women's movements. There were several reasons for this. Urban African men often benefited from women's residence in town, though rural men complained about the corrupting influence of urban women. Despite rural complaints, colonial officials in the 1930s suspected that very few women were in town without permission of their parents or guardians. Rural parents rarely came to urban centers to claim their daughters because often they shared in their earnings. Older generations of Africans were less concerned about urban residence than they were about controlling wages of the younger generation. In addition, the state was not committed to removing women from urban locations. For example, the colonial government did try to locate and return some urban women in the 1930s, mostly young, recent arrivals. Yet, they ignored many urban women, including prostitutes, who had resided in town for longer periods of time and women who had come from great distances. Settlers feared African resistance to large-scale removal and they feared that, in the absence of African women, African men would turn to white women for their sexual satisfaction.

Finally, placing social reproduction at the center of African political concerns gives the nationalist movement in Zimbabwe greater historical depth and breadth. One of the examples of interest here is the response to the Rhodesian government's enforcement of the 1946 Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act, which disqualified many men and women from urban residence. When the state began removing respectable urban women (wives, widows, and mothers), the Reformed Industrial Commercial Workers' Union took up the cause of men's marital rights and women's township residence rights for the next five years. As a result of the protest, the government ceased night raids and began allowing some men and women to register for residence. In another example of African concern for social reproduction, the 1956 bus boycott turned violent one night as men attacked and raped independent female hostel residents, some of whom had flouted the boycott, saying they had enough money to pay the fare. For many Harare men, independent control of wages was threatening to the African social order.

Barnes' work succeeds in illustrating that long before the armed struggle, African women (and men) were dissatisfied with their lot in Southern Rhodesia and sought ways to change it. The chief omission (due in part, at least, to the original intent of the oral history interviews) is a lack of attention to families (p. xxv). In order for her arguments about social reproduction to be carried to a logical conclusion, stories of colonial Harare's residents' relationships with their rural families, and with the lives of their urban children, need to be told. These additions would enable the reader to see more clearly the rural-urban linkages so vital to women and their families during this period as well as the efficacy of their strategies to recreate viable African families in a new context. This book will be of interest to social historians, women's historians, and urban historians of Africa. The concept of social reproduction is an important avenue for the exploration of African initiatives under colonial rule.

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Western Education and Political Domination in Africa: A Study in Critical and Dialogical Pedagogy. **Magnus O. Bassey. Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1999. 123pp. Cloth $59.95.**

Three premises, though not new to most Africanists and Africans, are the basis for Magnus O. Bassey's most recent work: 1) Current African educational systems have colonial and missionary roots; 2) education in Africa leads to elite status; 3) elites tend to protect the current system. The author presents this book as "a critical analysis of the behavior of African educated elites and argues that educated elites in Africa have used their education and the schools to perpetuate their dominance over their less fortunate countrymen and women" (p. 11). In addition, Bassey proposes the adoption of a critical dialogical pedagogy to address these current imbalances.

With these goals set out in Chapter One, most readers, especially those with an interest in African education, would expect a detailed study of primary historical and current documents. However, a careful reading of this work reveals no such analysis. While there are glimpses of specific events and regions, "Africa" and "Africans" tend to be the underlying analytic categories of this nine-chapter work. With such a wide scope, perhaps it is no surprise to find a lack of depth and very little continuity across chapters. Most chapters appear to stand alone. Chapter Two begins with a focus upon general principles of "Traditional African Education." Bassey utilizes secondary philosophy and general education sources to posit that African systems of

education were egalitarian, complete and "relevant to the needs of the individual and his or her society" (p. 24).

The next three chapters document the general influence of Christian Missions and colonial education policies. But there is little discussion of how missionary systems interacted with the previously discussed forms of African education, except to say that they undermined traditional authority. The author outlines French, British, Portuguese, Belgian, and German colonial educational policies in seven pages. All colonial policies are then referred to as having certain features, including domination, elite status, and inequity. Throughout these chapters, Bassey makes reference to the "African neobourgeoisie [that have] prolonged the life of colonialism inadvertently by talking so much of educational changes and achieving very little in this direction and by sustaining imperialism through neocolonialism" (p. 49). This section makes very clear the central weakness in this work: Lack of scope and contextualization lead to problematic overgeneralizations. There are marked contextual differences between Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana, and Zimbabwe that must be recognized. When such differences are not taken into account, generalizations across regions become much less tenable.

Chapters Six and Seven explore the concept of power, inequality and their general manifestations in African educational systems. Chapter Six discusses the general atmosphere of African dictatorships that employ coercive violence. Chapter Seven returns to the school setting to discuss the issues of disempowerment, sexism, domination, and hegemony. A majority of this chapter discusses the gender gaps in contemporary African education and the attitudes contributing to their continuation. Throughout the chapter, disempowered teachers and students are portrayed as helplessly reproducing the structures of hegemony. In addition to a review of the Frierian concept of "banking education," and Bernstein's "codes of control," the author includes an overview of Bourdieu to show how cultural capital leads towards maintenance of the status quo. Further development of these frameworks with specific African examples would greatly assist reader in this chapter. An in-depth treatment of Bourdieu's conceptual framework might lead to a discussion of how powerful market forces influence all members of a society, not only elites.

Chapter Eight is a brief (five-page) general summary of the apartheid educational system in South Africa. This chapter appears to be disconnected from the rest of the work. No attempt is made to integrate the South African example into previously discussed chapters. The concluding Chapter Nine is a call for critical dialogical pedagogy to address current inequities in African educational systems. Drawing upon Giroux, Friere, and Dewey, Bassey concludes, "My answer is that we must use our schools for psychic conversion of Africans in favor of economic investment, wealth creation, entrepreneurial spirit, self-help and for creating wealth for the nation" (p. 111). In order to do this, he states, formal education must be reconceptualized to overcome its colonial heritage. How this would be done in a specific context is not mentioned. To recognize these important differences would probably contradict an underlying central premise of this work: that one can actually speak of an "African elite" and "African educational experience." Much more detailed scholarship recognizing the complexity of African experience will be necessary in order to achieve his laudable goal.

This work appears to be largely inductive and aimed at a non-specialist audience. What Bassey generally reiterates in this work is already painfully clear to African specialists and

citizens of African countries. Perhaps most novel in Bassey's work is his stated intention to isolate and assign blame to African elites for the current state of affairs. But this alone is insufficient. A more thorough analysis would examine local needs and levels of participation in one region's educational systems. Connections could then be made to both historical roots and current political trends. Only then could specific solutions be formulated. Indeed, the goal of "harnessing the language of critique with the language of economic empowerment" (p.113) is something to which most educational policy planners worldwide would aspire. If Bassey's ultimate goal is to reorient the elite focus of African educational systems, it remains unachieved.

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Drama for a New South Africa: Seven Plays. **David Graver (Ed.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. 228 pp. cloth $39.95; paper: $16.95.**

In the opening paragraph of this volume of South African plays, David Graver states that his goal is to keep American attention on South African theatre "now that apartheid has passed" because of its "universal lessons and appeal." Theatre enthusiasts should recognize a wealth in South Africa of "hybrid dramatic forms" combining "African and European" (also named as "industrialized and developing)" aesthetic values, which are "rich in vivid language, forceful performance styles and incisive social function" (p. 1).

I can only imagine that this glossing over of these complicated and controversial ideas may have been forced upon this otherwise respected scholar by his publisher for marketing purposes. In rescuing what he perceives to be America's flagging interest in South African theatre, however, Graver does make a point worth considering. This is the idea that it was not artists who faced a crisis of imagination after apartheid (a debate which flourished in South African intellectual circles), but audiences, particularly overseas audiences. He does not use this point, however, to catalyze any substantial discussion on transnational processes in South African theatre.

Reading through the introduction, one wonders why Graver professes interest in bringing South African plays to the attention of the West, since he notes that certain plays, while important in a South African context, lack an emotional impact that would make them seem "crude and schematic" by "European standards of dramaturgy" (p. 15). While his introduction discusses theatre of "social function", such as township community theatre and workers' theatre, he pronounces it lacking in "significant autonomous aesthetic appeal" (p.14) for an anthology.

Graver acknowledges a literary bias in this collection, bowing out from including more community-oriented plays, or a community-oriented analysis. Such perspectives, however, remain a vital part of the landscape of South African theatre for the very reason that they address issues of marginalization, gender equality, education, poverty, crime, and cultural identity, all pressing issues in the wake of apartheid. Given this, it is surprising and unfortunate

that Graver would choose such glib phrasing as "wife abuse has become a popular topic lately in South Africa" (p.14).

Although Graver's introduction covers far more ground than just the scripts he has selected for the anthology, it is impossible in a twenty-page introduction to do justice to the history and range of South African theatre. It might have been more important, therefore, to focus on the historical moment called "post-apartheid" and how the problematics of this term are reflected in the plays he has selected. The historical category, "post-apartheid," is a vexed one as the legal changes that have been implemented have not significantly improved the material lives of the majority of South Africans. By including plays that were written during the height of resistance to apartheid, the implication is that Graver views post-apartheid as an imaginative category rather than one that corresponds to reality. However, he does not follow through on this point. Instead he focuses on a "rainbow nation" definition of "post-apartheid" by insuring a representative "sampling" of plays, from "Afrikaner, Anglo, African, and Indian communities" (p.19). Moreover, the limited analysis he gives revolves around the rather reductive themes he names as belonging to this era of "post-apartheid theatre," namely: "the recovery of the past; abiding social injustices; and hybrid theatrical forms" (p. 7). Such broad, general categories could be applied to any number of South African theatre works, from those created in opposition to apartheid to those created during its crumbling and aftermath, no less than to the theatre of several other nations.

The collection itself opens with the seemingly obligatory and marketable "Sophiatown" (1986), one of the most famous South African plays. This play as well as Zakes Mda's "And the Girls in Their Sunday Dresses" (1988) and Paul Slabolevsky's "Mooi Street Moves" (1992) have all previously appeared in print in other places, although granted they were published in South Africa and not the US. We can be thankful, however, for the remaining offerings which have not yet to my knowledge appeared in print: Ismail Mohomed's "Purdah" (1993), Reza de Wet's "Crossing" (1994), Nicholas Ellenbogan's "Horn of Sorrow" (1988), and Brett Bailey's "Ipi Zombi?" (1998). These last two choices were particularly bold but welcome, since their performance styles are so distinctive that it might have seemed counterintuitive to attempt to represent them in print form.

However, it might have been even more suitable to the goals of a volume of plays from the "new" South Africa to include more recent examples of "post-election theatre" that are at least historically congruent with what is really new, namely the adoption of a democratic constitution. It would also have been gratifying to see more plays given first-time publication, works that have not already had much academic discourse surrounding them. Examples of such plays might include, Mike van Graan's "Dinner Talk" (1996), which could be considered as a formal opening of the discussion on "post-apartheid" issues; Craig Coetzee's tour-de-force, "White Men With Weapons" (1996), or the memorable community work, "Gomorrah" (1997). Alternatively, with Graver's insistence on emphasizing the combined European-ness and African-ness of South African theatre, and his concern with appealing to the American audience, it might have been interesting, for example, to include a play like "Good Woman of Sharkeville" (1996), Janet Suzman and Gcina Mhlophe's restaging of Brecht's similarly titled play.

Despite his literary propensities, Graver does acknowledge the inability of a play's script to give an impression of its performance. To his credit, he supplements the texts with information on the staging and performance techniques, and has preserved the multilingual qualities of the scripts by including translations and a glossary of terms. Each of the plays is accompanied by a short biographical account of the playwright, a performance history and, in most instances, a brief account of political implications or context. Thus, while this anthology may fall short of expectations of scholars of South Africa, it does certainly make a range of compelling scripts from South Africa easily accessible to an American audience.

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Music, Modernity, and the Global Imagination: South Africa and the West. **Veit Erlmann. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 312 pp. Cloth $65.00.**

In this dense volume, Veit Erlmann focuses on the musical tour as a site that gives expression to "the interdependence of Western constructions of Africa and of African representations of the West" (p. 214). The core of this book is devoted to the African Choir's tour of the United States and the Zulu Choir's tour of London in the 1890s, and Paul Simon's Graceland tour of South Africa in the 1980s.

Loren Kruger (1999) makes a similar argument about African claims to modern subjectivity within colonial constructs in her analysis of "tribal sketches" and historical pageants in early 20th century South Africa. The weight of Erlmann's argument, however, resides at the level of "the individual" or the "bourgeois subject" (p. 36) as a site for the construction of a range of personal and social identities as a mode of "self-fashioning" in the face of societal, national and global pressures.

Erlmann's analysis also departs from the industrial, economic, and other invisible and disembodied global processes that produce various racially or nationally encoded musics under the neutralizing term of "hybrid." Rather, the author mobilizes a Victorian-inspired notion of the physical traveler as a remedy for a set of ontological and epistemological crises produced by the onset of modernity. These examples of musicians traveling between South Africa and the West at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries are not only motivated by, and generative of, fictions about the Other, but reveal specific longings and biographical fictions of self. Suspending a concern for post-colonial relations of power, Erlmann works with a more closely postmodern idea of a "global imagination." The global imagination evokes a world made from images that are inscribed, projected, worn, mimicked and contradicted in a mutual economy of cultural imagining.

The book opens in the 19th century where the totalizing epistemology of spectacle produced such forms as the panorama, world fairs, Parisian shopping arcades and the panopticon to which the author adds the scopic orientation of 19th century autobiography and

travel writing. In his analysis of autobiographical texts of the African choir members published in the London papers, Erlmann argues that these writings manifest mutually produced and intertwined fictions of the self as articulated through an association with African nationhood as much as through an association with Victorian values of education, Christianity, heroism.

Erlmann claims that late-19th- and late-20th-century worldviews reach across the hundred-year gap that separates them by virtue of their common embeddedness in "societies of the spectacle" (p. 5). In so doing he intends to disrupt disciplinary boundaries that consider culture as situated in time and place and to "offer a picture of cultures in constant state of movement and displacement" (p. 8).

Another unifying theme is his extension of Benedict Anderson's (1983) conceptualization of the nation as an "imagined community" by recognizing nationalistic trajectories inscribed in religious narratives of redemption and education. The first half of the book historically grounds this phenomenon in the history of the missions and black independent churches in South Africa, and the civilizing values in Victorian Christianity perceived by both blacks and whites as embodied in the hymn, and in American Negro spirituals. In the second half of the book this theme of redemption plays out as a means of locating personal development within a global sense of historical change, rather than in a societal search for epistemological truths.

For example, Erlmann analyzes Paul Simon's motives in the Graceland tour as exemplifying Simon's "own search for identity," which is "emblematic of the attempts of significant sectors of the middle class to refashion themselves as cultural intermediaries to reach some state of grace and redemption" (p. 181). Ladysmith Black Mambazo's songs mirror this gesture with their own longing for "home" as a locus of identity, "redemption," and wholeness" (p. 200), provoked by and made possible through an engagement with "the modern world" (p. 200).

Nowhere is the complex relationship between national identity, biography, and religious redemption more apparent than in Chapter 13, which addresses another Ladysmith Black Mambazo collaboration, this time with South African born Tug Yourgrau in "The Song of Jacob Zulu." Here the dramatized biography of Andrew Zondo becomes a site for the autobiographical projections of the collaborators. These projections are infused with tropes of nostalgia, innocence, and ritual religious conversion that simultaneously symbolize personal and national redemption. Despite this potentially interesting layering of biographies, this chapter diverts and disappoints by invoking the over-determining discourse of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as emblematic of South Africa's forging of a post-apartheid national identity. Consequently, Erlmann leaves terms such as "politics of memory" (p. 235), "reconciliation" (p. 244), and "postapartheid identity" (p. 235) undeconstructed and unaffected by the mill of global and mediated distortions as if to signify some axiomatic irreducible essential of present-day South Africa. One finds evidence for this in Erlmann's reading of the sequel, Nomathemba, a story of a woman who leaves her rural home and wifely duties to make an independent life for herself in the city. Falling short of his earlier imperative that aesthetic expression be considered as a "medium for the construction of meanings" rather than an "agent" of a fixed relationship between signifier and signified (p. 187), Erlmann reads Nomathemba simply as a "metaphor for the people of 'New South Africa's' continued search for hope and renewal in their country" [my emphasis] (p. 244).

Although Erlmann does draw parallels between 20th century film and cyberspace and 19th century panorama (p. 5, 176) as mediums by which societies are governed by images (p. 176), the author never does address music performed in any of these mediums directly. He excuses himself by contrasting his arguments on global culture with Appadurai's, which are based in the rise of electronic media (p. 177). Instead, he is more interested in Zygmunt Bauman and Richard Rorty's notion of an aesthetic community characterized by what Erlmann calls "triumph of the symbolic" (p. 177) and in the "utopian power" of Michel Maffesoli's notions of style and figure (p. 177). These ideas are taken up relatively briefly in Erlmann's last two chapters devoted to two more Ladysmith Black Mambazo collaborations with Spike Lee in *Do It A Capella*, and with Michael Jackson in the music video *Moonwalker*.

This rich, multidisciplinary work is destined to interest a broad range of scholars. Ethnomusicologists will find their home in the occasional but detailed musical analyses. Historians will find a depth of historical information. Cultural theorists will find a reliable survey as well as a significant contribution to the literature on trans-nationalism, modernization and globalization. In addition, the book's perspectives speak to the current academic discussion in South Africa on biography and autobiography as genres mediating national narratives of political transition.

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A Daughter of Isis: The Autobiography of Nawal El Saadawi. Translated By Sherif Hetata. New York: St. Martins Press, 1999. 294pp. Cloth $55.00; Paper $19.95.

Autobiography has long been the site of scholarly discussion especially as more personal modes of narrative have taken on historical and political importance. Recent controversies over the autobiographical writings of Rigoberta Menchu and Edward W. Said challenge the veracity of their stories and mark this genre as a site of struggle over social and political authority. Nawal el Saadawi has already been attacked and imprisoned in an attempt to quell her authoritative voice. Her autobiography, *A Daughter of Isis*, may provoke similar responses. She has challenged Egyptian neo colonial policy, self-serving gender norms, and conservative interpretations of Islam. She writes, "The written word for me became an act of rebellion against injustice exercised in the name of religion, or morals, or love" (p.292). Her presence on a

fundamentalist death list forced her to leave Egypt for the United States, where the majority of this book was written.

In a spiraling style reminiscent of much of her fiction, el Saadawi depicts the sights, sounds, and smells of her early life. Mixing her contemporary experiences with those of her Egyptian youth, *A Daughter of Isis* recalls the formative life of one of Egypt's foremost writers. El Saadawi is well known as a physician, novelist, and writer of essays. The candor with which she has approached health, economic, and social problems has landed her in jail and driven her into exile. She writes, "My crime has been to think, to feel. But writing for me is like breathing in the air of life, it cannot stop" (p. 34). Although many of her other works have addressed parts of her personal life, this is her first real foray into the genre of autobiography. She writes "Perhaps in some ways autobiography is more real, more true than fiction, more creative, and more steeped in art. Autobiography seeks to reveal the self, what is hidden inside, just as it tries to see the other" (p. 293).

Much of el Saadawi's writing reveals incidents in her personal life and there has been considerable speculation about the extent to which her novel, *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor*, is autobiographical. Like Huda Shaarawi's memoir, *Harem Years*, el Saadawi speaks in ways that lead up to but fall short of many direct personal revelations. What is very beautiful about her fictional style can occasionally be frustrating in this autobiography. She alludes to early sexual experience, but never comes back to it. Perhaps the answer is implicit in the beginning of the book where she remarks that: "Memory is never complete. There are always parts of it that time has amputated. Writing is a way of retrieving them, of bringing the missing parts back to it. Of making it more holistic. Reality is something that changes all the time, something I cannot pin down or express in words on paper" (p. 9). Both the works are wonderfully suggestive, but sometimes do not achieve the candor we find in other works.

Her early life is told beautifully and is peopled with characters interesting for their moral courage and unusual views of life. El Saadawi's academic excellence saved her from suitors, and a life of domestic drudgery. As Sittil Hajja says, ".... the miserable life of a peasant does not change. Education is the sweetest of all things. It opens the door to a job in the government and helps a man to become full in his clothes" (p. 72). When her father faltered in his support for her studies, her mother, Zaynab, helped by saying she didn't need her assistance in domestic tasks. Her father and mother come to respect her achievements as a thinker and doctor. In turn the young el Saadawi is very aware that her mother's sacrifices, love, and support allow her to continue at school. Her father's view that "politics is a game without principals" reflects the many difficulties of the colonial situation. His integrity as a man opposed to corruption, one who refuses to be a party man, gives the young el Saadawi a model of thinking independently. But she is well aware of how her gender forms her place in society even as she transcends its most common expectations.

In *A Daughter of Isis*, reflections of el Saadawi's early life in Egypt are framed by her exile in Carolina. As is the case with much of her fiction, this is a particularly engaging style. It keeps bringing the reader full circle in her life and creates an anticipation regarding the things which will drive her from her homeland. The book foreshadows her coming traumas but, except in a brief afterword, it does not deliver the stories of those later times. Although the book contains pictures of her as a rural doctor, at the first meeting of the Egyptian Women Writer's

Association, with her children and current husband, these people and events are only mentioned. The events of the actual account stop with her still in Al-Mashraha School of Medicine. She leaves us at a point where she is not very formed as a person, where her desires to be a good woman, law abiding, and a good Muslim, clash with her desire for closer involvement with the revolutionary forces driving out the vestiges of colonial power. The very interesting ways in which she eventually integrates her personal, intellectual life and her politics are missing from this volume, since she stops her story prior to the synthesis. For those of us who respect her mature positions, it is disappointing not to hear more of their origins. She reflects on the choice to focus on her earliest life in the afterword, "the years I had written about where very important in the direction that my later life took" (p. 290). Still it is a very wonderful life story, and especially in the beginning, beautifully written. The English translation contains explanatory references to historical material, words, and concepts with which the European reader might not be familiar.

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