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in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Tuzyline Jita Allan, ed. *Women's Studies Quarterly 1997: Special Issue on Teaching African Literatures in a Global Literary Economy.* Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press, 1998. 240 pp. $18.00 (paper), ISBN 978-1-55861-169-6.

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Published on H-AfrLitCine (October, 1998)

This special issue of Women's Studies Quarterly combines the flexibility and timeliness of a journal with the coherence of a scholarly book. The guest editor, Tuzyline Jita Allan, has united an impressive array of articles on the theoretical and pedagogical issues relevant to African and post-colonial literatures in the current era of globalization. In her introduction to the issue, Allan writes that the volume aims to "evaluate at the dawn of a new millennium Africa's rising literary stock... and to examine the creative pedagogy developed by teachers of African literature to draw attention to its self-affirming and interdependent worldview, as well as to the challenges it presents to comparative, cross-cultural criticism" (p. 6). The volume meets these goals with resounding success, and seems likely to become a well-worn companion to many scholars and instructors in the fields of African and post-colonial literatures.

Allan's editorial sets the stage for the following articles by putting Africa into a global context, then by exploring the continent's wealth of literary offerings. The first of these articles, Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's essay on "Visions of Freedom and Democracy in Post-colonial African Literature," follows this model, offering a broadly conceived and interdisciplinary analysis of the conflicting visions of democracy that appear in the works of Nuruddin Farah, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Bessie Head. Comparative essays, such as Christine W. Sizemore's article comparing Tsitsi Dangarembga and Margaret Atwood, or Pia Thielmann's article on "Black-White Love in African Novels" succeed in reinforcing the sense that African literatures must be seen in a global context. Peter Hitchcock's Coda on theories of post-coloniality serves to sharpen readers' awareness of what is at stake in this global literary economy.

In spite of the emphasis on the global, particular areas of interest stand out. Several of the articles focus on francophone Africa; three of these address Senegalese literature. Omofolabo Ajayi and Lisa Williams choose to focus on Mariama Ba's So Long A Letter, (p. 1) while Marilyn S. Zucker writes about teaching The Abandoned Baobab. Faida M. Mitifu explores the issue of gender in works by several male writers from the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire), and Joyce Hope Scott introduces readers to an exciting, but little-known novel by the Burkinabe writer Monique Ilboudo. Anglophone African literature is represented primarily in essays about Nigerian (Chinua Achebe and J. P. Clark) and Zimbabwean works (Tsitsi Dangarembga); however, Thielmann discusses works by South African writers and Zeleza focuses on anglophone works from east and southern Africa.

The many strengths of these theoretical and critical essays put the pedagogical issues that dominate the volume into a wider political context. This context allows several authors to question institutional frameworks as well as pedagogical approaches. Thomas Hale, for instance, tests the notion that departments of literature must focus solely on written texts, arguing convincingly for the inclusion of oral, African-language works in the curriculum. He also offers excellent suggestions for instructors who would like to incorporate African-language works. Other writers focus on the role of the instructor in the classroom. Helen M. Cooper offers a nice review of the ethical and practical issues that white instructors of African and Caribbean literatures face in her article, "African and Caribbean Texts/White Critics and Teachers: The Search For New Academic Life." In offering useful strategies for addressing the question of legitimacy in the classroom, she never assumes that "race" can be "overcome" through teaching strategies–rather, she comments on students' wistful comments that they would like to have some black role models at university with great sympathy and understanding. Cooper draws on Ann duCille's work in perceptive fashion here, leaving readers with the realization that it is a good thing that we are "no longer at ease," as uneasiness is a necessary

part of our efforts at sustained critique and inquiry. In another teaching article, Judith G. Miller theorizes about the issues around producing an African play with a group of white, North American students, and also presents excellent suggestions for teaching African theater.

Tanure Ojaide tackles these questions from another angle, describing his experience of sharing strategies for teaching Things Fall Apart with white, North American faculty members from various disciplines. He offers many useful pointers for instructors unfamiliar with African literature, and a few that might be helpful to other African faculty asked to conduct faculty workshops. Two other contributions on pedagogy by African scholars take up these issues in quite different ways. While Ojaide offers a rich source of strategies for contextualizing Achebe's novel in North American classrooms, Nobantu L. Rasebotsa examines the curricular issues that concern African colleagues who are reshaping programs of African Literature across the continent. His short history of the development of African Literature on anglophone campuses in sub-Saharan Africa is absorbing reading; however, the central point of his essay is the argument that African literatures must be studied in the context of other world literatures. This approach also seems to be part of Clement A. Okafor's strategy for teaching John Pepper Clark's *Song of a Goat*, for he clearly draws on students' familiarity with western theory when teaching the text.

These essays on teaching provide invaluable practical information, as well as theoretically informed discussions of teaching issues. In spite of the many strengths of the volume, we might question the lack of any reference to lusophone texts or to texts written (rather than performed) in African languages In addition, some readers may wonder at times how gender fits into the overall picture of African literature's role in the global literary economy. Apart from the editor and Ajayi, few of the authors put their primary emphasis on gender. As Allan states in her introduction, however, "the perceived indifference of African women writers to Western feminism holds important clues to the difficult lessons of a transatlantic feminist coalition" (p. 5). These clues have led a growing number of scholars to reconsider accepted western methods of gender analysis when dealing with African texts and contexts (p. 3). Perhaps, as Allan and others suggest, this apparent indifference actually holds important clues for a better understanding of what feminisms might mean to African writers and their readers.

ENDNOTES

[1]. For different, yet complementary views, see the two articles on the novel in *The Politics of (M)Othering: Womanhood, Identity, and Resistance in African Literature*. Obioma Nnaemeka,ed. New York: Routledge, 1997.

[2]. Interested readers might wish to consult Albert Gerard's *African Language Literatures: An Introduction to the Literary History of Sub-Saharan Africa*. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1981. Patrick Chabal et. al. *The Post-Colonial Literature of Lusophone Africa*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1996. or Gerald Moser. *A New Bibliography of the Lusophone Literatures of Africa*. London: Hans Zell Publishers, 1993.

[3]. See Oyewumi Oyeronke. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1997. and Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi. *Gender in African Women's Writing: Identity, Sexuality, and Difference*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

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Citation: Lisa McNee. Review of Allan, Tuzyline Jita, ed., *Women's Studies Quarterly 1997: Special Issue on Teaching African Literatures in a Global Literary Economy*. H-AfrLitCine, H-Net Reviews. October, 1998.

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