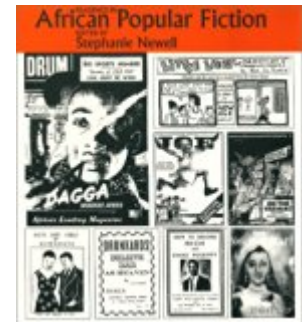


Stephanie Newell, ed.. *Readings in African Popular Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. ix + 206 pp. \$54.95, library, ISBN 978-0-253-34051-1.



Reviewed by Elizabeth Blakesley Lindsay

Published on H-AfrLitCine (June, 2002)

Cartoons, Market Literature and Genre Fiction: An Overview of African Popular Literature

With this work, Stephanie Newell addresses a little-studied area of African literature. This volume will bring attention to an important segment of African writing that has been largely unrecognized in Europe and the United States. Newell's collection, a cross between an encyclopedia and a textbook, focuses attention on a wide array of genre fiction, including romance and detective novels, as well as urban cautionary tales.

The material is arranged into three sections, based on geography, having one section each for West African, East African and Southern African popular literatures. Each section contains scholarly articles and primary texts. The articles are culled from publications of well-known Africanists including Bernth Lindfors, Raoul Grandqvist and Alain Ricard, among others. The articles provide the reader with essential background on topics as varied as Onitsha market literature, Hausa language publishing, Malawian romance novels, popular culture in Cameroon and the motif of Ogbaanje (spirit children) in Nigerian popular fic-

tion. Issues of language, politics and gender in the popular fictions of Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Cameroon are also addressed.

The fascinating primary texts include Alex La Guma's "Little Libby" cartoon strips; a reproduction of J. C. Anorue's *How to Become Rich and Avoid Poverty*; copies of covers, advertisements, cartoons, stories and letters published in *Drum* magazine and *Joe* magazine during the 1950s and 1970s; and excerpts from various novels.

Although the collection includes many works that have been previously published in readily available sources, the unique primary materials and the arrangement of the resources will make this volume valuable to many scholars and library collections.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at
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