

the citizenry when interrogating the political implications of new digital media. In this book, however, Bernal's contribution to knowledge first and foremost focuses on a part of the globe not well represented in scholarly discourse: Eritrea – a place she describes as 'a small nation in the horn of Africa'. In addition, despite asking questions that are similar to those that digital media scholars often ask, such as who is using digital media, how are they using it, and with what implications, Bernal's ethnographic approach reveals significant findings that further extend the discussion. Hence, although many studies have addressed the political impact of digital media on societies from the position of social movements, revolutions, protests and other forms of mass action, Bernal's Eritrean study takes time to examine the ways of a people, revealing the more gradual cultural shift brought about by the adoption of ICT.

Although the theoretical grounding of the book is not explicitly stated, the use of key terms such as the 'public sphere' and 'debates' and references to Habermas show that Bernal is somewhat inclined to his theory. Yet the theorizing of the public sphere does not form her main frame of reference. Bernal focuses more on developing her own conceptual framework, which she appears to find more relevant and useful in contextualizing her discussion of the Eritrean online public space. In doing this, she develops two major concepts: infopolitics or infopolitical power and sacrificial citizenship. Infopolitics refers to how power is exercised and expressed through the control of media, communication, circulation and actions of censorship and authorization. To Bernal, 'power relations are embedded in the circulation of management of information'. Sacrificial citizenship, on the other hand, is a concept that characterizes the 'social contract between citizens and the state', which, according to Bernal, in Eritrea is displayed through 'sacrificing for the nation'.

Scholars of media, politics, sociology and African studies, and those interested in the emerging research method of digital ethnography, will find this book immensely useful. In the same vein, active citizens who seek to further understand how their participation in the affairs of their respective states can have varied impacts would also find this book a constructive resource. One shortcoming of the book might be the lack of any mention of other sites in cyberspace where an Eritrean communicative public sphere might have been reconstituted, such as social networking sites. In addition, other questions arising would include whether images were part of the social texts on these websites and what meanings they bore. But, notwithstanding these shortcomings, the overall understanding one may glean from this book is that the roles new media can play are not divided strictly along the binary lines of being 'net deluded' or 'net smart'. Rather, these roles are shaped by the cultural actions of the users for whom digital media serve as a platform for 'collective social practices, public communication and collaboration'.

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CAROLINE DAVIS, *Creating Postcolonial Literature: African writers and British publishers*. London: Palgrave Macmillan (hb £55 – 978 0 23036 936 8). 2013, 255 pp.

In a 1977 interview with Jane Bakerman, Toni Morrison insisted that, although a lot of work, sweat and even struggle go into the writing process, this must not be apparent to the reader: 'it must appear effortless. No matter what the style, the

seams can't show' (p. 56). To a reader raised on an exciting diet of British-published African writing – Heinemann's African Writers series, Macmillan's racy Pacesetter series, and Oxford University Press's Three Crowns series – *Creating Postcolonial Literature* offers a rare glance at the seams of artistic negotiations, financial considerations, editorial interventions and legal conversations that midwifed African literature by focusing on the Three Crowns series at Oxford University Press. Ironically, while OUP prioritized school markets – producing texts that could be set as examination works – my encounter with over 90 per cent of these titles was not as prescribed set works but as reading for pleasure, through informal book-exchange networks among young people across school and work environments. Here then, Davis's insistence on the importance of African book markets can be extended to that other stubborn myth: that Africans don't read for pleasure.

Creating Postcolonial Literature is interested in colonial and postcolonial literary production at 'the intersection of culture and commerce' (p. 7). It grapples with two questions: 'how did Britain impose and maintain its cultural dominance over anglophone African literature beyond the formal end of colonisation in the continent; and what role was played by British publishers in the creation of African literature in this period of decolonisation?' (p. 2). Davis explores how OUP negotiated the transition from the colonial publishing of abridged supplementary readers to printing the emergent literatures of anglophone Africa, which often held strong anti-colonial and anti-apartheid views. For Davis, the answer to this seeming paradox lies in understanding OUP's investment in the Native Education agenda, which promised ready markets for educational books; and its strategic self-projection as a champion of scholarship and education in the post-independent nations. In her words, 'the Press veiled its profit motive in Africa [using] carefully constructed narratives to describe its cultural mission' (p. 193).

Creating Postcolonial Literature is an excellent addition to a growing body of scholarship on postcolonial literary production. The first part consists of four chapters tracing how OUP navigated the capital/commerce nexus, where 'this tension was manifested as an opposition between literary and scholarly publishing versus educational publishing' (p. 11). Chapter 1 sketches the 'hand-in-glove' relationship between the Colonial Office and British publishers in Africa as mediated by a shared investment in English-language teaching. Chapters 2 to 4 examine the OUP Africa branches – West, East and South Africa – and the impacts of respective regional politics. For instance, OUP West Africa survived the indigenization of the publishing industry in the 1970s by swiftly replacing British staff with Nigerian staff, although its massive profits from the region continued to be repatriated to London (p. 38). Back in London, OUP's strategic 'gloss of altruism' (p. 31) afforded it tax exemption based on its role in 'the spread of British culture and influence' (p. 3) and what it projected as the University's 'obligation to contribute to high standards of learning and scholarship throughout the world' (p. 30). Meanwhile, the South African Branch wrestled tensions between 'scholarly publishing for the white liberal academic establishment and school books for Bantu education' (p. 12). Visible across the three branches is the imprint of individual regional representatives' flair, initiative and commitment to African writing, and their frustration with the head office's gate-keeping of African literary potential. As Davis observes, 'editorial control was centralised in London and a hierarchical literary policy devised whereby "high-brow" African literature was selected and published from the centre but popular, educational or local-language literature was published by the branches' (p. 106).

The second section of the book features five chapters that offer case studies of authors in the Three Crowns series by zooming in on Léopold Sédar Senghor, Obi Egbuna, Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin, Oswald Mtshali, John Pepper Clark, Barbara Kimenyi, Raymond Sarif Easmon, Athol Fugard and Wole Soyinka. Chapter 5 looks at the tension between the cultural and economic imperatives of OUP in Africa, while Chapter 6 explores the artistic values upheld in the creation of a new African literary list. Chapter 7 interrogates the relationship between author and editor in the Three Crowns series. The two closing chapters are dedicated to Wole Soyinka and Athol Fugard as two major authors whose work eventually 'graduated' into the prestigious mainstream OUP line.

Davis weaves an engaging portrait of the people, decisions and strategies that account for the success of OUP in Africa through sophisticated analyses of archival information, including letters, financial reports and interviews. In sum, OUP 'adopted a system of cross-subsidisation of cultural and economic capital that was global in scale: symbolic capital accrued by the academic, Oxford-based Clarendon Press helped sell educational textbooks throughout the colonies, whilst the economic capital generated at the periphery supported cultural endeavours in the metropole' (p. 31).

I opened this review from my location as an Africa-based reader of British-published African literature. I would like to close it as a reader of *Creating Postcolonial Literature* from my location in an African university. One irony of this book being published by Palgrave Macmillan is that some of the tensions between commerce, culture and publishing are currently discernible in academic publishing on African studies – in which Palgrave Macmillan is a major player. Palgrave Macmillan's role, and that of other academic presses, in publishing excellent African studies titles is remarkable, but these titles about Africa and Africans are often either unavailable or priced out of the market for African university libraries and Africa-based academics. My hope is that readers in Africa will soon see *Creating Postcolonial Literature*, and other exciting Euro-American published titles, as affordable paperbacks in bookshops in Nairobi, Ibadan, Cape Town and elsewhere. This is definitely one book that deserves to be made widely accessible.

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ERNEST N. EMENYONU, editor, *African Literature Today 30: Reflections and retrospectives*. Woodbridge: James Currey (pb £18.99 – 978 1 84701 056 8). 2012, ix + 195 pp.

The thirtieth issue of *African Literature Today* (ALT) is the latest in a long and illustrious line of publications originating in the era of decolonization. On the cover of this issue is a photograph of shantytown dwellings near Cape Town, signalling its rootedness on the African continent and commitment to social and cultural justice. ALT was started at the University of Sierra Leone in 1968. Its key stated aims were to serve as an in-house journal for African universities and to make the emerging canon of African literature accessible to a large readership. In 1971, it switched from biannual to annual publication and became what it is today: a cross between a book series and a journal, each new issue organized around an overarching theme. In the past, ALT has helped to articulate some of the key debates in