The book is a continuation of Gifford's earlier work on Christianity in Africa, both in form and focus (*African Christianity: its public role*, 1998; *Ghana's new Christianity: Pentecostalism in a globalizing African economy*, 2004; *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 2009, among others). With his extensive and long-term experience, the author is at home in the field – a field that is approached through personal experience, attendance at religious meetings, and religious texts. The arguments of the book are illustrated with an array of examples from various African contexts. The book does not pay much attention, however, to how these religious messages are understood and interpreted by churchgoers themselves, except for a few references to testimonies mediated through religious leaders. This is a drawback for the book. A discussion of how Christianity can contribute to modern development would benefit from a more refined historical and contextualized analysis of this enchanted religious imagination. Is it uniquely African? And how are these ideas translated into lived experience? By assuming that these questions are already settled, Gifford essentializes the enchanted religious imagination.

The book has many examples of where and how an enchanted religious imagination is expressed, but little about its historical roots and local variations. What exactly is local, cultural or Ghanaian about the enchanted imagination? This also reinforces the binaries of the secular/the religious and the enchanted/the disenchanted; it would be useful to transgress these binaries in order to reach an understanding of how the religious becomes political and vice versa. But such an analysis is not what Gifford is aiming at; he takes the enchanted religious imaginations as well as the African neo-patrimonial political culture as his premise. He adopts a non-relativist approach through which, in an open and clear way, he discusses what he perceives as hindering Africa becoming modern, from enforcing the rule of law and building up bureaucratic institutional structures. In that sense, the book offers an honest and well thought-through voice in a debate that often receives little focus in African studies: a voice that is concerned with the role of Christianity in Africa's development.

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ODILE GOERG, *Fantômas sous les tropiques: aller au cinéma en Afrique coloniale*. Paris: Vendémiaire (pb €22 – 978 2 36358 1 709). 2015, 285 pp.

Odile Goerg's new book on the development of film culture in colonial Africa is a brilliant work of scholarship that makes an important contribution to the ever-expanding field of African popular culture studies, and it should also be of great interest to scholars of postcolonial African filmmaking. Her research covers a wide array of sources, ranging from colonial archives to novels and memoirs, to personal interviews with African interlocutors who grew up steeped in the film culture of their homeland. Much of Goerg's evidence is drawn from Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, but the author also cites from sources relating to East, Central and Southern Africa, spanning the British, French, Portuguese and Belgian colonial possessions in these regions.

Within months of the first Lumière screenings in France in 1895, cinema arrived on the African continent, with screenings held in Cairo and Alexandria. Over the next two decades, periodic screenings in hotels and cafés would follow in major

African cities before the interwar period witnessed the emergence of the first custom-built film 'theatres'. These mostly open-air buildings began as modest affairs but, as the popularity of film grew, mega-cinemas with space for audiences of 1,000 or more began to make their appearance.

Throughout the colonial period, there was a pronounced unevenness in access to cinema. Given the technical requirements necessary for even the most rudimentary screenings, it remained largely an urban affair, limited to the major colonial administrative centres. In some colonies, white and black audiences were explicitly kept apart, either in separate movie theatres or in separate sections of the cinema, but more commonly they were kept apart on the basis of their unequal financial means. If white Europeans initially occupied most of the seats in the covered areas of the cinema, with Africans exposed to the elements in the uncovered sections, they soon found themselves joined by an emerging black middle class. This was not always appreciated by racist colonizers: at a 1938 screening in Bamako, the future Senegalese writer Birago Diop received a punch to the head for his 'insolence' in demanding equal treatment (pp. 41–2).

Despite the rapid growth in the popularity of cinema in the interwar period, it remained a luxury open primarily to the better off in colonial society. However, in the wake of the Second World War, cinemas began to spread from the European-built city centres to the suburbs, opening up the medium to more popular audiences. This brought about two interrelated developments: audiences began to consume film in new ways and cinema owners began to schedule films designed to cater for more boisterous audiences. Young men acted out the on-screen roles of the tough cowboys in American westerns while audiences sang along with the musical numbers that were central to the Egyptian and Indian melodramas that became a staple of popular film-going in many parts of the continent. The post-war period also brought rural audiences into contact with film as many colonies saw the growth of mobile cinema enterprises.

From early on, the colonial authorities fretted about the influence of the new medium of film, which carried a 'threat of destabilisation' (p. 8). Film offered colonized audiences the opportunity to view new worlds, to imagine different social relations and to interact with a wide cross-section of their compatriots. Moreover, in the aftermath of the Second World War, cinemas were often used by emerging African political parties to hold mass meetings. Distributors largely avoided politically charged material, but, as the colonial authorities would discover, even the most seemingly innocuous forms of escapist cinema held hidden dangers: gangster movies and westerns represented instances of transgression against authority that inspired the young African men in the audience. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the growing popularity of Egyptian cinema engendered fears that their imagined or genuine expressions of pan-Arabism might prove attractive to Muslim audiences. Few films were banned outright, but the censors' scissors were always poised to cut troublesome scenes: where audience responses had caused the authorities to become concerned, censors also intervened after the first screening. But the censors' task was made more difficult by the fact that films generally circulated with a time lag of at least one or two years after their release in the West. In some parts of Africa, pre-war films that pre-dated organized attempts at censorship were still circulating in the 1950s.

By the late 1950s, as the African colonies began to gain independence from the European powers, cinema was at the heart of new, primarily urban forms of experiencing 'culture'. In the decades following independence, young African filmmakers were often cast as 'contemporary griots', but, as Goerg underlines, 'cinema constituted a break with the practices of the past' (p. 9): audiences may have 'read' films through the lens of their own local cultures, but the creation of the film theatre as a social space for the shared consumption of narratives by different members of society also led to new modes of identification and sociability. Odile Goerg's book is thus a must-read not only for scholars of African popular culture but also for scholars of postcolonial African filmmaking, who have long been in need of a better understanding of film audiences in Africa and their expectations, desires and fears. Since the 1980s, cinemas have been disappearing from Africa as new ways of consuming film have emerged (video clubs, home viewing, streaming), but this volume allows us to get a better grasp of cinema's heyday from the 1930s onwards as one of the key sites in which modern African identities were negotiated.

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KATHRYN OLSEN, *Music and Social Change in South Africa: maskanda past and present*. Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press (hb US$64.50 – 978 1 43991 136 5). 2014, 223 pp.

Devotees of the Zulu solo guitar and guitar band genre known as *maskanda* will be very pleased to see this new study by Kathryn Olsen, one of the foremost authorities on the form. Those unfamiliar with *maskanda* will need the assistance of the copious discography the author has thoughtfully included: thank you, YouTube. The prologue begins with a lively, evocative description of a *maskanda* performance, but oddly doesn't inform the reader as to the identity of the observer. I only mention this because this will be almost the last time the reader is treated to any actual on-the-spot ethnographic description.

The first chapter, 'Maskanda researched', provides the obligatory epistemological, methodological and theoretical self-reflection and even abnegation, where the author does her best to shuffle off the obligatory guilt over her identity as a white middle-class suburbanite who analyses and interrogates an ur-Zulu musical genre. As a self-declared feminist, she warns against the 'cultural imperialism' (read: ethnocentrism) of applying the tenets of European gender studies to Zulu women performers. It is rather a shame she does not take this advice in her subsequent social analysis. I am also not convinced that we need Slavoj Žižek's 'parallax view' (2006) to understand descriptions of what is going on in live *maskanda* performance. What potential readers really want is not theories of observational positionality but an appreciative and illuminating tour of the genre and its exponents.

This the author provides beginning in Chapter 2, 'Maskanda's early years', with a most helpful review of the musical history of *maskanda* from its early colonial origins, something the literature on the form has not previously supplied. This is followed by the kind of thoughtful and detailed account of the work of the pioneer of early 'pop' or electric guitar band *maskanda* Phuzushukela (John Bengu) that we would expect from this author. In the following chapter we are introduced to two of the other major innovators of the genre, Shiyani Ngcobo and Phuzekhemisi (Johnson Mnyandu), who represent for Olsen the opposing poles of folk authenticity and pop commercialization in the development of the genre. Predictably perhaps, the author ends up in ethnomusicology's endlessly recycled authenticity trap. Of course, Shiyani Ngcobo's acoustic retro style is more culturally faithful, subtle, varied, nuanced and affecting than Phuzekhemisi's standardized, over-produced,