scholars with an extremely interesting case study in Western eclecticism, akin to the experiences and activities of other, equally interesting, neo-shamanic practitioners.

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GRAHAM FURNISS, *Orality: the power of the spoken word*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (hb £45.00 – 1 4039 3404 5). 2004, 188 pp.

This is a dense and fascinating book, building on a rich experience and a great variety of political and cultural texts, from Roman and African literatures to cartoons, rap songs and everyday conversations. It also ranges from Somali and Pacific cultures to the British political scene, across time and space. The author seeks to explore in five chapters and 'from a cross-cultural perspective, the centrality of orality in the ideological processes that dominate public discourse, providing a counterbalance to the debates that foreground literacy and the power of written communication' (p. 170).

The oral communicative moment, the cultural parameters of speech and their insertion into the social domains of cultural production, are the object of the first three chapters. The first captures the simultaneity of expression and perception, the match and mismatch between intention and effect, the place of memory in perception and the transition from private to public. The second considers the ways in which attitudes to self and others are worked out in practice; shifts and changes manifested in the language; and the aesthetics of speaking as evidenced in Yoruba *oriki* or Berber verbal culture. The author then explores speech genres, performance and audience, and the constitution of public cultures through public speech and audience reaction. He raises the issues of plausibility, credibility and values, and offers, through an interview with the well-known Hausa writer and editor Abubakar Imam, an in-depth reflection on the centrality of truth in the communicative process. He also examines advertising as an alternative discourse and reflects on the importance of stereotyped characters in narratives. The last two chapters examine the relationship between ideology and orality and the various academic approaches to the concept.

The focus of the book is on orality as sets of communicative, dynamic conditions common to all human societies, affecting cultural production and associated notions of public and private culture, and on power relations, social contexts and the different cultural parameters surrounding the speech event. A few great speeches stand out: the Native American Chief Standing Bear's defence of Indian rights before a Nebraska Court in May 1879, Hubert Humphrey's eight-minute plea for racial equality on the floor of the American Democratic National Convention on 14 July 1948, Sir Geoffrey Howe's resignation speech in the House of Commons on 13 November 1990, which spelt the end of the Thatcher government, and Mark Antony's piece of eloquence in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Along the way, we meet more great speakers of all kinds, from Gandhi and Martin Luther King to Hitler and Winston Churchill, Alastair Cooke and Eminem. Highlighting the spontaneity, creativity and immediacy of the communicative moment with both skill and humour, Furniss reflects on the spoken word and the situations in which it occurs, highlighting its potentialities, and takes his readers from a rehearsal of neighbourly banter to much more public scenes. Drawing on his Nigerian and

wider African experience, and in particular his knowledge of Hausa and Yoruba, to broaden the range of situations considered, he offers proverbs, riddles, praise poems, speeches and illustrations, weaving a colourful network of thoughts, richly illustrated and sifted through theories. The last lines confirm the power of the spoken word at the heart of societal transformation. Appendixes, index and photographs add further to the value and interest of the book.

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OPOKU AGYEMAN, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism: the case of the All-African Trade Union Federation*. Lanham: Lexington Books (hb US$131.00 – 0 7391 0620 1). 2003, 392 pp.

At a moment when African leaders and Africa watchers are preoccupied with the new African Union, its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the G8's proposed solutions to Africa's problems, Opoku Agyeman's book is timely. It is a carefully interwoven account of grassroots Pan-Africanism, labour activism, and the sacrifices of radical Pan-Africanist leaders whose efforts were thwarted by conservative and neo-colonialist opportunists. According to Agyeman, the latter – as well as the failure of grassroots Pan-Africanism in the labour and political spheres – contributed immensely to missed opportunities to empower the majority of Africans to overcome, through a strong political union, the continent's underdevelopment and lack of dignity.

Agyeman provides ample insights into why one of the rare Pan-Africanist organizations – the All-African Trade Union Federation (AATUF) – failed to unite African workers and to contribute to Africa's economic liberation. This is a notably interdisciplinary study of Pan-Africanism that spans labour studies, international relations, intra-African relations and the Cold War. Some of the issues addressed include the viciousness of the Cold War, how some African leaders were made to choose sides, and how that may have led some Pan-Africanists to rescind their membership of the Socialist International. According to Agyeman, these Pan-Africanists preferred to focus on the unique manner in which colonialism and neo-colonialism were antithetical to Africa's development. The Eastern bloc (led by the Soviets) would rather wage class struggles across the globe.

Agyeman uses the case of the AATUF to detail how Cold War rivalry severely hampered Pan-Africanism from achieving its goals of complete political and economic liberation and development of Africa. While the Cold War raged, both the West and the East used Africa to pursue their selfish goals. In this regard, this book is strongly recommended to the new student of Cold War politics and Africa and to the experienced practitioner who needs to refresh his/her memory about how devastating the Cold War was to Africa. Agyeman is able to place Africa's problems in a context broader even than the Cold War when he observes that, 'Pan-Africanism's central goals of continental equality with the rest of the world ... entailed a basic transformation of African society and thereby of world society.' He cites Emmanuel Wallerstein to explain why the West in particular abhorred Africa's unity and progress: 'it was precisely because the dangers of unity were so great to the "existing world system"' (p. 28).

Agyeman's main theses, abundant documentary evidence and copious quotations should arouse the reader's interest in why African leaders – especially those enamoured of NEPAD, the G8 and recent IMF/World Bank programmes