

heard' (p. 247), even though this may discourage further writing in African languages. The plea entered here for the building of a corpus of texts in African languages has already been overtaken: this is already being compiled, even though it is yet to attract the attention of translators and critics, who are still focused on Anglophone and Francophone literatures.

We know that 'the Africa that writes is too often put away' (p. 144). The title of the book reminds its readers of the perverse and toxic role played by South Africa's apartheid, presented as the ultimate avatar of colonialism, which led to the systematic marginalization of African writers. The author counters this organized, stifling enterprise with the translation mandate triggered by the Babel experience and confirmed at Pentecost. The best section of the book is its second part, which focuses squarely on translation and offers an in-depth reflection on this art, presented as a creative principle, a tool and a weapon meant to get languages, cultures and literatures out of their respective ghettos, with translated texts compared to a battlefield. The author later comes up with an illuminating shortcut for the compelling need for this exercise, placing African languages on a par with European languages other than English (pp. 371 ff.). This elaborate defence of translation, on the part of an author who did his bit to advance Southern African literature in France, confirms the link between translation and the promotion of African literatures. Chapter 10, entitled 'Unnecessary translation?', reflects on the exponential spread of the English language, as illustrated in the production of 'a local, Anglophone ... literature, published locally and which sustains its authors' (p. 291). This panorama extends from translations to authorial linguistic recreations, and one may regret at this juncture the hasty condemnation of the translation of Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*.

Throughout the book, the author argues that translation 'is [a form] of linguistic equality and consenting hospitality offered to others' languages' (p. 393) and presents it as a patient linguistic dialogue between European languages and African languages, the latter taking an increasingly important role in spite of the yawning time lag between original publications and subsequent translations. The mention of Mandela's contribution to his country's national reconciliation through the translation of his autobiography into all South African languages, 'so that we can live together' (p. 394), aptly summarizes this vast book which adds to the reflection on translation in the context of globalization.

FRANÇOISE UGOCHUKWU
Open University
francoise.ugochukwu@open.ac.uk
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CHANTAL ZABUS, *Out in Africa: same-sex desire in sub-Saharan literatures & cultures*. Woodbridge: James Currey (hb £45 – 978 1 84701 082 7). 2013, 292 pp.

These are interesting and equally frustrating times for African literature. Writers are delving into new genres such as science fiction and online writing, but they are also exploring painful experiences, especially the daily challenges faced by non-straight Africans at a time when we are being told by many political and religious leaders that homosexuality is un-African. This book by a leading scholar is a timely contribution to our understanding of a long and complex history of same-sex desire in Africa.

Chantal Zabuz uses works by African scholars such as Nevile Hoad, Ifi Amadiume, Unoma Azuah and Marc Epprecht to grapple with what the young

Kenyan intellectual Keguro Macharia considers ‘moments of subject-making and subject-unmaking’ in African queer studies. To debunk the myth of the un-African-ness of homosexuality, Zabus begins by exploring the names some fifty African precolonial societies have for same-sex desire; the various examples of same-sex desires in Africa for well over two centuries; and the framing of same-sex desire in the context of colonial modernity. In the process, she problematizes the term ‘homosexuality’ when used in the African context, because what is deemed to be homosexuality by some Western scholars may not necessarily be considered as such by many on the continent. As Zabus explains:

Exclusive homosexuality would not have been and is still not a viable option for Africans who value wealth and patronymic extension through marriage. Also whether one penetrates or is penetrated may be more important than the gender of one’s sex partner ... The very concept of ‘sexual orientation’ would therefore be alien not only to ancient Greeks but to both pre-colonial and post-colonial African men as well, who, when choosing sexual partners, do not see themselves as ‘homosexual’ since they take up the ‘manly’ role of penetrator in the sex act. (p. 26)

Throughout this book, Zabus commendably draws on texts written in English and French: academics tend to focus on African writing either in English or in French, and not often do we get an analysis that brings both together. She also depicts in detail Europe’s fascination with the African body, in which the sexualized and undisciplined African body appears as the antithesis of a disciplined and organized Europe. This, of course, is not a new revelation to scholars of African studies, but what is new is Zabus’s revelation of homoerotic lust for African men – and what she describes as ‘situational heterosexual’ lust for African women – by European men.

The book draws on a wide array of texts to historicize the way in which the church penetrated the African mind by first controlling the body. The writer ties the church to the root of the criminalization of homosexuality in several African countries by arguing that many African leaders, who are today condemning homosexuality as un-African, inherited such attitudes from colonial-era missionaries. But this agenda also permeates African literature: using examples drawn from three different generations of writers, Zabus shows the way in which some writers are too willing to suggest that same-sex desire is a legacy of colonialism rather than something that is part of African history.

Zabus is arguably at her best when using works of literature to analyse African same-sex desire. Her analysis shows the way in which literature can provide us with the starting point that 100 per cent non-straight Africans are arguably central to our understanding of history, politics, shifting sexual meanings and erotic choices. Zabus also commends the works of writers such as Unoma Azuah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Lola Shoneyin and Temilola Abioye for their ‘implicit “queer” gesturing’ (p. 125). Together with other notable emerging voices from Africa, such as Binyavanga Wainaina and Sahilja Patel, these writers regularly use the freedom offered by the internet to focus attention on marginalized bodies, and they are also willing to advocate for gay rights, within and outside literature.

Zabus masterfully weaves the present and the past together; her passion and knowledge will never fail to awe the reader. In Chapter 4, for example, she invokes the phrase ‘postcolonial gothic’ to describe the shadowiness of queer Africans, figures who have been dogging African history for centuries but who remain spectres within that history. On the one hand, her close reading of these texts shows the way in which art and life imitate each other – fictional narrators and real-life figures continue to see totally non-straight Africans as a menace

and unsavoury, and simultaneously depict them as supernatural and phantom-like. On the other hand, Zabus reveals a long history of subversion of this marginality by queer figures and writers alike.

This book is a must-read for anyone – academics and non-academics – who wants to understand some of the complexity surrounding the history of same-sex desire in African societies. It makes an important contribution to our understanding of how literary analyses of same-sex desire in Africa can be employed to query history and can contribute to our understanding of contemporary attitudes towards sexual behaviour that do not conform to societal norms.

SHOLA ADENEKAN

Universität Bayreuth

olorunshola.adenekan@uni-bayreuth.de

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FREDERICK COOPER, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960*. Princeton NJ and London: Princeton University Press (hb \$45.95/£30.95 – 978 0 691 16131 0). 2014, 512 pp.

This work analyses the transition to majority rule in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa, not as a simplistic transformation of a colony into a nation, but as a process, spanning a decade and a half, in which numerous possibilities for Africa's future were debated by French and Africans alike. In this richly detailed book, Frederick Cooper explores overlapping and often conflicting visions of citizenship and sovereignty, and, in so doing, sheds new light on nationalism and the end of French rule on the African continent.

The first two chapters address how Africans became part of the debates that took place in the latter stages of the Second World War and in its immediate aftermath about the position of empire in a reformed and reconfigured, yet still fragile, French Republic. Chapter 1 explores how and why, as efforts were made to redefine the relationship between metropole and colony, the idea of a federation became part of the vocabulary in both France and Africa. 'Turning France into something other than the empire it had been' (p. 43) was, for the French, a means of rebuilding the nation after the defeats and disappointments of the Second World War, and restoring the French *mission civilisatrice*. For Africans, it formed part of a wider campaign to attain equality with metropolitan France, also evident in African mobilization around the question of female suffrage in the Four Communes and the strikes by workers from across French West Africa in 1945–46. Chapter 2 looks in great depth at the role played by Africans in the negotiations for a new French constitution, which took place in Paris in late 1945 and 1946. It reveals that, in spite of their small number, Africans successfully voiced and defended their interpretations of citizenship, bringing about a new phase in the struggle for equality between Africa and France.

The next two chapters explore how, once 'the genie of citizenship was out of the bottle' (p. 106), the concept was defined and demanded by Africans in the years between 1946 and 1956, as well as the response from the French colonial administration. Chapter 3 examines the political and ideological limitations placed on citizenship by the institutions of the Fourth Republic and subsequent African efforts to claim equality within the legislative framework of the French Union. Africans made use of the voice accorded to them by the constitution throughout this period (p. 164), voting frequently and in growing numbers (p. 146), and calling repeatedly for the single college, universal suffrage and real power for territorial