

place as a result, as indicated by the founding of cities in such diverse regions as those from Central Asia to Spain. The role of merchant capital in the development of Meccan society and the rise and expansion of Islam are totally ignored by such statements. Essential, this view is ahistorical and based on value judgements against nomads. It was in recognition of a social, political and economic transformation in the Islamic world that we see Umar II attempting to institute a major shift in the policy of the Caliphate. And it was for this attempt that Umar II is known in early Islamic history, although he ruled for a short, and otherwise uneventful two years.

In conclusion, this book perpetuates unfounded assumptions about early Islamic society and for this it does not bring anything new. One might regard it as a testimony to the tenacity of the static and ahistorical misconceptions of the Orientalist mind-set not only in Western scholarship but also in that of the socialist countries. With all of its drawbacks, including the poorly edited text and its low technical quality, this book is full of valuable and interesting information supplied by the primary sources regarding Fustat and early Islamic history; for example, Kubiak's discussion of the Khandaq, a defensive trench dug by the Khariji governor Ibn al Jahdam against the Umayyad army of Abd al-Malik. Historians should find the involvement of this Khariji governor here critical for the understanding of several aspects of early Islamic history such as the role of the so-called anti-Caliph Ibn al-Zubayr, the role of the Khawarij, and Umayyad policy. Kubiak also provides several good discussions on the territorial evolution of Fustat from which we learn that expansion was inward rather than outward (the spaces between the khittat were filled up). On the demographic evolution, we learn that the population continued to increase in size and diversity to reach several hundred thousands. Therefore, it is for these contributions and for its factual information that the value of this book should be recognized, not for its assumptions and conclusions.

Mahmood Ibrahim
History Department
University of California
Riverside

* * * * *

Katakata for Sofahead. Segun Oyekunle. Macmillan, London, 1983. 47 pages.

If the aim of literary work is to make a significant impact on its intended audience, the careful choice of the language of communication, the form or style and the story are particularly essential. Segun Oyekunle's Katakata for Sofahead,

a play written in Pidgin, the language of the common man in English-speaking Africa combines elements of Bertolt Brecht's Theater of Alienation with African oral traditional style, to make a strong comment on how social and economic predicaments in Nigeria dehumanises especially the common innocent Nigerian citizens.

The story if reconstructed lineally is of a young brilliant school leaver who leaves for the city with a dream, but when the reality of life strikes, he ends up in a prison because he could not bribe his way out of a misdemeanour. There he is forced to relive his painful experience in a mock trial by the prisoners who once again condemn him to perpetual punishment. But *Katakata* is not lineal. Rather it opens in the prison and the drama unfolds in a series of storytelling and re-enactments in which all the prisoners participate.

In a dramatic style which the bare set of the prison cell forces upon a writer, symbolism becomes a very strong vehicle of reaching a meaningful rapport with the reader or audience. *Katakata* thus is at its satiric best not only in its witty Pidgin dialogue but in conjuring meaning through the dramatic use of every item in the prison cell.

The cell thus becomes a small microcosm for the Nigerian society at large. Nigeria is thus a prison, not a criminal prison per se, since the Buhavis, the Okolos and the Jangidis of this cell are not criminals, but a prison of social and economic mismanagement and of a judicial system only too eager to inflict 'justice' on the poor. If this sounds familiar to readers beyond Oyekunle's immediate audience, it is because *Katakata's* total meaning reaches at an economic system the world over which has been able to keep the world's major population in the perpetual penury of the economic prison. This is what universality of art should mean for the African writer, achieving meaning beyond the immediate experience using familiar elements of that experience.

There is perhaps a note of pessimism in *Katakata*. The only progress in this very interesting drama is downhill. The struggle for survival becomes more vicious among the prisoners and Lateef our innocent victim loosens up and joins in the language and dance of the prisoners. This is another strong implication of the play in today's economic realities. In Nigeria today, Lateef might as well be a jobless Graduate.

Both Segun Oyekunle and Macmillan deserve commendation, the one for resisting temptations and pressures from other publishers to introduce Pidgin by way of English translation, the other for the courage in giving a dynamic language a chance to reach a wide audience and be judged on its own merits.

Katakata for Sofahead is a very successful experimentation. The Pidgin enhances the drama. It is interesting to read for speakers of Pidgin, challenging and most fulfilling to readers who are being introduced to Pidgin for the first time. It is strongly recommended for all readers and especially the students and scholars of theater to whom its unique style would appeal, and to young students who need to learn from the experience of Lateef. Katakata for Sofahead is an immediate reference for scholars interested in Pidgin use now and in the future.

Aliyu Umar Modibbo
Cal. State University
Long Beach

* * * * *

Women in Tanzania: An Annotated Bibliography. Ophelia Masacarenhas and Marjorie Mbilinyi. Scandinavian Institute of African Studies. Uppsala, 1983. 256 pages.

In the last decade, we have witnessed a phenomenal growth in the body of literature dedicated to the study of women in developing countries. The effect of such a concentrated intellectual effort has been an encouraging acknowledgement that the issue of women is not a separate or secondary issue but rather an integral element to national development. Because of the ramifications of gender and economic discrimination, it has now become clear that economic and national development will be meaningless without the full participation of women.

The relevant literature on women can be broadly classified into three strands — often discrete but many times overlapping: 1) the attempt to understand the relationship between women and development through a series of theoretical constructs — e.g., modernization, dependency, and Marxism; 2) a body of literature devoted to empirical and statistical analysis of the condition of women in both the urban and rural areas; 3) a continuing debate that focuses upon determining the most effective ways of resolving the question of women in national development (emphasizing policy planning and implementation).

The book under review falls within the last category and provides a critical analysis of the available material on the Tanzanian woman — not as a homogeneous group, but as a group with class differences, and hence different priorities. It is an excellent compendium of information.

For those who are studying "the question" of women in national development, with a particular concern for peasant women, this book is a treasure. It focuses on Tanzanian women