

and Brazil is not the only country where non-native born scholars conduct research. Indeed, where would academic study of the United States be without de Toqueville or Myrdal or da Matta?

The organizers of *O Brasil dos Brazilianistas: Um guia dos estudos sobre o Brasil nos Estados Unidos, 1945-2000* are to be applauded for encouraging this kind of debate. The articles show clearly that scholars of Brazil, irrespective of their birthplaces or training, are in dialogue with each other. The governments of both Brazil and the United States (and other countries as well) are eager to promote intellectual exchanges in order to guarantee the conversation and this is good for scholars, their students, and the interested public. Brazilianism only exists as a function of Brazil and, as *O Brasil dos Brazilianistas* shows, the tension between the poles makes for a fertile intellectual landscape

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Afolabi, Niyi. *The Golden Cage: Regeneration in Lusophone African Literature and Culture*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2001. 256 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index.

Niyi Afolabi's *The Golden Cage* is a worthwhile contribution to the field of Lusophone African Cultural Studies. The book focuses on four authors, one Angolan (Manuel Rui) and three Mozambicans (Luís Bernardo Honwana, Mia Couto, and Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa). Through impressive close readings of selected texts, Afolabi develops the argument that there is, in Lusophone African literature, a carnivalesque regenerative tradition that neutralizes hierarchies and celebrates the "complementarity of opposites" (228). In essence, he is asserting that these writers deconstruct the colonial and neo-colonial binaries they inherit.

While many of Afolabi's textual readings are interesting, sometimes his reasoning lacks rigor, particularly when he tries to pass subjective value judgments off as universally agreed objective truths. A very glaring instance of this is his muddled explanation of the book's title. After claiming that Portuguese colonialism was "the most brutal" of all colonialisms (xii), and implying that it uniquely "required an armed warfare to dismantle" (xii), he then proceeds to assert that "these non-Portuguese-speaking parts of the African world offer a richness and a diversity that have been hidden to the rest of the world due to language barrier, the devastating armed struggle, as well as harrowing civil wars that have underdeveloped rather than develop that part of the continent" (xii). Even assuming that Afolabi means the Portuguese-speaking parts of Africa, and not the opposite as he states and which makes his argument nonsense, he seems to fall into a number of intellectual traps in order rhetorically to bludgeon his reader with an idea which could more simply be stated as the problem of the Anglophone bias in African Studies. Reducing Lusophone Africa to an underdeveloped, homogenous and unique war zone that suffered at the hands of, and as a result of, the "most brutal" colonial regime, overlooks the relative stability of Cape Verde, the turmoil, civil wars, independence struggles, and underdevelopment of large tracts of Francophone and Anglophone Africa, not to mention that it morally downgrades the brutality of the British, French, Belgian, Italian, Spanish and German presences in Africa. A more convincing argument for general ignorance of Lusophone Africa is the semi-peripheral position of Portugal recently addressed by Margarida Ribeiro in *Portuguese Studies* (2002). When the

colonial power languishes on the margins, the former colonies begin life as marginal constructs of a marginalized center. In some ways, that renders their cultural output unique because their literature is born of resistance to weakness.

Afolabi reads Honwana's *Nós Matámos o Cão-Tinhoso* as a subversive attack on the concept of Portuguese colonial regeneration. Brutality and violence simmer at the surface of a text that construes the ambivalences of Mozambican identity. As Afolabi shows, the frontiers between language registers, the social demarcations of skin pigmentation, and the distinction between humanity and bestiality become less than rigid in Honwana's universe and simultaneously belie the rhetoric of the Portuguese "'civilizing' enterprise" (33).

In his chapter on Manuel Rui, Afolabi argues that the Angolan is almost unique among his nation's contemporary authors in that his work bridges "the two contesting periods of colonial degeneration and post-colonial regeneration by subjecting the characters to ridicule" (115). He also claims that Rui "distinguishes himself as a writer who keeps renewing his art through constant narrative experimentation while he remains thematically uncompromising in his focus on socio-political criticism through satire" (77). In some respects, Pepetela has done the same, and drawing more explicit parallels between the two authors would have added an interesting dimension to Afolabi's argument. In fact, Afolabi's treatment of Pepetela is troubling and limited, particularly his assertion that "Pepetela has evolved from optimism to pessimism" (14). This observation requires rather more substantiation than Afolabi offers given the variety and complexity of the twelve books published by Pepetela that predate *The Golden Cage*. While Rui certainly uses different works to critique different moments, both pre- and post-independence, in Angolan history, so does Pepetela, and satire, Rui's supposedly distinguishing feature is very present in Pepetela's *A Revolta da Casa dos Ídolos* and *O Desejo de Kianda* (which, incidentally, Afolabi misnames *O Segredo de Kianda*, 14).

Afolabi provides some very astute readings of Mia Couto's work, demonstrating how the Mozambican blends "tradition and modernity" and applies a "revolutionary (re)appropriation of the Portuguese language" in order to fashion a cultural memory for his young nation (168). However, Afolabi's treatment of the negative criticisms leveled against Couto for lacking "authenticity" repeats a critical paradigm that needs to be challenged. While he rightfully points out that such criticisms are restricted to "unofficial comments made in the inner circles of the *Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos*" (122), he then falls into the trap of unnecessarily defending Couto, claiming, "while constructive criticism may be productive, I find the case of Mia Couto to be exception [*sic*] to this rule" (168). Couto is a big enough writer to expect and require criticism. What is amazing is the lack of published, coherent interrogation of his political stance as a literate, white writer taken to speak for a predominantly illiterate, black nation. To date, only Maria Manuel Lisboa has dared to raise these issues in a cogent and well-argued article published in her own name, and she does so in a manner that both appreciates the writer's virtuosity and problematizes his position (See Maria Manuel Lisboa, "Colonial Crosswords: (In)voicing the Gap in Mia Couto," in Robin Fiddian, *Postcolonial Perspectives on the Cultures of Latin America and Lusophone Africa* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2000). In contrast, there is a disproportionate number of articles and interviews in which phantom arguments against Couto's work are rebutted before they are ever articulated, obscuring genuine arguments not so much against Couto as a writer, but instead against the way in which Western-orientated readers interpret him. Unfortunately, Afolabi repeats this pattern.

Afolabi positions Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa as a rebel against both colonialism and its post-independence successor. He convincingly argues that Ungulani's work reveals "disenchantment with power structures" (224) and intertextually resonates with a double

discourse that effaces a “Portuguese glorious past,” textually replacing it with a Mozambican past and present (225).

Overall, *The Golden Cage* is important for its textual readings, and the excerpts from interviews with authors that it includes. However, it would have benefited from a more rigorous editing process, prior to publication.

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Johnson III, Ollie Andrew. *Brazilian Party Politics and the Coup of 1964*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2001. 176 pp.

In his book, *Brazilian Party Politics and the Coup of 1964*, Ollie Andrew Johnson III revisits the crucial question of the role of political parties in the breakdown of democracy in Brazil in 1964. He contests the received wisdom that it was Brazilian parties’ indiscipline, ideological incoherence, and inability to compromise that contributed to the failure of democracy. In Johnson’s view, it was the growing electoral strength of leftist parties and progressive factions, and the strengthening of the party system as a whole, that led the traditional right and center to abandon democratic institutions and support a military coup. The argument rests on an analysis of three dimensions of party behavior: interparty, intraparty and transparty competition. Each chapter provides an interesting new perspective and new data on these aspects of party behavior during this period. Johnson’s most important contributions are to our understanding of the evolution of the electoral strength of the left and the behavior of cross-party factions in the legislature. At the same time, his claim that the clear trend in the party system was toward a programmatic reform emanating from the left is not convincingly supported by this data. And the links between changes in the party system and the decision of the center and right to support a coup are virtually absent from the analysis. The result is a study that provides an interesting new perspective on how the Brazilian party system evolved over this period. It is less convincing in countering the dominant view that the left shared many of the institutional weaknesses of the right and the center and that it was a general weakness of democratic institutions that contributed fatally to breakdown.

Johnson’s first analysis focuses on the evolution of the electoral strength of the three major parties of the right (União Democrática Nacional or UDN), center (Partido Social Democrático or PSD) and left (Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro, or PTB) over the period. He challenges the view that there was no clear direction of change in the party system primarily by dispelling the view that the rise of the PTB was strictly regional, located primarily in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In addition to emphasizing the decline of the PSD, Johnson sheds new light on the growing national strength of the left. He shows that while the PTB delegation in the Lower House increased by 75% over the period, Rio Grande do Sul contributed only 12% of this total. While these figures do much to dispel the view that the PTB was strong primarily only in one state, he does not provide a state-by-state breakdown of the PTB delegation. Figures demonstrating that the remaining 86% of deputies were spread across a number of states would have strengthened his argument for a national realignment of party forces. Nevertheless, Johnson’s point that the PTB was more of a national phenomenon than previously recognized is an important contribution.