

life and marriage in Songhai and casts a spectral shadow on the narrative. The metaphorisation of marriage as a garden into which the hungry go to have their fill of golden apples is quite ingenious. The noun phrase 'golden apples' is a euphemism for sex (the Life Force).

Much as Gimba tries to decapitate the logo and make his style gender-neutral - a popular feminist practice that holds no attraction for Zahrah -, his diction still appears phallogocentric or sexist. He uses the lexical item 'male' for both sexes. A moralist, he eschews eroticism and a florid style and

thus denies the reader the pleasure of linguistic orgasm. The novel's title is instructive in this respect. Its symbolic code is highly poetic but repressed. Unlike Armah, Gimba shies away from calling things pertaining to sexual intercourse by their true names. Consider the only instance of the sexual act in the novel. Having sent Aalimah his client into a deep slumber with a barbiturate, An-Najmu the randy marabout 'went into commerce with her' (206). No doubt, the novelist's banking profession has impacted his style. Clean, nonindulgent and nonprurient, it is the

style of the puritan and is worthy of note in a licentious age. But it is marred by a few grammatical and typographical errors.

Golden Apple fits perfectly into the phase of African literature in English expression, which essentially is national in scope, in contrast with the literature of the second phase which is continental and racial in orientation and to which *Osiris Rising*, an example *par excellence* of Negritude writing, belongs.

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Girl who would be king

Yaw Boadu-Ayeboafah

Ama Ata Aidoo, THE GIRL WHO CAN AND OTHER STORIES, Sub-Saharan Publishers, Legon, Accra, 1997, 146pp.

THE literary prowess of Ama Ata Aidoo is well known. For students of literature, the depth of her works, especially the derivation of English from the roots of Akan is very stimulating. She makes form and substance, intricate structures for otherwise ordinary commonplace events.

Among her works are *Dilemma of a Ghost*, *Anowa*, *Changes*, *Our Sister Killjoy*, *No Sweetness Here*, *Someone Talking to Sometime*, *An Angry Letter in January* and other *Poems as well as Birds and Other Poems* and *The Eagle and Chickens and Other Stories* for children. The versatility of her works cuts across the genre of literature, novel, drama and poetry, as well as short stories.

The pieces in *The Girl Who Can and Other Stories* have appeared in different publications at different times. They have been put together under one cover by Sub-Saharan publishers, based at Legon, Accra. It is good that the book is published locally which means that it can be available to Ghanaians.

Through the stories, the author takes the reader through the whole social fabric. She provides new insights into some of the issues that confront us. Among them is the feeling of depression among women and the need to fight back in the face of cultural practices that do not encourage women to assert themselves. Equally, the author uses the stories to make political statements and push for women's rights.

'She-Who-Would-Be-King', which opens the book is a pro-feminist activist's assertion that whatever social inhibitions, there is hope for women to occupy political leadership. Thus in the story, the young girl emerges not just a president, but the president of the Confederation of African States (CAS) where men in the individual countries are still reluctant to accept that a woman is as capable as a man and are thus unwilling even to discuss the fact that a woman is the president - confirming traditional notions, that women must not lead.

In *The Girl Who Can*, which gives the collection its title, the author tries to look at tradition and the elements which see nothing wrong about the fact that the child must be seen but never heard. The child's duty then is only to listen and do what she/he is told. There is also the issue about the pioneer women pilots in the Ghana Air Force. Thus 'Heavy Movements' tries to capture the frustrations women go through to survive. This is seen all over the place. At the cadet training, the ladies are not only derided but scorned.

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Then how come that Akuba's stepfather was not prepared to stay with the stepdaughter. Had it been him who had a child, would he have expected Akuba's mother to live with that Child?

There is also the resilience of women, from Mampa who accept to bring up Akuba, as well as her mother whose determination to have her daughter educated could not be dimmed by an unfeeling husband. In the end, perseverance did it. Women must not be daunted by the obstacles. They can succeed.

In 'Some Global News: A Short Far-Voice Report,' the international dimension is brought into the picture and how human beings virtually behave the same way.

In 'Lice', the author touches on a major social problem, the tendency for men to abandon their children to their wives and leave the

upbringing of such children to the women. The frustrations and the thought of your man in

the arms of another woman, all these can affect the moral and psychology of women to think negatively.

But as happened with Sissie, how can a mother kill herself and her daughter out of frustration. So, even after Sissie had poured petrol on the head of Baby and herself, she could not bring herself to see their death, hence the decision to put off the lighted match before it caused havoc.

'How should she go about it? Ah, she knew. She should light baby's head first. Then her own. She struck the match. Loud coughing came from beyond the door. Of course, it was Kofi who had coughed. There was also a sound of him turning restlessly in his sleep. He coughed again. Sissie heard it. The match box and the lighted stick fell from Sissie's hands. She sat on the edge of the bed. After a second of being perfectly still, she moved with the greatest effort she must have ever made in her whole life, and brought her foot on the glowing match. Then she threw herself back on the bed and burst into tears'.

'Choosing - a Moral from the World of Work,' is another with philosophy, a great lesson for those with talent. We must always have to make a decision and a choice.

Boadu-Ayeboah writes for the literary columns of The Graphic, Accra



Ama Ata Aidoo

Not yet the hour of signs

Sola Olorunoyi

WHEN the automobile came, techno-advicts promptly proclaimed that the bicycle's hour of signs had arrived, but somehow after about a century the 'iron horse' continues to redefine its own imperatives. The allusion seems to underscore Bellagio's new initiative which attempts to weigh the impact of the new information technology on the old letter press mode of publishing; and for those conversant only with Bellagio's fellowships to scholars and writers, this must be indeed a welcome development.

Somehow though, 'the

Philip G. Altbach and Damtew Teferra Eds., KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION IN AFRICA: THE ROLE OF SCHOLARLY JOURNALS, Bellagio Publishing Network Massachusetts and Oxford, 1989, 137 PP.

Philip G. Altbach and Damtew Teferra Eds., PUBLISHING AND DEVELOPMENT: A BOOK OF READINGS, Bellagio Publishing Network; co-published with Obor. The International Book Institute, Inc., Massachusetts and Oxford, 1989 190 pp.

'Bellagio Studies in Publishing, 9-publishing'-foregrounds the 'Bellagio Studies in Publishing, 8 -Knowledge' - which merely contextualises the African experience in publishing;

hence, I have taken liberty with this more convenient sequence to draw my observations. Publishing contains nine chapters including 'Current Trends in Book Publish-

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