

reasonably have remained with no threat to the orthodoxy of the Christian communities (pp. 109, 196 ff., and epilogue).

Curiously, Okwu does not present a theory of conversion (per the book's subtitle). The only discussion at any length about conversion is in the epilogue, with no interaction with other scholarship on conversion, such as Robin Horton's "intellectualist" model ("African Conversion" [1971]), or Okorocho's "salvationist" study of Igbo conversion to Christianity (*The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa* [1987]). What Okwu seems to mean by the subtitle to the book is that Christian missionaries, in theory, sought to convert individuals from "paganism" to Christianity. Instead, these missionaries had to contend with Igbo demands for education and their responsiveness to advancement within Western political and economic systems. Though Okwu notes the appeal of missionary services to the Igbo, their actual impact upon Igbo culture is vague in parts. For example, in one sentence Okwu mentions in passing that Catholic medical practices led to a diminishing of Igbo notions of causality regarding illness and health, without expounding upon the cultural ramifications of this shift (p. 232).

Okwu compiles a variety of sources to illuminate both the "Igbo" as well as the "missionary" sides of the religious encounter. Thus, he extensively uses the archival resources of multiple missionary societies, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, and government records. His use of "oral tradition" is more ambiguous. He does pepper the work with frequent references to local tradition or memory. These are predominantly autobiographical and anecdotal in nature (though they are frequently quite fascinating examples) (p. 172, 179). However, these references are not cited or based upon obvious field research.

*Igbo Culture and the Christian Missions* is more a study of the impact of Igbo culture on Western missionary societies' policies than of the changes that missionary presence effected within Igbo culture itself. Okwu accomplishes his task of demonstrating this relationship. His work provides an impressive history of Catholic missions in colonial Nigeria, and would certainly be of interest to scholars of the history of Christian missions, especially in the colonial era. It also shows that the introduction of European civilization and religion into southern Nigeria was a complex phenomenon in which both Europeans and Africans negotiated cultural ideals with colonial realities.

Jason Bruner, *Princeton Theological Seminary*

**Tejumola Olaniyan and James Sweet. *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. viii, 363 pp.**

The relationship between the African homeland and its diaspora has increasingly become an object of study, particularly since the last decade of the twentieth century. However, there has also been a lack of conceptual frameworks that would best make sense of the phenomena being studied. Where scholarship has not been frozen in mildewed theory and anachronistic research methodology, interdisciplinary suspicion or animosity has put paid any real chances for meaningful dialogue between the competing and contending disciplines. It has been extremely rare to see scholarship that goes against the operation of disciplinary border police in an

attempt to unlock the essence of the African diaspora. Therefore, African diaspora studies, has, first off, been in dire need of an avenue for cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary dialogue and for the rethinking and reconfiguration of conceptual frameworks that would make scholarly investigations more meaningful and effective. Secondly, it has been in dire need of a platform where any number of disciplines can meet and dialogue freely and beneficially in a manner that is mutually intelligible.

Tejumola Olaniyan and James Sweet's edited volume could not have come at a better time. With a title fashioned after Robert Bates and V.Y. Mudimbe's *Africa and the Disciplines* (1993), this new text echoes the spirit but not the letter of its precursor. The earlier text is preoccupied with how Africa has contributed to various disciplines, whereas this new one focuses on strategies of studying the African diaspora from different disciplinary perspectives. Olaniyan and Sweet's text has the potential to reinvigorate African Diaspora Studies, itself a burgeoning field crying for more illuminating conceptual anchoring. The volume is a collection of a wide range of theoretical essays grounded in divergent fields of inquiry, which nonetheless converge in their quest to make sense of the mystique of the African diaspora. It is this diversity of disciplinary voices and stances that lends this volume its richness and profundity. But this is also greatly enhanced by the quality and divergent disciplinary biases of the essayists contributing to the volume. On the whole, the book adroitly brings together erudite voices from the humanities and social science as well as hard sciences such as genetics that have a bearing on African Diaspora Studies.

The book contains fifteen chapters divided into four distinct parts, covering history, the sciences, arts, and cultural studies. The bulk of the chapters are judicious selections from a conference on the African diaspora and the disciplines that was held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison under the sponsorship of The African Diaspora and Atlantic Research Circle in March 2006. The chapters deal with theorization of the African Diaspora Studies and initiating dialogue between and within various disciplines with respect to African Diaspora Studies. The volume emphasizes conceptual debates over primary research and analysis. And in developing their various conceptual arguments and analyses, the writers do not equivocate. The outcome is an edited volume that confronts and illuminates upon conceptual debates with authority, acuity, and clarity.

The text is remarkable in the way it privileges the overlap between disciplines in general but particularly between the humanities (history, philosophy, and musicology), the social sciences (geography, anthropology, archeology, and political science), and genetics (science). Fatimah L. C. Jackson and Latifa F. J. Borgelin's enlightening article "How Genetics Can Provide Detail to the Transatlantic African Diaspora," is an example of the magnitude of disciplinary diversity in the volume. In this article Jackson and Borgelin bring the science of genetics to bear on our understanding of the Transatlantic African diaspora in ways that are truly rewarding and refreshing. As they argue compellingly, the DNA or "genetic information can yield a more robust perspective on the migrations of African peoples" (p. 75). Their article not only shows the methods at work in the past and the present in assessing the African diaspora but also suggests new and innovative ways with which that could be done in future.

In his “African Diaspora and Anthropology,” Richard Price provides a survey of the trajectory of thought on continuities and disjuncture of aspects of the homeland in the cultural heritage of the African diaspora, particularly in North America. He is severely critical of scholars such as Michael Gomez, who insist on retention of African cultural practices in the diaspora. Instead, he maintains: “We must grant full agency to African Americans, making them the central actors in the construction of their cultures” (p. 66). In other words, in his view the diasporic African is responsible for his self-creation, his formulation of a uniquely diasporic identity, ethnicity, and culture. Evidently, Price is unlikely to have the last word on this debate, but what is important at this point is how his chapter like, others in this volume, not only articulates issues beyond disciplinary particularity, but also self-consciously engages other disciplines.

In brief *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines* is a luminous collection of essays, indeed a must read for anyone interested in diasporas in general and the African diaspora in particular. This book has the potential of becoming a touchstone for the field of diaspora studies.

Ken Walibora Waliaula, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

**Brett L. Shadle.** *“Girl Cases:” Marriage and Colonialism in Gusiiland, Kenya, 1890-1970.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006. x, 256 pp.

The title of this remarkable text, borrowed from a saying by a British official in the South Kavirondo District of colonial Kenya in the 1930s, refers to the gender and generational disputes over the meaning of marriage and its customs in the region of Gusiiland in the twentieth century. More specifically, “girl cases” referred to the phenomenon, beginning in the 1890s, of Kenyan women in Gusiiland being abducted, raped, or running off with lovers. Brett Shadle uses the events of “girl cases” to illuminate the changing notions (and conflicts) about marriage in twentieth century Gusiiland. Thus, the main aim of the book is to “describe from where the ‘girl cases’ emerged and what became of them . . . untangle the contentious struggles over marriage, and trace the trajectory of Gusii marriage from the turn of the century up through the 1960s” (p. xx).

Shadle’s significant arguments stem from the myriad reasons why “girl cases” occurred. He asserts that the era of innumerable “girl cases” —the 1940s through the early 1960s—was born of the union of two factors, one old and one new. First, was the nature of Gusii bridewealth. Gusii men’s primary source of bridewealth cattle was what they received from the marriage of a daughter or sister. A father had to ensure that what he received as bridewealth would be sufficient to give as bridewealth in return. However, when a man heard rumors of increased “going rates” for bridewealth, he had to abide by the current rates. Consequently, a Gusii man might be left without enough cattle to make a new marriage if he abided by the increased current rates for bridewealths. The second reason for “girl cases” was the colonial economy. Shadle emphasizes that unevenly distributed new wealth circulating in Gusiiland forced the bridewealth rate up to levels unseen for decades. Because the going rates for bridewealth dramatically increased, only a few men could afford a wife, let alone multiple wives. As

Copyright of African Studies Quarterly is the property of African Studies Quarterly and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.