

Emmanuel Ngara and Andrew Morrison, Editors, **Literature, Language and the Nation**, Harare: ATOLL & Baobab Books, 1989, 230 pages.

This publication is a collection of papers arising from the 1987 conference of the Association of University Teachers of Literature and Language (ATOLL) held in Harare. ATOLL was set up in 1985, and now appears to be a flourishing organisation. In general terms its major aim is to promote co-operation in teaching and research among the University Departments of Literature and Languages in the SADCC region. **Language, Literature and the Nation** is an example of the positive results of co-operation and discussion, being the first publication of the Association. The Universities of the SADCC countries are well represented by the authors of the majority of the papers, and they are joined by some contributors from Scandinavia.

**Language, Literature and the Nation** contains nineteen essays on a wide range of subjects concerning language and literature in Africa. The essays are competent, pertinent, thought-provoking, and perhaps importantly, in a volume of this kind, almost all contributions are accessible to a fairly wide range of readers. The papers are clearly divided into two sections under the headings of "Literature" and "Language", but academics, students, and others who are concerned with the issue surrounding language, literature and the creation of cultural consciousness will find much to interest them in both sections whatever their particular area of specialisation.

The literature essays range from some detailed analysis and discussion of particular texts, such as Chennell's paper on La Guma's later novels, through more general "position" papers such as Sumaili's "Literature and the Process of Liberation", to more unusual topics and approaches such as McLoughlin's analysis of comic strip as a reflection of Zimbabwe's national development. The Malawian contribution to the book comes from Anthony Nazombe, whose review essay of **When My Brothers Come Home**, a collection of poetry edited by Frank Chipasula, is entirely relevant to the main theme of the volume and is broad in its scope. Through its analysis of poetry and liberation it is one of the few papers that is able to encompass the whole of Central and Southern Africa in its discussion, thus making a particular contribution to the kind of regional consciousness that ATOLL is trying to promote.

The language essays are as varied and interesting as the contributions on literature. Some papers discuss the general issues of language and literature in education and nation building. The issues are not new, but fresh and unusual perspectives are presented. For example, Ines Machungo and Gilberto Matusse from Eduardo Mondlane University give an interesting, if rather disappointingly short, overview of language and literature in Mozambique, and raise the particular problems of teaching English in a country where the "second" language is Portuguese. Also Preben Kaarsholm, from the University of Copenhagen, draws intriguing comparisons between popular political and cultural movements in Denmark and Zimbabwe. The other contribution from Scandinavia, by Helge Ronning, deals with the general theme under which these essays have been collected but focuses exclusively on Norway, and in this sense seems rather out of place as it is the only paper which does not directly concern itself with Africa.

By contrast with the papers already mentioned, one from Peter Mwikwisa focuses specifically on African Languages in his analysis of Sesotho, Setswana and Silozi. Other language papers discuss particular problems and issues in English language teaching, and its place in relation to African languages. Finally, Tom Essiflie's paper deserves mention. Based at the University of Botswana, he comments on Language Teaching Programmes in various SADCC Universities. This kind of comparative perspective provides particularly valuable insights and information for those who are actually teaching within the SADCC region.

Overall the standard of the papers in **Language, Literature and the Nation** is high, and the book is attractively presented and well produced. This is an impressive beginning for ATOLL publications.

**Jennifer Evans**