"African magic/marvellous realism" (166) through an attachment to Ben Okri, an interrogation of Kole Omotoso's use of the term, and a brief review of "African science fiction." (circa 172) Deandrea is not particularly intrigued by literary critical labels, but they do permit him an entry into the fascinating world of Laing's technique:

This essay does not intend to underline literary standards, unlike Homi Bhabha, I do not think that 'Magic Realism' – or fantastical realism or African science fiction or whatever – 'becomes the literary language of the emergent post-colonial world' [Bhabha: 7]. Completely different kinds of fiction can be as effective and compelling as Laing's. Nevertheless, what I hope I have managed to stress are the groundbreakingly unique characteristics of his style (176).15

The clarity of language, the range of reference, the attention to detail, and the enthusiasm for his subject are qualities that the new trends and generations in African criticism would be remiss to ignore. While this issue of African Literature Today has an unevenness to it, some of Eldred Jones' selections maintain the journal's significance to scholars of African literature.

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This small book has been written by a renowned scholar of Comparative Literature who has several publications on African and Comparative Literature to her credit. The book is definitely a useful addition to the scarce references we have on proverbs with regard to gender issues. The book surveys proverbs from different African ethnic groups, which are created around the theme of feminism. The author has made a big effort to ensure that the collected data is as representative as possible by getting it from as many as forty African countries.

There is an obvious suggestion that besides the mother whose countenance is positively reflected as "unique, loving reliable and hard-working," the rest of the womenfolk is depicted as more unfaithful than virtuous" and, therefore, negative, and men are warned not to fall for their charms and evil intentions. Thus women are painted as the source of all evil in the world, which is also the title of this book. However, this strong allegation seems to

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be mollified by the *Penguin Dictionary of Proverbs* (1986) when its author claims that “proverbs don’t have to be true, because they sometimes contradict each other.” How far can this claim be taken seriously? We shall come to it later.

The book is divided into four major sections, namely, the introduction, proverb texts, sources and bibliography. The introduction is a theoretical background of the proverb genre, which is discussed under three subsections. The texts section has two subsections which are further divided into subdivisions. Areas which, in my view, are of interest for scrutinization are the second part of the introduction and the texts themselves because these two form the heart of the work. The introductory part deals with “Women and Proverbs in Africa.” The author begins by classifying African proverbs into two groups of “direct” and “metaphorical statements.” However, she quickly adds that it is impossible to arrive at a satisfactory classification of them, which is incidentally an echo of a couple of other paremiologists. In various cases of the collected proverbs, so far, there has been no criterion reached which could be referred to as a standard method of their classification. Even the “father of paremiology,” Archer Taylor, admitted the futility of attempting at a successful definition or classification of the proverb genre.

Within this second part of the introduction, the author advances a discussion on four areas: “non-verbal” proverbs, proverbial characteristics, silent and invisible (women – JSM) and “The words of women do not fall down.” The area on non-verbal proverbs dwells on those proverbs which are symbolized by such things as sculptures on vessels or cloth, or by drumbeats or sound of horns and other artforms. Only the method of pot-lids (used in the Cabinda region) has been discussed in some detail. Notwithstanding certain advantages to the woman using this method, the author decries it because it still keeps the woman behind the curtains, denying her equal chance of expression with men in settling social problems in which she is involved.

However, the author may need to know a bit more about non-verbal proverbs. She may be amazed to discover that only a few of them are meant to cater for woman-man-woman or man-woman-man communication. Many of them are man-man/society (e.g. drum-, horn-, trumpet-, flag-proverbs) and they are meant to relay only very serious social matters, although “seriousness” is a concept that is subject to debate. One exceptional example of woman-woman/man/society and vice-versa communication could be the “khanga” and “kawa” proverbs of the Waswahili of East Africa. The khanga is a cloth which was introduced to the East African coast by the Indian traders at the beginning of the nineteenth century and which got indigenized as a female wear, and kawa is a food-cover which is made from dried palm leaves.