

BOOK REVIEWS

Nwando Achebe. *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria Ahebi Ugbabe*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011. xiii, 305 pp.

The Female King of Colonial Nigeria reconstructs the life and legacy of a powerful female leader in an appealing and engaging manner. Through substantive oral and archival research, Achebe provides an in-depth and extensive analysis of Ahebi Ugbabe. She begins by eloquently engaging her audience with a theoretically narrativized description of initial research undertakings and planning before the study. She takes the reader through her research journey from when she first set foot in Nigeria to study the female leader she curiously terms *The Female King*, echoing Ifi Amadiume's *Male Daughters, Female Husbands* (1989).

Achebe's historical study indeed sheds light on significant issues of women and gender in Africa. It is packed with illuminating insights on the fluidity of gender and the colonial experience. A panoply of different issues become visible in her discussion, especially the centering of issues of gender performances and female masculinities, as well as the conceptions of female enslavement, female independence, and the definitions of prostitution in an African context. To illuminate the significance of the issues discussed, Achebe provides evidential excerpts from interviews that give voice to oral expressions and society's knowledge of Ahebi even though some may question issues of memory and the validity of their expressions.

Achebe begins by describing her initial research preparations and then grounds her study by contextualizing it around and about all other similar studies. *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria*, as Achebe notes, speaks to all and above all criticisms she places or have been placed on other women (auto) biographies. But rather controversially, Achebe criticizes and discounts critics of her earlier critical works and elevates her text above other (auto) biographical texts written beforehand. Granted, Achebe clearly supports her text as critical in filling a gap in women's literature and unlike other women (auto) biographical texts, it is grounded on several indigenous oral expressions, it advances an interdisciplinary approach to biographical study, and it forwards theoretical debates on sex, sexuality, gender, and enslavement as well as critical narrative conventions on the study of self. However, flaunting her text as the best is somewhat jarring.

In the subsequent chapters, Achebe remarkably traces and reconstructs Ahebi's family ancestry and genealogy. She takes the reader on a journey surrounding Ahebi's origins, and development through photos, and oral history. Achebe makes sure to include minute but necessary details such as the meanings of names and their significance to Ahebi's story. Thereafter, Achebe explores Ahebi's gendered performances as a female headman and as a female warrant chief that seems to be the gist of the book. Ahebi's gendered performances are seen through her relationship with the British colonials as an informant, which may have impacted her various performances. Nonetheless, the author reveals the fascinating ambiguity whereby colonialism empowered women as much as it eroded their power in traditional societies.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v13i1-2a7.pdf>

Finally, Achebe concludes by explicating the typical daily activities of an all-powerful *Female King* and warrant chief in her palatial palace. Part of her activities included adjudicating cases spanning from land to adultery, cases that she judged even without help and in opposition to the liking of the British colonial administrators. It is unfortunate that even though Achebe examines the conflict between Ahebi and the male elders in the community who felt emasculated by Ahebi's association with the British colonials to keep her position as king, headman, and warrant chief, Achebe does not speak to or about the men in the society and how they negotiated their place under *The Female King*, thus forwarding the case of Ahebi's as all-powerful. To further, establish Ahebi's power, the author chooses to recount her self-commissioned burial rights. Achebe claims that Ahebi instituted her burial performances because it was an empowering performance and she "did not trust that her society would accord her a befitting burial" (p. 187). Similarly, to keep Ahebi's all-powerful stature alive, the story ends by a reconstruction of how Ahebi is presently remembered by her community.

In my judgment, the book provides a comprehensive story of Ahebi. There is no doubt that Achebe made an effort to construct and create a detailed analysis of Ahebi, whose life story would otherwise be told in a single chapter. There is ample evidence that the book was cleverly crafted, pieced together to reconstruct Ahebi's story from multiple sources and especially oral history and vignettes from the community including the authors own reconfiguration of the connections surrounding Ahebi. *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria* makes a solid contribution to the literature on women's (auto) biography and the cogent treatments of gender, and sexualities. The book will benefit scholars, students, and those interested in issues of women and gender.

There are, however, lengthy musical excerpts in the final chapters that may encourage or discourage a (non) musically oriented audience. Also, the text may push away readers who insist on gender parity, as Achebe's text significantly ignores the place of men in Ahebi's life. Nonetheless, the text complements and advances Achebe's earlier works and that of other scholars who have written on and provided insights on powerful Igbo women and studies on African women leaders.

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Heike Behrend. *Resurrecting Cannibals: The Catholic Church, Witch-Hunts, and the Production of Pagans in Western Uganda*. Suffolk: James Currey, 2011. 214 pp.

Africa is often regarded as home to witchcraft and cannibalism, two phenomena which have often been described in derogatory terms. *In Resurrecting Cannibals* Behrend ventures into the world of cannibals and witches and comes out with a book that is a must read for all interested in Africa. It is a useful resource in the study of history, religion, anthropology and sociology of Africa. With its catchy title readers would not be disappointed in the way cannibalism has been demystified in an unbiased professional manner.

Behrend pinpoints some dimensions of African religion and sociology which have often been overlooked by researchers. For example, the fact that food produces substantial connection

between persons other than just being a quench for hunger has not been fully explored. As a framework for the book, he identifies two factors as responsible for the origin and rise of occultism (cannibalism/witchcraft) in Africa – AIDS and modern Christianity. He states that the strong increase in death rates caused by AIDS with its attendant quest to find meaning has contributed to the rise of cannibalism. Again, modern Christianity in Africa has not put an end to witchcraft and occultism but has provided a new context in which they make perfect sense (p. 70). Using Tooro, a community of Western Uganda as the study area, Behrend shows in his book how Christianity and African religious practices such as cannibalism and witchcraft on the other mirror each other.

The first section of the book, “Eating/Being Eaten,” analyzes the history of Tooro and discusses extensively the concept of “eating” and its bonding effects. This part is followed by the section “Terror and Healing” in Tooro that gives an account of how the encounter with missionaries changed the socio-cultural dynamics, creating a situation of mutual suspicion between Africans and whites. Finally, Behrend takes time to do a comparative analysis of complementary relationship between Christianity and cannibalism and how the former reinforced the latter instead of destroying it. The book identified paradoxical relationships; religion is supposed to promote peace but can also create violence (p. 112); Christianity condemns magic but promotes miracles (p. 124); eating and fasting are opposing actions with a common effect (p. 113); “Falling down” in the spiritual sense could be good and bad (p. 125).

The book brings up an interesting story about the implementation of a democratic means of identifying witches (p. 80). In an attempt to ensure fairness, suspects were put at the mercy of community members who voted to decide whether or not they were witches or cannibals. Although the emphasis of this story in the book was to show how helpless government was in resolving the “culturo-religious” challenges of witchcraft, it has a far reaching implication for the wholesale adoption and implementation of ideas from the West to promote the development agenda of Africa. Another interesting observation is how Mbiti’s description of the African as notoriously religious plays out in advertisements and signboards in towns in Uganda (p. 85). Signs as hilarious as “End Time Disco” and “Christ-Net Computer and Business Holdings” only go to prove, in Parrinder’s terms, how incurably religious the African can be.

It is unfortunate that such an interesting and well researched book may appear to invite a limited number of readers because of its specialized and abstruse language that could cause it to be accessible to only academicians. For example, a sentence such as “... synthesis between massacre and bureaucracy in the colonial world was the subject of experiment in a twilight zone of suspended law” (p. 178) could potentially affect its possible readership. Moreover, even though Behrend did very well in presenting a fair and an unbiased account, the supplementary material in the form of a DVD included with the book portrayed stereotypical images of poor Africans in tattered clothes walking barefooted, images that negate his attempt to correct the misrepresentations of Africa.

These observations notwithstanding, *Resurrecting Cannibals* is a great book. I would highly recommend it to researchers, students, and even those who would want to read for fun. In spite of its sole focus on Western Uganda, the book creates linkages with other African nations such

as Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, et cetera, and the issues raised in the book are common and could conveniently be related to most African cultures. Coming from a Ghanaian background, I saw myself as an active participant in the stories as they unfolded in the book and I believe others would relate the same way upon reading it.

References

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Elisabeth Bekers. *Rising Anthills: African and African American Writing on Female Genital Excision 1960-2000*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010. 262 pp.

Rising Anthills is a chronological analysis of various literary works on the ritual of female genital excision (FGE). This custom, which is practiced on almost every continent and across the three major monotheistic religions, is attacked, defended, or a source of conflict in the plots of the texts covered in the book. Bekers attempts to relate over twenty texts of “contemporaneous literature, to one another as well as to the general debate on female genital excision” (p. viii). The book is organized into three flexible time periods with the first looking at literature during the colonial period, where the characters are in conflict with Western missionaries over their traditional rites in rural villages. The second period focuses on authors writing in the newly independent states of Africa, situated in urbanized and growing towns. They are not battling European colonialists for progress but trying to find freedom in their own society. The third covers authors publishing in the 1990s with a more international perception of African women and their bodies. The introduction provides the reader with historical, linguistic (various terminology for FGE), and some cultural background to the significance of FGE to gender and ethnic identity and how the discourse of this practice has evolved in the latter half of the twentieth century. The timepieces she analyzes are a reflection of those changes and are undoubtedly shaped by local, national, and even global political thought and movement.

The first time period of writings focuses mostly on literature of the Gikuyu ethnic group from Kenya. The author gives a detailed account of origin stories, social construction, and eventually ethnic solidarity that inscribes or literally carves womanhood onto the bodies of women in this community. The analyzed works—*The River Between* by Ngugi, *Daughter of Mumbi* by Waciuma, and *They Shall be Chastised* by Likimani—all take place in Kenya, in which the rural communities are colonized and occupied by European missionaries. The author carefully analyzes themes, narration point (female characters as focalizers), and deconstructs each fictional work to show how FGE's role in colonial Kenya served as a marker of ethnic identity in a struggle against European antagonists, and a post-colonial critique of “the disastrous effects of colonization and evangelization on the indigenous population” (p. 57).

For the women in these novels, converted or not, mission-educated or traditionally trained in their ethnic rituals, FGE remained a nonnegotiable, significant marker of Gikuyu identity versus “the dirty mud of sin” in the Christian European context (p. 38). Bekers goes on to explain (p. 39) that both Christian and Gikuyu identities in the texts were drawing distinct ideas and values of “purity” and “cleanliness” of their own. Thus, the attempts to fully unite both cultures failed in death of converted and excised Muthoni in *The River Between*, the segregation of excised and unexcised girls at the missionary school in *Daughter of Mumbi*, and Mr. Obadiah's staunch defence of FGE and Gikuyu women's submission to men, despite his western education and status as a school headmaster, in *They Shall be Chastised*.

This first chapter introduces the reader to many views of gender identity in the African vs. Western context, as well as socio-political ramifications of FGE and for the women who may or may not choose to undergo the procedure (unexcised girls not able to marry, being banned from community). This first wave African authors and literary pieces was a strong beginning to discussion of FGE and how it was politicized during this era, and what it meant for African women who seem to lose no matter what side they stood on. However, there is one connection which was not iterated in Chapter One, with how FGE may have been a status marker in Gikuyu community. The missionaries were successful in converting many Africans, but as in Chinua Achebe's *Things Falls Apart*, some of the converts were already outsiders, men and women with little or no status in their community, or those who were already questioning their beliefs. When missionaries introduced their new way of life and perspective of “proper society” it challenged those with high status within the Gikuyu community. Unexcised women are now able to wed, have children, and gain status without “suffering” through the patriarchal constraints of the gender system in Kenya, and this challenged the status of excised women who gained respect and deference by following the norms of their community's sociocultural structure. They valued their tradition since they invested so much (physically and emotionally) to uphold it. Thus, this connection could also have contributed to politicization of ethnic identity and womanhood.

The second time period brings us to the newly independent states of Africa with a new generation of authors and literary characters. Bekers analyzes a more diverse group authors who are from different countries, languages, and even genders. However, the omnipresence of FGE links the tragedy of the female principle characters. The writing styles and conflict have also shifted: there are no European missionaries or colonial antagonists to defend a way of “pure and moral” living. The ritual of FGE is more physically and emotionally described in the works of Kourouma's *Les Soleils des Indépendance*, Farah's *From a Crooked Rib*, El Saadawi's *The Circling Song*, Maïga Ka's *La Voie du Salut*, and many more. The protagonists are struggling for freedom and equality within their own society and culture. Many of the main characters in these second generation writings live in urban towns rather than small rural villages and suffer oppression at the hands of their kin, husbands, partner, or society at large. In these texts, however, it is really the violence of rape, military subjugation, poverty, forced marriages, war, and political corruption (on a national level) that take thematic precedence in these novels rather than FGE. The excision ritual, for protagonist Salimata in *Les Soleils des Indépendance*, or

Ebla in *From a Crooked Rib*, or Hamida in *The Circling Song*, is a distant but recurring memory that is part of a chronic chain of suffering, oppression, and violence against these women. Our principle characters are questioning the entire gender system that oppresses them and regulate their bodies as the properties of men, such as the rape of Amina in *Sardines* by Farah. "In a society where women are treated as man's exclusive property, a daughter's violation is a means to punish her father..." (p. 120). In the end, the reader sees that the plight of African women continued after independence, the end of colonization brought no change to the oppressive gender system, and our focal characters' personal suffering (FGE, rape, difficult childbirth/infertility) paralleled the suffering of the nation on a whole.

The second wave of authors brought more diverse insight into the plight of African women post-independence, one highlighted by Bekers in a connection to FGE. However, the diversity of voices may have made a weaker connection than in the first chapter, because it is only a connection and not a discussion. The second wave of authors do not seem to have a level of dialogue and congruity with each other, but seem to be writing inattentive to the FGE debate specifically and more to national politics. However, in contrast to the third chapter's literary analysis, this wave does highlight how African women viewed their plight of gender and national oppression versus how women in the African diaspora (living in America and elsewhere) viewed the scope of FGE and gender oppression. As Bekers states in her opening of the third generation wave, "[M]any Africans objected to the condescension and reductionism of Western (feminist) interference, which sensationalized such issues as female genital excision instead of giving priority to African women's self-defined needs." (p. 153). Perhaps, second generation authors, are addressing what they believe are women's self-defined needs, in which FGE plays a role, but not one that is central to gender oppression, as one may have originally believe.

This brings us to the final chapter in Beker's book and the third generation of literary authors, who are more culturally diverse than our first two generations. The first few are African Americans like Gloria Naylor, Breana Clarke, Glenda Dickerson, and Pulitzer Prize winner Alice Walker. And some are African expatriates living in Europe and elsewhere like Fatou Keïta, Saida Hagi-Dirie Herzi, and Evelyne Accad. First, there is an undoubtedly, united consensus that the authors and their characters are opposed to female genital excision. The controversy lies in the way these works were composed to typecast Africa and its people in a negative light. Alice Walker is the only author in this generation to receive a high level of criticism despite the fact that her work, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* gave more agency and positive light to her protagonist, Tashi, than other compositions during this time period; according to Bekers, "Tashi is one of the most vocal and powerful protagonists discussed in this book..." (p. 164).

In other works, such as Naylor's *Outcast Virgin Mary* or Clarke and Dickerson's *Re/membering Aunt Jemima*, the excised female (or the woman avoiding her excision in *Aunt Jemima*) hardly say any lines or narration in the story. It is the American women that speak on their behalf, for they are silent victims relying on enlightened Westerners to save them. In fact, as Bekers also point out, the protagonists end up emigrating from their native repressed culture

to another country (such as America) to find liberation and peace. In these works, as well as Accad's *L'excisée*, patriarchy, prejudice, and lack of understanding are also relevant to the debate of whether these "outsiders" could discuss FGE without denigrating African culture. African men are the primitive violent aggressors in Walker's, Clarke and Dickerson's work, while African women were victims looking towards the West for salvation.

The authors' focus of FGE has again shifted from ethnic identity to psychological trauma, to a physical health and human rights issue. Walker, Clarke and Dickerson, and Herzi, all bring up various health complications that may occur to a circumcised (specifically infibulated) women: hemorrhaging, infection, infertility, difficult childbirth, the pain of defloration, etc. All of the works in this chapter homogenizes the practice of FGE to all Africa, even though only some parts of Africa practice FGE (p. 173) and all of the writers use infibulation (which is the most extreme form of genital excision) as the ritual in question or they interchange between clitoridectomy and infibulation (p. 172) which may confuse an audience not familiar with the practice. These errors may work to further alienate African audiences and scholars from the debate, who may once more see ethnic and national identity under attack from imperialist westerners.

Bekers ties up this final category very well in describing the last shift in literary writing of FGE and gender identity. However, there is no comparison between the second and third generation writings in her summation of how second generation Africans writers, as (cultural) insiders, describe their plight of gender oppression versus third generation African diaspora writers seeing FGE as central to the oppression and violence of African women. My earlier comparison of how these two generations saw the plight of African women showed a significant shift in the FGE debate; not only have the faces changed (African women to American women) of literary activists, but also the intended audience. Some of the erroneous assumptions and prejudices risk alienating African readers, the very people needed to instill change in the culture.

Thus, one may ask, where are we today thirteen years after the latest work published in Beker's review? Is the plight of African women still in the global discourse, which vehemently opposes FGE as a central barrier to gender equality and freedom? Or has it returned back to national and local discourses of politics and social status? What will the fourth generation (assuming that we are in the fourth generation) of writers look like and how will they contribute to the debate of post-colonial, feminist, human rights, medical, economic, and gender construction of FGE?

In the first chapter, due to the nature of colonialism and the growing grassroots efforts for independence, the authors described FGE as a marker of ethnic identity and not just patriarchy. Traditionalists (men and women) supported this rite as necessary for the cohesion of their community and their asymmetrical gender system as well as social status. In the second chapter, there is a shift in the debate; FGE is not the central theme in most of the works. However, it is explained in more detail as the physical and psychological pain as part of the protagonists' suffering through their long events of tragedies. Many of these post-independence authors are criticizing the oppressive state of newly formed African governments and the lack

of improvement in women's status after colonialism. However, the dialogue of FGE in this generation is not a strong consensus, perhaps because FGE is not seen as central to plight as African women as it was in the first or third generation. By the late 80s and into the 90s, the debate goes global and literature now shows a unanimous disapproval of FGE. However, the lack of understanding of cultural traditions and prejudices that typecast Africans as homogenous and primitive may work to alienate African audiences; and in turn stall the debate or hinder any intercultural dialogue.

The author chronologically reviewed over twenty works of literature to show the dynamic but yet sometimes subtle intricacies that helped shaped this complex cultural rite into the international discourse we have today. Bekers also shows a fascinating but albeit lesser known evolution of female African writers who have pioneered a genre since at least the mid-twentieth century. The general debate has many faces and perspectives that prove valuable to determining the plight of women (not just African); and how we can all work together to liberate ourselves from the subjugation of gender, violence, and race.

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Megan Biesele and Robert K. Hitchcock. *The Ju/'hoan San of Nyae Nyae and Namibian Independence: Development, Democracy and Indigenous Voices in Southern Africa*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. 269 pp.

Megan Biesele and Robert H. Hitchcock provide an ethnographic account of the Ju/'hoan (San people) and their struggle for autonomy and political representation in Namibia under the colonial and the post-colonial administrations. While the authors emphasize the agency of the San in the realization of these goals, this book is about multiple actors, authors included, and how the interaction between the San and the outside world changed their plight. The political struggles of a group that constitutes less than 1 percent of southern Africa's total population is well articulated in the book's nine chapters and introduction. In summary the authors are able to demonstrate how the San, who were previously abducted to work on farms and mines and threatened with invasion by powerful local tribes, not only reorganized to defend their rights but also managed to start advocating for other San groups in Botswana. This book is a detailed anthropological piece; a must read for anyone interested in ethnic minorities, democracy, development, and southern Africa.

The introductory chapter describes the earlier ethnographic work by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas and how her presence in Nyae Nyae transformed the lives of San people between 1951 and 1961. The encounter with Thomas created a "positive sense of self" among the Ju/'hoan that motivated them to transform their society.

Chapter 1 traces the history land of reforms in Namibia and how the post in-dependence changes relegated some Ju/'han traditional leaders. Chapter 2 focuses on Ju/'han traditional governance and their livelihood strategies and how they had to deal with the paternalism of the the colonial government that chose to relocate them to Tsumkwe instead of giving them secure rights on their land (Nyae Nyae). Chapters 3 and 4 focus on Ju/'hoansi skepticism toward top-

down planning and the increasing role of formal institutions in transforming the Ju/'hoansi from the "Old Way" (p. 5). Later, John Marshall and Claire Ritchie established the Ju/Wa Bushman Development Foundation (JBDF) "to help Ju/'hoansi to get out of of Tsumkwe, start farming on their own n!oresi" (p. 68), to escape the social problems related to government subsidized alcohol, and to return to places where their ancestors were buried and they could live in contentment. The participation of externals, however, provided a basis for the colonial government to dismiss Ju/'hoansi demands. Chapter 5 details political developments in Nyae Nyae between 1988 and 1989, a period where the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Co-operative (NNFC) provided an overarching framework for locals to speak with externals, including discussing Resolution 435 of the United Nations that ended "petty apartheid" (p. 130) and enabled the Ju/'hoansi to participate in the 1990 election.

Chapter 6, "Independence: The Years of Hope," looks at the role of NNFC and JBDF during the transition to independence. In particular, these institutions managed to deal with the South Africa Defense Forces (SADFC) anti-liberation propaganda. After the 1990 elections, the number of visitors in Nyae Nyae increased and the new land reform proposal by the new government sought to dispossess the Ju/'hoansi of their heritage based claims over Nyae Nyae. By 1991, Ju/'hoansi were politically sensitized and were able to strategically defeat the prescribed land reform models that were proposed by the post-independence government. When President Sam Nujoma visited Nyae Nyae in 1991, he felt the area was fertile to sustain large herds of cattle, a view that was not shared by all Ju/'hoansi who felt other people should not be rewarded for poorly managing their environment—including the Herero who were eager to exploit Nyae Nyae for grazing resources.

Chapter 7 details the work of the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation (NNDF) of Namibia, founded in 1981 by Marshall and Ritchie. The establishment of the development foundation was followed by an influx of international workers that created coordination and communication challenges. Chapter 8 looks at the role of NNDF after independence and highlights how the internal changes impacted internal power dynamics, the shift of San governance from "each one of us as headman" p.181 to formal leadership, and the challenges of youths taking a leading role. Chapter 9 focuses on the first conservancy project in Namibia, an institution that legally empowers communities to derive financial benefits from wildlife resources.

The book also references useful sources for example, John Marshall's 1958, 1979, 2003 films. It also provides carefully selected Ju/'hoansi voices that illustrate their perspectives of governance (see pp. 91, 92, and 110-11). Despite the challenges of dealing with externals, the Ju/'hoansi faced internal challenges that they had to resolve on their own. In my view this work is facilitative rather than directive and provides a model for empowering local communities in a way that often times is not possible through short-term NGO projects.

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Graham Bradshaw and Michael Neill (eds.). *J.M.Coetzee's Austerities*. Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010. 272 pp.

This volume consists a collection of twelve essays by different contributors that analyze creative works of J.M.Coetzee from different angles and present an all-round depiction of his creative activities, his deep psychological penetration into the inner world of his characters and, none the least, his treatment of the language as an indispensable tool of individual characteristics and the national South African English language as a whole. The volume will be of interest to literary critics, psychologists, sociologists, men and women of letters, linguists, and all lovers of good reading. The book's appearance is timely and significant, in particular to those who are interested in the development of English literature in South Africa and the trends in the South African English language.

The literary work of J.M. Coetzee exerts a noticeable impact upon both South African public opinion and social consciousness and upon the existence and functioning of the national English language of South Africa. J.M.Coetzee is a protagonist and cultivator of a specific English style of South African prose, which presumes that narration referred to the past, is expressed in the present, events immediately preceding the narration in perfect, and those referred to a remoter past in simple past. In this style the function of the Definite Article is also somehow modified. These grammatical features are worth mentioning, since if this tendency persists and they become grammaticalised, it may lead to profound and fundamental structural changes in South African English. This was marked by J.Lamb who presents Coetzee as a realist, the realist who devoted much attention to the structure of the language (p. 179) and who, as one could see in his works, managed to introduce original specificity into the English of his own country.

Editors Bradshaw and Neill formulate their main goal as "to align or realign the South African Coetzee with the 'late modernist' Coetzee" and to "pay particular attention to Coetzee's most recent fiction" (p. 2). The book's significance, however, goes far beyond these limits.

The editors try to treat the whole span of Coetzee's work, while, in my perception, the most interesting is his South African period. It is this period when the specific language style and the controversial attitude to the events in the country were formed. Coetzee raises questions to which he often does not answer unequivocally and leaves them for the reader to answer. One can agree with D. Attwell that the Australian provenance of Coetzee's fiction is distinctive and striking but it is unlikely to produce as rich a harvest (p. 176).

D. Attrige justly remarks in his essay that the most favorable situation for the writer was that of political tension rather than relaxation that he met in Australia. Attrige tries to show the role of fine arts and nature in depicting the South African reality, which was characteristic of Coetzee, as well as of such South African writers as A. Brink, Z. Mda, and others. According to C. Clarkson,"several of Coetzee's characters 'look long and hard at words'" (p. 43). It is quite possible that the portrayal of such characters prompted Coetzee to create such language peculiarities that in future may grammaticalize and become established properties of the national version of English in South Africa.

L. and T. Dovey discuss possibilities of adapting Coetzee's fiction to cinema and filming his novels. They agree with Attridge that "reading occurs as an event, a living – through the text which responds simultaneously to what is said and the intensiveness and singularity of the saying" (p. 59). According to this statement, a question arises whether it is possible at all to film fiction without losing its properties and intention. It is no wonder that Coetzee himself was very much concerned with the "South Africanness of the film" (p. 61). In agreement with that, one may express apprehension whether filming of Coetzee's works beyond South Africa (as well as works of any other writer beyond the place of its origin) will not distort the very idea of the original work.

Attwell discusses the role of the writer in society and the message the author is supposed to bear (p. 163). He evaluates Coetzee's message in literature as something much wider and more profound than teaching young people how to live. Coetzee's fiction invites the reader to share the experience and point of view of a particular personality whom the author portrays (p. 173).

All in all, one can agree with B. Dancygier in her concluding essay that "the framework represented here is an interdisciplinary attempt to look at specific features of literary discourse through the lenses of conceptual structure" (p.251). An attempt, one may add, that is very successful, instructive, and attractive.

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Padraig Carmody. *The New Scramble for Africa*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011. Xi, 194 pp.

I was an avid student of African history during my high school years in the late 1980s where I had a chance to study the first scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century. Consequently, Carmody's *The New Scramble for Africa* motivated me to learn about the new and second scramble. As the title suggests, the current scramble is new, therefore, different from the first one that was mediated through the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. In my mind, the following questions arise, "does book describe the newness of the new scramble, its cause and consequences and also offer policy recommendations?"

The nine chapters (plus an introduction and a conclusion) are concerned with one of the most debated issues today; the new scramble for Africa, or appropriately put, the new scramble for Africa's resources. The importance of Africa as a major source of resources is showcased from the very beginning (top of page 1). In this regard, Carmody appropriately borrows from then EU Commissioner for Development who, in 2009, stated that "there is no denying that Africa has become a sought-after continent in a short space of time, thanks to its strategic importance" (p. 1). Carmody poses pertinent questions right at the beginning; i.e., why has Africa suddenly become strategically important for great and emerging powers? The book argues that the scramble is a consequence of the deepening process of globalisation and that one of the distinguishing features of the process is the increased competition over Africa's resources. Having laid out the key features of the new scramble, the author states that the overarching

objective of the book is to explore reasons behind the new scramble, its nature and impacts? Thus, this review seeks to answer the question, "did Carmody achieve this objective?"

Chapter One delimits the universe of the discussion by comparing/contrasting the old and new scrambles for Africa. Particularly, Carmody dispels the notion that Africans are helpless, passive, and bemused spectators in the new scramble. Thus, through negotiations, African governments enter into deals that result in economic benefits, although in some, the rent is appropriated by the political elites (Angola's oil is such an example). Chapter Two is concerned with the mosaic of powers, e.g., US, China, EU, Japan, etc, that are competing for the economic hearts and minds of the Africans. Of particular interest is South Africa whose footprint has been planted all over Africa. Chapter Three discusses the hottest topic in political economy; that of China's resource interests and strategies in Africa. Worthy of mention is the principle of *flexigemony* whereby China uses soft power and "prioritises the economic over political and security concerns" (p. 79). Relatedly, unlike western donors (the US as an example), Chinese aid is not tied to issues such as governance.

Chapter Four comfortably links with Chapter Three whereby the role of other Asian investors, India and Japan, are discussed. In addition, the chapter discusses relatively new players in the new scramble for Africa; Brazil and Russia. Chapter Five deals with the familiar if not controversial topic of oil. Thus, given supply issues in the Middle East, African oil is regarded as a safer alternative. At the same time, Carmody argues that rent from oil extraction benefits a small section of the population as instanced by pockets of corruption in Equatorial Guinea and Angola. In Chapters Six and Seven, the book takes the reader through the extraction of non-oil resources: uranium and coltan (these are conflict-causing), timber, bio-fuels, plants, food, and fisheries. Chapter Eight discusses Chinese investment in Zambia, highlighting issues of lack of skills transfer and strained labour relations. Chapter Nine discusses Africa's development *vis-à-vis* the new scramble.

The conclusion, drawing from the nine chapters, asks, "What is Africa's benefit from the scramble?" Carmody optimistically opines that there are potential benefits and hence exhorts African governments to develop win-win situations with their suitors. Amongst others, they must sign mutually beneficial resource deals.

The book has a number of strengths: objectivity, it is widely researched through the use of multiple sources and both the author and co-authors are experts in the area. Importantly, the book is an excellent reference source for those interested in understanding the new scramble for Africa. Notwithstanding these, it could do with shorter *verbatim* quotations. Did the book successfully explore reasons behind the new scramble, its nature and impact? Yes, it does as evidenced by its extensive coverage.

Emmanuel Botlhale, *University of Botswana*

Stephen Chan. *Southern Africa: Old Treacheries and New Deceits*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011. 302 pp.

The beauty of South Africa is always commented upon. It is only on arrival and taking in the tastes and smells and energy of its peoples, animals and environment can one begin to understand more keenly why throughout the twentieth century such a bitter battle was fought for its control. South Africa epitomizes the “land of contrasts” cliché. Arriving into the outstanding beauty of the Western Cape one is easily seduced. But Cape Town has its darker side like any city. From the wine growing regions of the Cape and the accompanying plethora of cuisines reflecting the multicultural heritages of the inhabitants; African, Mediterranean, European,, or Asian, the tourist can easily get lost in the romance. Nevertheless the contrasts are there to see and cannot be hidden. Just riding from the airport the tourist is confronted with the harsh realities of life lived there. This is a pattern replicated throughout the country; Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg all boasting modernity and pockets of affluence juxtaposed against enormous township areas dominated by the poor, dispossessed, and increasing numbers of foreign migrant laborers.

To be fair this picture is the case to varying degrees for most cities around the world, though disparities of wealth are more or less obvious from place to place. In South Africa’s case it is more, and the situation ensures that the crippling legacies of Apartheid live on. The shortcomings of the current political leaders perpetuate what is human misery writ large. No surprise then that crime is endemic and ethnic conflicts threaten social cohesion as the unemployed compete for work with the foreign migrants fleeing their own nightmares. Cross-border neighbors, the Zimbabweans (not the only ones) also vote with their feet to escape the political and economic horrors of their rulers. Harare, too, offers contrasts of fate for its inhabitants, and thousands head into South Africa. These challenges and more lie at the center of the politics of the region. The grand aspirations fed by decades long fighting against Apartheid and its exports would have been difficult to meet under any circumstances. Furthermore the unrelenting long suppressed necessity to attend to domestic needs, such as job creation, housing, public health, building up of infrastructures, educational systems, and social justice would be a challenge for any country even without the extravagancies of an ambitious political class.

The insight provided by Professor Chan’s well informed analysis allow the political challenges of the region to be foregrounded in a more multi-layered way than is often the case. Chan is well able to do so from a standpoint of the many years of work and travel in the region. In places the book is hard to put down, and one is reminded more than once of Chan’s “insider” knowledge and access to the key movers and shakers. This can at times be grating, but one cannot doubt the authority of experience from which he speaks. He contextualizes domestic politics against the history and interconnections of South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Chan’s humanizes the political characters by revealing these often misrepresented African caricatures as complex astute politicians and diplomats. Chan’s purpose is “to endow what the Western media has turned into black caricatures with the same sort of life we would

automatically assume was inherent in Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron, Nick Clegg, George Bush, Barack Obama and Nicolas Sarkozy" (pp. xii-xiii). Further by referring to the political intrigues of other central and southern Africa states in his analysis, readers are provided with a comprehensive and microscopic summary of the political, social and economic transitions of this region over the past thirty years. Refreshingly there are no hagiographic profiles or rose tinted visions. The colorful characters of Mandela, according to Chan "not a good president," Mugabe (speaks for itself!), Kenneth Kaunda, Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma, and Morgan Tsvangirai (few women are mentioned) present awarts and all portrait of these particular African leaders in their domestic and regional environs. This makes for a more nuanced and multi-dimensional analysis so often missing from the "saint versus demon" one-dimensional portraits beloved by the Western media. Mind you, with a character like Mugabe, it is hard to be balanced, though Chan manages not to make him a pantomime baddie. Chan is forensic when analyzing Mugabe's regime, especially the surprisingly sophisticated vote-rigging, the ugly violence, and the corruption of generals siphoning off wealth from mineral deposits of neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo. Furthermore, his ambivalent relation with Mbeki makes for interesting reading. Ambition and deceit often underpin political life, and Southern Africa is no different.

Chan is no great fan of Mbeki, and in the areas in the narrative where he attempts to deconstruct Mbeki's character, later contrasting him to this nemesis Jacob Zuma, it is hard to put the book down. Zuma himself emerges as a chameleon able to reinvent and communicate with the mass in a way that the urbane Mbeki is clearly unable to do. He fatally lacks the "common touch," and Chan leaves the reader in no doubt of that. Neither does Chan spare his critique of European and other foreign interlopers. Whether it's the Russians, Chinese, Cubans, and Americans manipulating the resource rich region for their national and geo-political roles, or the perfidy of former colonial masters such as Britain, though their language is cloaked in political-speak suggesting nothing but judicious propriety. Chan's subtle shift from academic analysis to journalist commentary, peppered with anecdotes, does make for a compelling read about a complex region and state of political affairs.

After the end of Apartheid and Mandela's rise to the political leadership, western attention turned elsewhere. There were periodic dramas, however, that ensured the region kept in the news; xenophobic killings, Mbeki's puzzling HIV/AIDs stance (which Chan dissects), the FIFA World Cup, the ascendancy of Jacob Zuma, a media dream if there ever was one, and the irritating and deadly pantomime of Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe and his nemesis Morgan Tsvangirai, the main (but not exclusive) challenger. Through his easy writing style Chan enhances our understanding in a way that would appeal to a broad readership. We get a taste not only of the top table political strategizing but we are given an insight into the world of the current "big men" of Africa and the individuals who are affected by their governance. From the start, the story of the Zimbabwean Joseph, a migrant in South Africa, draws in the reader and presents the dilemmas facing individuals daily, while their political leaders try to outmaneuver each other for power. Chan's description of the ideological differences that developed in South Africa between the African National Congress exiles and the "inziles" delves into an

organization that for too long has managed to hide behind its formidable mythology. For Chan, “the ANC did not become the authoritarian party and fractious agglomeration of factions that it did simply from Day One of Thabo Mbeki” (p. 59). The problem started (some would argue it stretched back further) during Mandela’s term with his detached leadership style and his failure to mediate intra-ANC conflicts played a role too. We are provided with a portrait of a far from liberal organization in its political ideology, or in its internal bureaucratic structure. It is a party in danger of betraying its people and the nation’s future prosperity. South Africans not only can see what is happening across the border, but its effects are felt on their own soil in the shape of the numerous Josephs that live among them. In Chan’s analysis the country’s politics under ANC hegemony “turned from its mission to the people into a soap opera of personalities and vendettas” (p. 65). Ironically this assessment sounds very much like the final years of Thatcher, Major and Blair’s governments. It is probably indicative of any government as politicians cling to power no matter early promises made to the electorate. It is Chan’s purpose to explain these personalities, their “old treacheries and new deceits,” and he does so with skill. It is a shame the publication of the book missed the current ANC crisis over Julius Malema. Like other Southern Africa watchers, no doubt Professor Chan will be watching the unfolding events closely.

Elizabeth Williams, *Goldsmiths College University of London*

Alison Liebhafsky des Forges. *Defeat is the Only Bad News: Rwanda under Musinga, 1896-1931.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011. 306pp.

Des Forges carefully incorporates the rich culture of the Rwandese people and also portrays the manner in which the Court system appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She drew on oral histories and extensive archival research that shows how the separation of various groups in Rwanda led to their response of the colonial government, the traders, and the missionaries. Through her exploration and research she shows how Rwandese people used resources of the Europeans so as to enlarge their power even as they were seeking to preserve the royal court’s autonomy. The author brilliantly narrated the history; David Newbury introduced and edited it thoroughly in order to provide a context that is deep to better understand the civil war in Rwanda a century later.

Defeat Is the Only Bad News is important for its content as well as its method. Through her comprehensive study of the ins and outs of the royal Court at a key time in its history, des Forges provides one of the most detailed and logical accounts available of an African political elite facing the twofold challenges of the early twentieth century through the establishment of colonial rule and the presence of large numbers of Christian missionaries. These were chaotic years, first as Germany then Belgium pursued a hostile plan of colonization in the country whereas the missionaries challenged the rite basics that had sustained kingship in Rwanda.

The author portrays how the Rwandan court served as the center stage of Shakespearean proportions, which eventually emerges from her intelligent prose. By focusing on valuable oral accounts, missionary diaries, and a variety of other sources Des Forges sheds some light on the

intense atmosphere of the scheme, perceptive calculation, brutal betrayal, and sometimes murder that were the characteristics of the Court at this central moment in its history.

The reign of Yuhi Musinga offers rich material on the innermost rivalries that had long eroded the Rwandan Court against the powerful notables who ruled in its name or under its governance. It also gives perfect examples of the long old struggle between the Court and its agents, who were then trying to diversify their control on all sides, which was something that the common people opposed. The author also used one hundred and two Rwandans who took her through Rwandan history and shared their knowledge of their past experiences. They also helped des Forges understand how the court system of Rwanda operated back in the days.

The book well accomplishes the authors stated goals in various ways. There was the refinement of the royal culture where the Court developed its own beliefs, one which justified the rule of the leaders and expressed through an impressive array of highly formalized rituals and a set of historical stories explaining the origins of the dynasty. These elaborate ritual patterns justifying the royalty were the third attribute of court development. Des Forges writes that as the legitimacy of the Court's power grew, authoritative men hardly opposed it in public but rather saw fit to control it from within. Therefore, the struggle for power and influence intensified at the court, as illustrated in the manner of Musinga's succession to power.

The background to des Forges study introduces the social groupings of Rwanda to the reader, and the initial pages of her exposition gives a summary of the accepted social groups of pre-colonial Rwandan society as a set of clear, fixed and standardized administrative institutions.

Her thorough research reveals much more than the apprehension of power by a kinship group competing with the royal family. By examining the powerful politics at the Court over a range of fundamental issues, her study is seen to unveil the contested relations with many regions as the Court sought to expand its rule over the people in the southeast, north, the northwest, and southwest areas where the majority of people were opposed to rule by the Rwandan Royal Court at the beginning of the twentieth century and in some cases opted for outright resistance. This carefully researched, readable, and well detailed study about a critical period that was experienced in Rwanda's history becomes a significant contribution to people's understanding about court politics prior and after the beginning of the colonial rule. The author's work cannot be compared to any other, whether in English or in French, as it gives us the problems, anguish and turmoil that the people went through under the reign of Yuhi Musinga, who was a ruler who never valued the feelings of the common people and thus subjected them to a lot of suffering through the ruling that was made in the courts.

Musinga's interpretation about his governance in Rwanda under a foreign dominance, brings an understanding to the colonial situation that resulted in the rise of an uncertain future for Rwanda. The book's potential audience is anyone who wishes to understand the catastrophe of this country's history in recent times. Another potential audience could also be the young people who live in Rwanda, and it can also be kept in the archives for children yet to be born, which will in turn aid in understanding how Rwanda's people suffered in the face of Belgian

colonial rule, thus knowing the reason as to why Rwanda is in its current state, though it is now coming up from the ruins.

Ilunga Tchoma Kitenge, *Institut de Recherches et d'Etudes en Relations Internationales et Européennes, IREIE*

Mamadou Diawara, Bernard Lategan, and Jörn Rüsen. *Historical Memory in Africa: Dealing with the Past, Reaching for the Future in an Intercultural Context*. New York: Beghahn Books, 2010. vi, 248 pp.

This is a diverse collection of essays related to an international research project sponsored by scholarly institutions in South Africa and Germany. For American scholars it provides a chance to read work based in a German and French bibliography, representing interdisciplinary academic networks from Germany, South Africa, and Canada. The articles are loosely organized around the analysis of historical memory, sometimes defined as public history or commemoration, in Africa during times of violence. The example of South Africa, and particularly its Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), dominate the book, with some space given to other places in Africa, like the Congo, and comparative examples from India, South Korea, and the Holocaust. The book ends with two articles on the praxis of forgiveness and reconciliation.

What this collection adds to an already prolific field is attention to the link between memory of the past and anticipation of the future. The editors ask us to read history from the future backwards as we prioritize the possible over the real (p. 3). They posit that collective memory has been used in both constructive and destructive ways in postcolonial Africa. Memory is analyzed in its "sense making" role of identity formation and group mobilization, with explicit consequences for human life. The authors are clearly concerned not just with documenting history but also with prescribing positive ways of using historical memory for inclusion rather than the justification of violence. They warn that those who appropriate historical memory, whether for building up or tearing down, control its future (pp. 104-5).

While my first assessment of this book was its lack of coherence and clear contribution, I find myself still mulling over and talking with colleagues about many of its provocative points. Better editing and vetting for consistency, with a more theoretical introduction, would strengthen its impact. The wide range of writing genre and style is often distracting. It would be hard to assign the book to my undergraduate students. It took until I got to Lategan's Chapter 8 for me to fully grasp the role of the future in the process of memory, even though based on European theological examples. The theme of historical memory in relation to the future is only marginally addressed in many, nonetheless, interesting articles. For example, Macamo writes about the need for an African-generated Sociology to make sense of the experience of modernity (Mozambique). Diawara makes the case for the future-minded development industry to gain historical perspective (Mali). And Joubert argues that oral memory is still a significant way to

access lived experience (South Africa). The collection will be useful to scholars already versed in the field but not as an introduction.

The collection will certainly be useful for scholars interested in South Africa, the TRC, and the politics of memory. Many of the articles explore South Africa's attempts to reconfigure oral memory around a new majority democracy and the need for unity after apartheid. South Africa provides a model for studying the effects of investing enormous energy and public funds in historical memory. Other articles on South Africa take up commemoration of the South African War (Grundlingh), the politics of memory (Harries), and the TRC (Gobodo-Madikizela), while others use the TRC as a comparative case. These scholars explore South Africa as a nation founded on trauma yet seeking to include all citizens.

Other provocative issues surface without being fully resolved. New media, like internet and film, for housing public memory and transformations in concepts of time and space that affect historical memory (Jewsiewicki, Jourbert) suggest new avenues for research. Other authors focus on the use of public memory by the state to "perform the nation." A challenging point in this discussion is the current preference for the "voice of the witness" in public space, assumed to be unmediated and more authentic than a historian's interpretation. A "feel good" public/commercial history in South Africa thrives while the historical profession sinks into crisis (Harries). Similarly, the discourse of victimhood and identification with suffering is increasingly powerful in the commemoration of genocide. The victim narrative of colonialism however begins to ring false fifty years later and a new narrative of meaning has not unfolded (Bisanswa). The unifying message is that how we commemorate the past matters for lives today and can be influenced by how we think about possible futures.

Jan Bender Shetler, *Goshen College*

Donald L. Donham. *Violence in a Time of Liberation: Murder and Ethnicity at a South African Gold Mine, 1994*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. xiv, 237 pp.

Violence in a Time of Liberation captures the oddity and enigma of political violence that accompanied the luster and euphoria of 1994 in South Africa. To the outside world 1994 represents a year liberation, first democratic elections, and the historic voting in of Nelson Mandela as the first president of democratic South Africa. However, to many black Africans inside South Africa 1994 also represents extreme violence symbolic of the last dying breaths of a brutal regime. Conflicts along political lines especially between Inkatha, the African National Congress (ANC) members, and the third force engulfed many townships before and after the historic elections.

The author's goal in the book is to show the complexity of the roots of violence, which was often mislabeled by western media as ethnic conflicts between Zulus (Inkatha) and Xhosas (ANC). The author states that reading violence as simply Zulu (Inkatha) and Xhosa (ANC) conflict is inaccurate as the founding president of the ANC was Zulu, as is the current president. The book is based on an ethnographic case study of a goldmine in Johannesburg in 1994. The author reveals complexity of violence in the gold mine through narratives from

various stakeholders within the context of apartheid. The book is divided into eight chapters excluding the preface and the post-script. It is a must read not only for anthropologists but also for people who want to understand the daily and intimate workings of the South African apartheid system within an institution, and the contradictions that marked the end of apartheid and the transition into political democracy. Photographs in the book (by Santu Mofokeng) enrich and complement the book's narratives.

The first chapter introduces the narrative of murders within the gold mine. The rest of the book provides an explication of why murders occurred according to the African workers, white workers, and the author himself. The author warns that narratives should be understood in the context of the general framework of apartheid, which simplified everything along racial and ethnic lines. He points out that simplification of everything along racial and ethnic lines was dialogic, externally imposed, and internally reified. Narratives in the book are reflective of the dialogic nature of apartheid's imposition of racial and ethnic boundaries.

Above all, Donham delineates connectivity of forces, such as racialized capitalism and enforced segregation, which nurtured violence and brutality of the apartheid system. The author asserts that "blood and money" sustained the economy and brutality of apartheid and also psychologically occupied a significant space in the narratives of both black and white gold mine workers.

While the book is well researched, in the post-script the author implies that ANC aligned labor unions were well armed with modern weapons whereas Inkatha members had traditional weaponry. This implication overlooks evidence that emerged during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, which revealed that Inkatha and the third force were systematically armed with modern firearms by the apartheid government sympathizers. In sum, the book is well written and meets the goal of problematizing simplification of African conflicts to decontextualized ethnic conflicts. The author excellently delineates that narratives of violence in South Africa, or anywhere else, should be read as partial, incomplete, subjective, and located within a larger socio-political and economic context.

Shirley Mthethwa-Sommers, *Nazareth College*

David T. Doris. *Vigilant Things: On Thieves, Yoruba Anti-Aesthetics, and the Strange Fates of Ordinary Objects in Nigeria*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011. 420 pp.

According to the author, "This book, a study of objects, is also inevitably an ethnographic project. It is people, after all, who create, deploy, and interpret *ààlè*, and my goal has been to understand the objects as they fulfill their roles in the lives and thoughts of those people" (p. 27). Doris's book is of inestimable socio-cultural value because it thoroughly documents an aspect of Yoruba cultural semiotic, *ààlè*. To the best of my knowledge the book is the first of its kind that seems to fully put in book form hitherto apparently under-researched aspect of Yoruba objects or "things" of vigilance. According to the author, these are objects or "things" believed to possess or imbued with some kind of power or authority to protect valuables and

ward off or punish thieves who make away with such valuables. The enormity of the content of this book of *ààlè* is a testimony to the relevance of the subject itself as an element of the traditions that organize the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria. The unreduced presence of *ààlè* in the Yoruba socio-semiotic life is palpable, as recorded in the book.

Putting the subject matter of *ààlè* in an interesting and clearer perspective, Doris pervades his study with history and origin, cultural definitions, forms and kinds, power and authorities, functions and essences, people and places, photographs and images, witnessed demonstrations, translations and interpretations, graphic descriptions (p. 140), cultural boundaries and linkages (p. 148), cultural memes, idiosyncrasies and significances (pp. 148-59). Clearly, according to the author, *ààlè* is *not* a pretty thing, it is repulsive and meant to repel with a promise to punish transgression of accepted behaviors in Yoruba society.

In the *Introduction*, Doris begins with a glimpse into the Ifé-Modákéké age long conflict brought into the picture by the author's encounter with one Mr. F.F. Afolábí, a victim of Ifé-Modákéké conflicts. The subject of attraction was the *ààlè* which Mr. Afolábí erected on a pile of wood. The pile of wood, on which the *ààlè* lies, makes meaning in the symbolic representation of Mr. Afolábí's poverty that the author significantly links to the larger thievery and pillaging of the Nigerian nation perpetrated by both military and civilian rulership. Doris's narration and encounter with Afolábí's *ààlè* cascade into description and definitions of what *ààlè* is and what it is not (pp. 14-20), drawing contrastive and relationship perspectives in the episteme of *àse*, "fetish," "medicinal *ààlè*," "artwork," and "*àwòrán*" (visual image) (pp. 16-20) in the Yoruba semiotic world.

The book is divided into three parts apart from the "Introduction" and "Coda": Part I, *Creating Ààlè* (segmented into two: Presence, Power and the Past, and Palm Fronts; *màrìwò*), II, *Call-and-Response* (segmented into two as well: What We Look at and Remember, and Color; *Àwò*), and III, *Portraits and Punishments* (segmented into four: An Ontology of the Broken, Corncobs; *Sùkù Àgbàdo*, Snail Shells; *Ìkarawun Ìgbín*, and Brooms; *Ìgbàlè*).

According to the book, no particular locale or origin could be associated with *ààlè*. However, the book, citing and abstracting possible multiple sources in Yoruba orature, historical narratives, social origin linked to *Ògbóni* society of honored elders, allegory drawn from Ifá divination, which proffers mythic origin, documents left by foreign travelers and British explorers, concludes that "*ààlè* have long played a significant role in the Yoruba cultural landscape, and that Yoruba people have long regarded them as powerful" (p. 38). In Part I, Doris engages both the relational dependency and epistemology of *ààlè* to how it is created, the power it issues, its essences and significances in Yoruba semiotic milieu, This account is integrated with demonstrated photographs (pp. 46-48, 52-55) and the semiotic of meaning which *ààlè* signifies. Most enlightening in this part is *ààlè* relational power dependency on and abstraction of authority from Yoruba semiotics of *ojú* (the index of power), *Ìlutí* (good hearing and appropriate response), *Ìpínhùn* (making agreement with *ààlè*), *Àyajó* (we borrow the day), and *Ìjúbà* (paying homage to the source of power). For example, on how it is created, readers will experience a first-hand documentation of the ritualistic processes of *ààlè* creation with the use of *màrìwò* (palm fronds) in which the author was directly "involved" (pp. 100-19). In this

relational dependency of creation and power of *ààlè*, Doris concludes thus: “In the production of *ààlè*, the person enters into a set of constitutive combinatory relationships, not only with the object, but also with the institutional forces that precede and exceed both subject and object. These collective forces- divine, social familial- authorize all utterances of power in Yoruba culture, sanctioning a person to act on their behalf. In this way, *ààlè*, like better-known works of the Yoruba artistic canon, come to represent in traditional form- enduring, genuine, and very real- the lawful forces that bind the society together” (p. 49).

Parts II and III are replete with categories of well-documented “things” that can serve as *ààlè*. These elements range from those that may be imbued with sacredness to ordinary disused things like a piece of red cloth, a worn shoe, *màrìwò* (palm front) (pp. 86-119), corncobs (pp. 280-302), rags, snail shell (pp. 303-23), brooms (pp. 324-42), broken pots and combinations of other things. Doris found that the creator of *ààlè* has the latitude in the choice of objects depending on the object’s limiting power (p. 123) and the context of application. These sections are particularly interesting because the author, in her categorization, apart from explaining the ontology of “things” in relation to *ààlè* and how power issues to and from it, details the forms and types of things for the making of *ààlè* (pp. 135-37). Their sources and descriptions (140), interpretation and symbolism (pp. 240-47) from Yoruba oral genre of *Ifá’* and orature, their ordinary and semiotic uses, their power abstractions and significances in relation to Yoruba people’s existence and how they construct their world (pp. 123-24) are documented. In this, Doris discovered that the creation of “fear,” an abstraction of the power of *ààlè*, is derived from the three-dimensional understanding of the presence of *ààlè* image, the creator and the *èrí òkàn* (conscience) (p. 174) on the Yoruba metaphor of *seeing* (pp. 218-21) and semiotics of *àwòrán* (p. 163) “what we look at and remember” of the would-be thief.

Four major factors serve this book well: (1) an avalanche of sources of information; people and places, oral traditions, books and journals, history and archives, interviews and witnessed demonstrations; (2) a translation of Yoruba source language and cultural semiotics and interpretation into English; (3) photographs and images; and (4) an interpretive explanation of Yoruba semiotics like *àwò* (color) in interdependency relation with *ààlè* and its signifying essence. These compelling factors will particularly attract Yoruba and non-Yoruba readers to enjoy and understand the semiotics of *ààlè* and its wider hermeneutics in Yoruba cultural milieu.

Yomi Okunowo, *University of the Western Cape, South Africa.*

Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto. *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History*. Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2010. xiii, 333 pp.

It is not strange that Nigeria has been the subject of important publications on Africa by Africanist writers as well as Nigerian historians of different ilk and perspectives in the last two decades. The fact is that there are more publications on Nigeria written by non-Africans than those by Nigerians and other Africans. The cumulative effect of the ever-increasing interest in

Nigeria by non-Nigerian writers has been the projection and popularization of the country's history and traditions beyond its limited confines. The book under review is majorly concerned about the representations of Nigeria by pre-colonial and post-colonial Nigerian historians as they sought to counter Eurocentric stereotypes about the peoples and cultures of Nigeria during the particular historical epoch of their preoccupation. Spurred by nationalist fervor, Nigerian historians of the first and second generations, according to the authors, reconstructed the politics and economy of Nigeria's pre-colonial societies. The authors' main objective in addition to reflecting on historical renditions on Nigeria, was to re-introduce Africans into history writing about Africa in view of the diminishing share of African historians in the global output of literature on Africa.

In its sixteen chapters, the book chronicles the careers of nine of Nigeria's notable historians comprising K.O.Dike, Adiele Afigbo, J.F. Ade Ajayi, J.A.Atanda, Bolanle Awe, Obaro Ikime, G.O.Olusanya, Tekena Tamuno, and Yusufu Bala Usman. A chapter each was devoted to the works of these historians which also detailed their educational attainment as certified historians. The authors compared and contrasted the works of these historians to show how each of these historians interpreted such important topics as indirect rule, Christian missionary activities, the evolution of Nigerian state, the utility of oral traditions in historical writings, the origins of Nigerian peoples, and the formation of states and empire, among other subjects. In addition, the book classifies Nigeria's history into political, economic, social, and women's history. The concluding part of the book comprises two chapters which situated Nigeria's history within the context of African historiography while portraying the fragmented nature of the Nigerian nation as the trigger of its fragmented histories.

It is evident that the authors all through the book believe that by reviewing the scholarship of their selected Nigerian historians, they could generalize on the important role of historians in the production of knowledge. There was a celebratory tone in their analyses of the works of these "pioneers of Nigerian history, and indeed African history". Although the authors tried to justify the selection of the nine "notable Nigerian historians" as one made on grounds of their specific and unique focus, there is every reason to believe that some of the excluded Nigerian historians could have added value to the quality and substance of the book. For instance, the exclusion of E.A. Ayandele and Bolaji Idowu, foremost chroniclers of the Christian missionary incursion into Nigeria and Africa, makes the authors' historiography on Christian missionary activities in Nigeria an incomplete account.

Aside from the fact that the selection of Nigerian historians would appear to be unrepresentative of the diverse schools and thoughts in Nigerian historiography, there is an erroneous belief that only those who studied history and acquired postgraduate degrees in the discipline deserve to be spotlighted as celebrated historiographers as our authors have done. It was this mindset that influenced the authors' selection of Yusufu Bala Usman's radical scholarship while in actual fact notable Nigerian scholars such as Claude Ake, Bade Onimode, Ola Oni, etc rendered richer and incredibly pungent radical historical analyses than Yusufu Bala Usman.

However, the book under review is a well-written piece which highlights the different phases of Nigeria's history from pre-colonial era to the post-colonial times as captured through the historical prisms of some of Nigeria's foremost historians. The book presents a unique methodological approach to the study of Nigerian history. It is analytical in its presentation of historical facts and renders its arguments in logical sequence under some selected themes and sub-themes—a format that runs through the book. This style of presentation makes the book orderly and organized. The language usage of the authors is lucid and elegant thereby making the book comprehensible.

It would appear that the objective of the authors for writing the book is achievable especially when viewed against the backdrop of the growing realization across developing countries of the world that globalization has the potential of obliterating their cultures and values. Thus, our authors' counsel that Nigerian historians should study their country's history in new ways to comprehend its modernity and frame a new set of questions on Nigeria's future and globalization is sagacious. This book is a must-read for students and teachers of Nigerian history and anyone who is interested in Nigerian, and indeed African historiography.

John Olushola Magbadelo, *Centre for African and Asian Studies, Garki-Abuja, Nigeria*

Timothy Derek Fernyhough. *Serfs, Slaves and Shifra: Modes of Production in Pre-Revolutionary Ethiopia.* Addis Ababa: Shama Books, 2010. 344 pp.

Tim Fernyhough passed away in 2003, and this book, which is based on his doctoral dissertation (University of Illinois, 1986), was later completed by his wife, Anna Fernyhough. The book offers new and original insights to economic structures and changes in various parts of Ethiopia. It is rich in details, well-documented, and treats a highly complex subject matter in a consistent manner. The phrase "pre-revolutionary Ethiopia" may be somewhat vague, as the period under question is from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

The discussion of this vast theme is structured around three main topics (which also constitute the book's three parts); that of feudalism, slavery, and the characteristics of banditry in Ethiopia. The investigation of feudalism in the first part (which is merely one chapter) is firmly situated within relevant research and contains interesting details and convincing arguments. Fernyhough embarks on a discussion of the relevance of the term feudalism for the Ethiopian context in general, and for southern Ethiopia in particular. He offers new and interesting insights to the existence of a feudal order in the states of south-western Ethiopia and argues that Menelik's conquest there merely brought a modification of this order. This was in clear contrast to other parts of southern Ethiopia, where the feudal system was a novel introduction, and where ethnicity and religion exacerbated tensions between northern settlers and the indigenous population. The bulk of the chapter is, however, devoted to the south-western part, and one could have wished for additional investigation into the economic structures of the south-east.

The second part (chapters 3-7), devoted to slavery and slaving in Ethiopia, discusses slave as a mode of production, the trajectories of the slave trade, and the gradual decline of slavery in the twentieth century. Fernyhough offers original insights into the institution of slavery in the south-western states, demonstrating that slavery coexisted with a feudal mode. Arguing that enslavement was “on a scale without parallel in the Horn of Africa,” he amply demonstrates that the majority was engaged in domestic service, and that servile labor never surpassed forced agricultural labor and feudal rent. Whereas he touches upon the role of Muslims in the slave trade and Christian attitudes to slavery, more attention to this in relation to the particularities of Christian-Muslim relations in Ethiopia would surely have added value to the analysis. Fernyhough provides highly interesting insights on how international pressure and Haile Sellassie’s attempts to curb provincial powers gradually led to a decline in slavery, yet argues convincingly that the increasing importance of tenant cultivators was a main factor in its demise. As he concludes, slavery became commercially irrelevant and socially anachronistic.

The third part (chapters 8-9) discusses the topic of banditry in Ethiopia. With Hobsbawm’s concept of the “social bandit” as a point of departure, Fernyhough connects banditry to the feudal order, and rightly argues it was an expression of social protest, as well as a form for political and social mobility. He distinguishes between noble and peasant bandits, and provides relevant insights into differences between the north and the south, as well as within the southern regions. While the concept of banditry may be fitting for some cases, its general application arguably conceals some important nuances. My own ongoing research on this has revealed that armed insurgency in the south was, rather than banditry, an expression of political resistance to the Ethiopian state, and that ethnicity and religion were far more important factors than assumed.

This latter point relates to the theoretical perspective of the book, in which Fernyhough applies Marxian concepts with that of a mode of production as the primary analytical tool. The argument is that the unity of relations and forces of production determine the form of state authority and class structure, and the overall analysis is framed within a perspective in which economy and material realities are the fundamental forces. This consequently reduces the role of forces of a more ideological nature to merely a supra-structure. The book would have benefited from a broader approach, in which kinship, ethnicity, and religion ought to have been incorporated, and where such issues had been recognized as operating interchangeably with that of class. These comments notwithstanding, the book is a very important contribution to the field of Ethiopian studies, and should moreover be relevant for those interested in the economic history in Africa in general. Unfortunately, Shama Books has not done a very good job in producing this book, and a work like this would have deserved a better layout and copy-editing.

Terje Østebø, *University of Florida*

Jonathan Glassman. *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. xii, 398 pp.

In *War of Words, War of Stones*, Jonathan Glassman seeks to reconcile the contradiction between "primordialist explanations of Zanzibar's racial divisions" and the common representation of cosmopolitan Zanzibar as "the epitome of ethnic fluidity and racial indeterminacy" (p. 5). Glassman challenges the perspective that Zanzibar's racial tensions were a direct result of colonial policy by arguing that it was in fact the influence of ideas produced by nationalist thinkers. This led to the "racialization of politics" that precipitated the violent pogroms of early 1960s Zanzibar (p. 108). Against the colonial backdrop where British rulers and educators played "important supporting roles" he analyzes how African protagonists developed the racial thought that precipitated and justified acts of violence in the years leading up to independence. The overarching narrative concentrates on how and why "Africans' efforts to imagine a postcolonial political community resulted in racial violence and dehumanizing racial thought" (p. ix).

Readers familiar with Glassman's previous book, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Heinemann 1995) will see continuities in his approach to history. Here, in a study of a massive rebellion against the German colonial presence, he breaks from the mold of earlier "resistance" histories by reconstructing the motives of lower-class rebels "in settings where the most pervasive languages ordering social relations were those of paternalism and community rather than of class and nation, and where popular struggles were rarely concerned explicitly with issues of state power or the organizing of economic production" (p. xi). His analysis in this earlier work is also embedded in a comprehensive understanding of how cultural idioms shaped the motivations of local actors. In both works, Glassman is careful to stress that these historical trajectories were not inevitable. In *War of Words, War of Stones*, he tries to go beyond the simple stereotypes, despite the fact that his analysis may offend "many politically engaged Zanzibaris" because it breaks from the reigning normative mold of typecasting clear heroes and villains (p. x).

In Part I's two introductory chapters, Glassman critiques dominant instrumentalist and structuralist "misapprehensions" of African ethnicity and race to explain why he instead focuses on the "role African thinkers played in the construction of race" (p. 8). Part II, "War of Words," looks at the emergence of "exclusionary ethnic nationalism" amongst the secular intelligentsia before turning to subaltern intellectuals' discourse. Glassman then emphasizes transformations in civil society during the late 1950s and early 1960s, which can be seen in the "newspaper wars" where the racially charged vitriol of the press contributed to "politicizing every day life" (p. 149). In the final part of the book, he shows how the "war of words" influenced and led to the "war of stones," the June 1961 election riots. The substantive part of this book ends on the eve of the 1964 revolution, which means the coup and its aftermath are not discussed. In his conclusion and epilogue he connects his argument to the formation of contemporary Zanzibari identities.

Glassman offers a bold and persuasive argument that challenges much scholarship on

ethnicity, race, and colonial influence in Africa. He contends that "the rise of racial thought in colonial Zanzibar was largely the work of indigenous intellectuals, including those at the forefront of mainstream nationalism, who in their debates and disputations created a locally hegemonic discourse of racial difference" (p. 7). This contrasts with much of the prevailing literature, which assumes that ethnic conflicts arise from colonial created social structures.

Contrary to growing trend to use and insist on oral evidence, Glassman discounts oral traditions as understandings of the past, not recordings of them, and instead relies upon "the words of Zanzibari historical actors as they were recorded" (p. xi). He is critical of the "ingrained propensity in African studies to privilege oral sources" as more authentic, which he sees instead as "allowing nationalists to shape the historical record with their own post factor self-representations" (p. 7).

This book is a well organized and well written account of Zanzibar's "time of politics," a period spanning from the first elections in 1957 until independence in 1963. A critical political and intellectual history, this book is required reading for anyone interested in Tanzania's history. It, moreover, is a valuable contribution to literature on racial thought and relations in Africa that will appeal widely to both scholars and students.

Katrina Demulling, *Boston University*

Robert A. Hill and Edmond J. Keller (eds). *Trustee for the Human Community: Ralph J. Bunche, the United Nations, and the Decolonization of Africa.* Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010. 205 pp.

This essay collection focuses on Bunche's academic and diplomatic relationship to Africa. Unpacking the Nobel laureate's relationship to the continent, then, is the most useful purpose for the work. Although *Trustee for the Human Community* is comprised of conference papers from events celebrating Bunche's centennial birthday, it does not aim to serve as a comprehensive biography or examination of the subject's personal or professional life away from Africa, but it is notably the first major study of Bunche's role there.

Trustee for the Human Community contains ten essays that analyze Bunche and Africa in three specific contexts. In Part One, Martin Kilson, Robert Edgar, Elliott P. Skinner, and Pearl T. Robinson discuss Bunche's academic relationship to Africa, writing on his experiences during dissertation research and the degree to which these intellectual pursuits influenced the future statesman's career. Part Two expands upon this discussion, with Neta C. Crawford, John Olver, Crawford Young, and Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja writing primarily on Bunche's role in developing the United Nations' Trusteeship system and discussing his contentious relationship with Patrice Lumumba during work in the Congo. These two parts do of course overlap. It becomes readily apparent that Bunche saw his intellectual and diplomatic pursuits as intricately connected, and the essayists take care to describe the inner dissonance their subject often experienced when theoretical ideals and practical ones did not seem to prove compatible. Ralph A. Austen and Charles Henry conclude in Part Three by providing general reflections on Bunche and his accomplishments in both arenas.

Though this book initially adopts a celebratory tone toward Bunche at his centenary, it does so with a fairly nuanced view of the subject. Rather than being a saviour or visionary, Bunche becomes a complex individual whose legacy remains subject to interpretation, as each essayist interprets it slightly differently. This, again, is the strength of the book. It is purely a work on Bunche, rather than meeting Hill and Keller's goal of an examination of decolonization and African Americans in Africa more generally. Several of the authors do debate whether Bunche should be viewed as representative of Westerners involved in Africa or African Americans interested in Africa, and while the answer may sometimes be yes, Bunche remains unique in many important respects.

The role of the United Nations in Africa may be a little overplayed, particularly toward the end of the book when essayists describe the international body's interactions with the newly-independent Congo but largely exclude a description of United States or European actions there. The UN does become a useful space for analyzing the connection between Bunche's academic and practical interests, as his work within the organization is based both upon the theoretical conclusions of his dissertation and its ramifications for reforming the Trusteeship system as well as on his lived experiences as an African American living in an imperial society. Bunche's work within the UN is portrayed as both radical and pragmatic, as well as somewhat contradictory; the man who believed so strongly in the need for decolonization and independence still viewed African and Asian countries as needing guidance from the West under the Trusteeship and Mandate systems and refused to accept Pan-Africanism as a productive mechanism for facilitating decolonization despite his belief in connections between Africans in the Old and New Worlds.

Bunche also becomes both a pawn of the UN and one of its directors. The differing viewpoints of each essayist set up this dichotomy. Thus, the work's subject becomes a complex and complicated person. *Trustee for the Human Community* remains, however, a highly Bunche-centered work, not only in terms of subject matter, but also in its discussions. While the essays focus on Bunche's perceptions of Africa and Africans, there is little indication in any of them as to how African leaders—or his UN colleagues—viewed Bunche. Integrating these perspectives would have added to the discussion on the complexity of Ralph Johnson Bunche. Additionally, the book indirectly argues that Bunche's greatest achievements are his ones in the diplomatic field. Although his intellectual and practical pursuits are related, they eventually culminate with his role at the UN. Toward the beginning of the book, Martin Kilson notes that Bunche became the first dissertator at an American university to utilize African fieldwork in his studies. The focus, however, remains on Bunche as a diplomat rather than an intellectual.

Trustee for the Human Community does fulfil its goal of presenting an in-depth look at Bunche's role in African decolonization and his relationship with the continent. While more information on perceptions of Bunche would have been welcome, it is overall a nuanced view of an often-celebrated and occasionally-maligned African American. As a short and fairly simple read, it should be appropriate for generalists or undergraduate audiences, as well as Africanists seeking a better understanding of Bunche.

Myra Ann Houser, *Howard University*

Douglas H. Johnson. *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars: Peace or Truce?* Suffolk: James Currey, 2011. xix, 236 pp.

Following the overwhelming vote of southern Sudanese for independence from Sudan in January 2011 and the establishment of the new Republic of South Sudan on 9 July 2011, Douglas Johnson has revised *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, first published in 2003. This revised (and final) edition contains a new preface and concluding chapter and is targeted at students, policy makers, and activists seeking a thoughtful and succinct analysis of Sudan's history.

Johnson is well-qualified to explain the root causes of Sudan's civil wars to those unfamiliar with that country. He holds a PhD in Sudanese history and is the general editor at James Currey, which publishes quality academic works on Africa. The book under review relies on Johnson's considerable knowledge of Sudan, built from considerable time living and travelling in the country. Johnson's work is characterised by his sympathy for those peoples marginalised by the central government, particularly in the south, but he is no apologist for the often destructive actions of some southern leaders.

Johnson's intent is look into Sudan's past to identify the root causes of conflict, which defy resolution and threaten the long-term reconciliation between the central government and excluded peoples throughout the country. The root causes are:

- An exploitive relationship between the centre and the peripheries
- Militant Islam
- Premature granting of independence in 1956
- A nationalist movement narrowly based on the northern elite
- Economic weakness in the north, compounded by growing awareness of the south's natural resources
- Self-interested involvement of foreign governments and investors in Sudanese affairs.

Each root cause is strongly woven into Johnson's narrative, giving the reader a nuanced analysis of Sudan's history and an understanding as to why any "solution" to Sudan's conflicts must address the grievances of the marginalised who have had little reason to date to trust the state (and international mediation efforts for that matter). Johnson concludes that these root causes of conflict can only be addressed by replacing the authoritarianism of the past with a long term process of democratic transition. However, his assessment of whether the current peace initiative based on the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement will deliver peace is gloomy but spot on:

Self-determination for the South has finally resolved the longest running dispute of Sudan's independence, but it has done so by deferring a comprehensive peace for all Sudanese. The principles of 'democratic governance, accountability, equality, respect, and justice for all citizens' have yet to be established. Peace may finally come if they take root in the new republic of the South at the same time that the struggle to realise the promise of the CPA continues in the old Sudan. (p. 180)

Although Johnson traces the origins of at least one of his root causes – the exploitation of the peripheries by the center – to the early Nile states prior to the Turco-Egyptian conquest of

the Sudan in 1820, the focus of the book remains firmly on Sudan's recent history. The history of the early Nile states is completed in under four pages. In contrast, Johnson's analysis of colonial and post-colonial Sudan takes 171 pages. Johnson is at his best in discussing the post-independence period and does an admirable job in making sense of the intricate politics of Sudan from the 1970s onwards.

Those readers new to Sudan will find the chronology invaluable, but the usefulness of the bibliographical essay, which was a strength of the original edition, may be limited for some. Apart from a new section at the end of the essay on Dafar and the CPA, the rest of the essay does not appear to have been updated since the book was first published in 2003. Thus, the essay omits reference to Robert O. Collins' *A History of Modern Sudan* (2008), which is also an excellent survey of Sudanese history. Similarly, the essay lists the Human Rights Watch publication, *Sudan, Oil and Human Rights Abuses* as forthcoming, when it was in fact published in 2003.

My comment on the currency of the bibliography, however, is a very minor quibble that should not detract from the value of this book to the non-specialist reader. Johnson's analysis of the conflicts in Sudan is clear and incisive. By updating the book to include southern Sudan's independence, Johnson has given us a very important and useful survey history of Sudan.

Sonny Lee, *Independent Scholar, Adelaide, Australia*

Michelle T. Kuenzi. *Education and Democracy in Senegal*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. xiii, 190 pp.

Education and Democracy in Senegal is an important contribution in the field of education in Senegal and in Africa. Kuenzi's book presents her research on Senegalese education that examines the effects of non-formal education (NFE) on civic participation and behaviors. Kuenzi compares NFE to both formal and Koranic education in Senegal and argues that NFE "tends to be more supportive of democratic values and less authoritarian than those without NFE" (p. 22-23). To advance her argument, Kuenzi engages a qualitative research study in Senegal's non-formal education. Moreover, to investigate NFE at its core, she chooses to utilize a survey methodology of rural Senegalese citizens.

Kuenzi's book consists of seven chapters. The first chapter highlights the theoretical foundations of the NFE in general, and specifically NFE in Africa. She posits that NFE is more culturally relevant in comparison to formal education and therefore more pertinent to Senegalese citizens. Thereafter, the author takes the reader through a literary analysis of literature in modernization theories that support her argument that non-formal education fosters positive political and democratic attitudes in its citizens. Chapter Two provides a contextual background of the politics of Senegal from the pre-colonial to the post-independence period and how this contextual background influenced and continues to influence education in Senegal. Further in the chapter, Kuenzi brings in a discussion of the Senegalese presidential election in 2000 and its remarkable impact on ethnicity, history, politics, and religion in the

country. Chapter Three offers an overview of the history of education in Senegal beginning with the French colonial rule and its influence on the education system through to the current education system.

In Chapter Four, Kuenzi embarks on her qualitative research study by presenting the different aspects of her study including its design, sample population and its applicability to the countries around the world. Chapter Five presents an analysis of the findings as it relates to and supports civic and social political attitudes and participation. The results as is expected from the modernization theories advanced at the outset, suggested that NFE considerably appears to promote positive changes in political and civic behaviors and attitudes. Both Chapters Five and Six analyze research findings from the survey conducted in rural Senegal. While chapter five discusses at length a bivariate analysis of the findings, Chapter Six focuses on multivariate analysis of the findings. The final chapter offers Kuenzi's thoughtful observation and presents policy implications of NFE in Senegal. She particularly focuses on how the findings affect and impact women empowerment in general, as this is the group mostly benefiting from NFE. In conclusion, with regard to validity of the study, Kuenzi applies different qualifying checks including giving specific details of the research context and methodology. She particularly presents the minute details as to the qualifying checks and measures that were put in place, most importantly, to minimize errors and to give the reader a comprehensive and substantive picture of the study.

Kuenzi makes a solid contribution to the literature on education in Senegal and on non-formal education in general. She succeeds in advancing her argument that NFE has positive effects in its adult citizens by influencing their democratic choices in voting and in approaching community leaders. However, Kuenzi does not explicitly and evidentially show how the NFE helps individuals to reach for leadership positions or provide examples of individuals who benefited from NFE and made discernable changes in their lives, society or in their country as a whole. Rather the positive democratic behaviors and attitudes seem superficial and do not demonstrate active political participation and involvement. Also in putting emphasis on NFE as being more favorable to democratic practices, the author tends to underestimate the impact of other forms of education such as Koranic education in empowering its recipients. Furthermore, I found her selective use of modernization theory as appropriate but rather contrived, particularly when ideas are wheeled out to support the author's own position. The qualitative study would benefit more if an a priori research design was utilized to give room for emergent frameworks from the field.

In conclusion, besides filling a gap in literature on non-formal education in Senegal, the book is a noteworthy addition to literature in education in Africa and literature on the development of democratic citizenship education. Kuenzi's book will likely be valuable to scholars and students in the education field and to those engaged in African studies.

Anne Jebet Waliaula, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Janie L. Leatherman. *Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict*. Cambridge and Oxford, UK, and Boston: Polity Press, 2011. 242 pp.

Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict offers a comprehensive look at the issue of sexual violence in modern warfare. Leatherman asserts at the outset that sexual violence is neither a new or modern day phenomenon. History has informed us that rape has been part of warfare since time immemorial. It may not have been openly discussed as Leatherman explains that historically it was taboo to investigate sexual violence in armed conflict, one reason being it is seemingly impossible to understand these acts. But what has changed? Many people still find it hard to understand the barbaric acts of sexual violence, more so in an information age where graphic images of victims of modern warfare are easily accessible.

Notwithstanding, the present information overload can lead to viewer fatigue and an ensuing lack of understanding and empathy. I recently read an article about “Land of Blood and Honey,” the upcoming movie by the actress Angelina Jolie based on the Bosnia War. The readers were asked to comment on the article. The following comment was quite striking: “War is war. Rape is a consequence of war. Every war known to man has had rapes in them. As wrong as it may be, it has happened and will always happen. Just as people are killed, Collateral damage is always there too. Stop looking for the ultimate answer because nothing you do or anyone else does will stop torture and rape in wars. I wish it would but that is not reality” (<http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/04/opinion/lemmon-jolie-movie-women-war/index.html?iref=allsearch>). Nonetheless, in this highly conceptualized book, Leatherman offers an analytical framework to define the many reasons that have been put forward for sexual violence in armed conflict. The book offers a much needed structure to studying the issue as a subject in its own right and is a must read for students pursuing courses in modern warfare and other related courses.

Leatherman draws from three theories—essentialism, structuralism, and social constructivism—which she used to complement the wealth of information drawn from case studies and research on conflict and post conflict countries like the DRC, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Bosnia. She regards sexual violence in war as a runaway norm that crosses four thresholds: (i) the type of violence of which rape is the act most commonly associated with sexual violence in war, (ii) its target, (iii) agency, and (iv) the loss of neutrality and safe space.

At the heart of Leatherman’s argument is the feminist concept of patriarchy. Gender inequality predisposes women to the type of violence experienced not only in war but peace time. In true Feminist style it is argued that this subordinate position women occupy is no coincidence. In chapter 3 Leatherman successfully argues this point by drawing from cross-national studies that demonstrates the role of gender inequality in the social construction of violence. Numerous studies conducted by reputable organizations show that social and cultural practices in many societies go unquestioned and increasingly portray women and girls as vulnerable thereby exposing them to further risks when law and order breaks down. Leatherman’s feminist approach cannot be overstated and is bound to spark the debate with critics of feminism, who are quick to draw from the few successes of gender equality to claim

that the feminist movement has achieved its goals. It is against this token achievement that I wish to urge caution when Leatherman claims that with the creation of national and international laws prohibiting the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war the day of impunity is over for the militarized capitalist system. But which of the players in that system can be held accountable? We know that key players mentioned in chapter—the most insightful chapter of the book—such as the mining companies in the eastern Congo are not. In 2011, Global Witness, a whistle blowing NGO, withdrew from the Kimberley Process citing KP's refusal to address the clear links between diamonds, violence, and tyranny. There is also the herculean task of institutional reforms in highly patriarchal countries like Sierra Leone where gender inequalities are entrenched through discriminatory laws and customs. High levels of poverty and illiteracy also prevents women in such societies from seeking to uphold their internationally recognized rights.

The silence may have ended but justice for women like Boali, “one of 13 women who had the courage to testify before the King’s Commission in the Congo Free State” (p. 11), is a long way off. Nonetheless, *Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict* is another milestone in the effort to end sexual violence, be it in peace or war time.

Nafisatu Koroma, *School of Oriental and African Studies*

Simon Lewis. *British and African Literature in Transnational Context*. Gainesville: Florida University Press, 2011. 257 pp.

This book is a powerful call for ceasing to write the story of Africa and Africans from Anglo-centric, metropolitan, racist, and hegemonic or narrowly nationalist perspectives. It advocates a liberation of African literature from any tutelage and insists on the place, contribution, and centrality of African literature in the British literary and world canons. Equally, it is about intersections, interrelations, and interconnectedness and shows how Africans and the British share a great deal of their literary and historical traditions. This, however, has not been reflected in the writing and rewriting of Africa and Africans, since African literature is still perceived as an appendage to the British one.

A wide and rich variety of texts for analysis provide dialectical readings of nation, race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality. Some belong to authoritative writers such as Chinua Achebe, Buchi Emecheta, Wole Soyinka, T.S Eliot, and Caryl Churchill; others are not yet part of the canons like Abdulrazak Gurnah, Alan Hollinghurst, Yvette Christianse, and Chris Van Wyck. All these writers belong to British and African traditions; span a long span of time extending from 1958 to 2007; represent different parts of Africa and different African identities; and come from different political orientations in terms of their national, racial, ethnic, gender, class, and sexual affiliations.

Simon Lewis is a staunch Saidist. He is driven by Edward Said’s ideological motivations and uses the same conceptual tools the latter used in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993): “a new integrative or contrapuntal orientation in history that sees western and non-western experiences as belonging together because they are connected with imperialism;” “ an imaginative, even

utopian vision which re-conceives emancipatory theory and performance” and “an investment in a particular sort of nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy” (Said, p. 279).

Lewis’s significant addition is his capacity in his analysis of these diverse readings of the constructions of Africa and Africans to go beyond the contrapuntal reading of africanism of colonialist discourse and that of pan-Africanist rhetoric. He rejects racially exclusive nationalism, which can solely produce narrowly national literary canons accompanied by local tyranny and advocates hybridity to subvert such nationalism. Yet, Lewis maintains that the national identity of individuals within a given state together with the national sovereignty for the national within the international community should be affirmed.

One of the major objectives of this book is to thoroughly oppose Manichean impulses, which view history exclusively in conflict terms and reduces it to an ongoing binary opposition between them and us. Lewis is strongly critical of nativism, racism, and European colonialism and the supporting discourses that have lasted well beyond the formal period of colonialism. Race is a social construct, he suggests, with no biological basis, and this argument partly aims at undermining and eventually do away with it. That is the humanist aspect of the book in asserting the transnational nature of the whole field of writing in English about Africa in the second half of the twentieth century by demonstrating that British literature about Africa and African literature in English are one and cannot be perceived as separate lexicons because the history of Britain and that of Africa have been intersecting for long. For this purpose, Lewis claims the recognition and full inclusion of African literature written in English in the orthodox canon and histories of English-language literature.

Similarly, though inspired by Said’s model of contrapuntal reading, Lewis does not champion any single and uniform approach and does not claim to offer a comprehensive analysis of the selected texts in spite of the wide geography and history they cover. His motive is rather to undo whatever damage colonial Africanist and African nationalist discourses have done to Africa and African identity with words.

The main part of Lewis’s critique is directed at authors’ representation of Africa and Africans and their stubborn insistence in reproducing generalizing tropes of African otherness and neglecting local specificities. His texts show the hegemonic role of English as a linguistic medium in which the narrative of the world became the sacred word. Englishness is moreover depicted as an exclusively male construction based on an amalgam of attitudes towards others, whether their otherness is defined in terms of race, nation, class or gender.

For Lewis, English is still a racially exclusive category not yet prepared to house African writers of the calibre of Achebe or Soyinka. These and others remain invisible in the still selective and nationalist English literary history. It is not striking, therefore, that these Anglophone African writers each in his/her way travel between and most often blend narratives that focus on local differences and narratives that highlight universal commonalities.

Adel Manai, *University Tunis El-Manar*

JoAnn McGregor. *Crossing the Zambezi: The Politics of Landscape on a Central African Frontier*. Suffolk: James Currey, 2009. 237 pp.

JoAnn McGregor undertakes a challenging endeavor: to historicize the processes of claim-making developed between 1850s and 2000 along both margins of a mid-Zambezi landscape. This history of competing cultural, political, and economic claims to and appropriations of the Zambezi is limited to the section of the river between Victoria Falls and Lake Kariba. According to the author, imperial explorations of and colonial interventions in the mid-Zambezi and their unsettled legacies influenced post-colonial conflicts over the waters in this part of the river. Thus, McGregor begins this history of competing claims over the mid-Zambezi frontier during a series of “dramatic episodes” (p. 4) and their impact on the landscape and the river populations. This constitutes the basis for the first of the author’s two storylines. These episodes include David Livingston’s “discovery” of the Falls in the mid-nineteenth century, followed by the construction of the Victoria Falls Bridge in 1905 and of the Kariba Dam in the early 1950s. The second storyline focuses on the struggle over the Zambezi as a borderland, an analysis that embraces both the complex dynamics of the pre-colonial frontier as well as the subsequent formation of the colonial state border. Here the author pays special attention to the politics of border identity and explores how imaginary as well as material aspects of colonial and post-colonial frontiers relate to pre-colonial hierarchical relations between decentralized groups and the major state systems in the nineteenth century.

The book consists of ten chapters. The introductory first chapter sums up some of the recent scholarship on landscape that informs and frames the study. Drawing on the borrowed notion of “sites of memory” (p. 9), however, with an emphasis not only on narratives but also on counter-narratives, contestation, and alternative sites on the river, McGregor aims to avoid depoliticized and ahistorical constructions in this excellent study. Her analytical approach is clearly trans-disciplinary, combining concepts raised in historical geography, history, and anthropological oriented theory. The following two chapters contain insights into pre-colonial history and examine imperial discourses about the mid-Zambezi. Thus, chapter two discusses oral histories told by present-day “river people” – specifically those related to river-crossing and to some ritual practices at particular landscape sites – for they evince “pre-colonial modes of discourse” (p. 18) of chiefless people, the politics of a late nineteenth century frontier, and people’s material relations with the river at that time. Chapter three reevaluates Livingston’s ethnographic writings, tracing accurately the way local interpreters’ ideas along the route influenced him and shaped his writings, as much as the transition process by which the river changed from being considered a “natural border” to its definition as a boundary between colonial states. The consequences of marking the border are analyzed in chapter four. Here, McGregor goes into detail on the impact that the new state structures of authority and colonial law had on the decentralized “river people,” and their gradual marginalization from the new political and economic centers. Chapters five and six turn to the construction of two mega-engineering works, the Victoria Falls Bridge and the Kariba Dam, emphasizing their political uses within the expansionist colonial state and the way they affected the formation of identity of the Tonga communities. Chapter six reconstructs the process of their displacement and

resettlement in Northern and Southern Rhodesia after the damming of the river. Chapters seven and eight focus on the development of a nationalist consciousness in the Zambezi borderlands exemplified in the Tonga and Nambya ethnic mobilizations and on the politics of cultural recognition, its demands and stress on cultural difference, which took shape after independence. Methodologically innovative, chapter nine deploys commissioned diaries from Kariba Tonga gillnet fishermen to explore their present-day fishing and trading livelihoods, which shed light on local networks and on both legal and unregulated practices in relation to state authority. The last chapter discusses the post-colonial political uses of the landscape, tourism, and heritage industries at Victoria Falls, analyzing their influence on local claims today.

This excellent work is a pleasure to read and will be of interest not only to historians, geographers, and anthropologists concerned with southern and central Africa, but also to Africanist scholars and students at large. Perhaps a glossary listing the acronyms used in some chapters could be of help for readers unfamiliar with the area and the research topic. Despite the good selection of photographs and other visual aids supportive of the text, the addition of some more maps to locate the area of study in the districts of Hwange and Binga would have been welcomed. Nevertheless, McGregor's ability to deploy an extensive array of different sources throughout her analysis is exceptional and doubtless one of the attractions of this stimulating and well-documented book.

In sum, McGregor's study contributes significantly to historicize complex claim-making processes in Africa within a framework of *longue durée*, skilfully including the pre-colonial past into the analysis. Arguable is to what extent present-day oral sources of the Tonga (in myths, tales, and rituals) may be regarded as "pre-colonial modes of discourse." The author's goal in this study is less about theorizing than about historicizing processes and transitions, and this goal is masterly fulfilled.

Olga Sicilia, *University of Vienna*

Elias Mpofu (ed.). *Counseling People of African Ancestry*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. xix, 332 pp.

This book is aimed at psychologists, counselors, social workers, and other helpers "working with Africans, people of African ancestry, or with an African cultural heritage" (p. xv). As defined in this book, "an African ancestry identity goes beyond race, skin color, or geographic location to include anyone who proclaims African self-hood" (p. xv). The twenty chapters in the book are divided into three parts, and a concluding chapter synthesizes and integrates the discourse on the book's themes. The first section of the book focuses upon the foundations of counseling in African settings and includes chapters on such topics as the role of indigenous healing practices in Sub-Saharan Africa, the role of oral tradition, issues regarding assessments for counseling, the history of counseling research in African settings, and building an empowerment model in the context of racial oppression and colonization. The second section of

the book examines counseling in various contexts, and chapters here focus on school counseling, counseling students at tertiary institutions, family therapy, pastoral care and counseling, refugees, orphans and vulnerable children, and the relationship of the social psychology of peace-building and conflict resolution to counseling. One chapter in the book focuses upon diversity counseling with African-Americans, and reviews issues regarding understanding culturally appropriate counseling interventions, notes barriers to counseling, considers the impact of counselor-client discussions of race, and identifies a paucity of research with such populations as elders and multiracials. The third part of the book offers several chapters devoted to various counseling applications, including trauma, HIV/AIDS, substance use disorder (including the most commonly abused substances in Africa, alcohol, cannabis, and khat, and lesser known ones, such as tik), careers, and people with disabilities.

The book's editor, Elias Mporfu, is a professor of rehabilitation counseling in Sydney, Australia. He brings over twenty years of experience to this project, with research interests in disability, complementary, and alternative health (CAM), and, of course, Africa. Most of the chapter contributors hail from Southern Africa (predominantly South Africa, as well as Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), though several are based at universities in the U.S., the U.K., Australia, and other nations around the globe. Most of the authors are PhD psychologists, though contributors also include a MD and a MSW. This geographic range permits discussion of a range of essential topics. One hopes that future projects adapt this volume's format and expand it to consider more fully other regions in Africa. As Lopez and colleagues note, the "ethnocultural milieu of contemporary Africa is highly heterogeneous, contrary to the stereotypes held by many Westerners" (p. 57). Of course, periodically some authors do discuss other regions in Africa and around the globe, for instance when discussing Somali refugees to Australia (p. 287) or refugees and displaced persons from the Great Lakes Region. Furthermore, Mporfu reminds readers that "within African cultural heritage settings, there is considerable diversity in cultural aspects salient to subgroups within the same generic mix, for which creative or innovative approaches to counseling services provision would be necessary" (p. 313).

A number of the chapters emphasize the challenges involved when Western psychological approaches meet African cosmologies and ways of knowing. Repeatedly, the chapter authors note the value and importance of respecting traditional healers and indigenous healing and spiritual systems. In fact, according to the authors of the present book, "about eighty percent of Africans seek health care services—and by extension mental health care services—from traditional healers" (p. 314). Authors here argue that rather than accept a situation in which old and new systems operate at cross purposes, as has often been the case since colonial times, counselors and other helpers should focus on facilitating and improving collaboration and dialogue between counselors and traditional healers, and on improving integration of more formal counseling systems with indigenous healing systems. For thousands of years, traditional practices have been a source of comfort and healing for Africans in times of unbearable pain and despair. Rather than attempting to overturn such practices, which would largely be impossible, the authors argue for integration, collaboration, and mutual respect.

Several chapter authors point out that research methods appropriate for the African context may include more qualitative, ethnographic, narrative, and phenomenological approaches in contrast to the positivistic, quantitative approach of some Western psychological work. However, one approach of the West that may more easily apply to Africa is family therapy, as the role of the extended family and community in many African societies has long been recognized by traditional healers and by people of African ancestry. Thus, the fact that published family therapy research thus far hails mostly from the USA is troubling, especially in light of such facts as in forty-seven years not one article with a first author from the Middle East or Africa has been published in the journal *Family Process* (p. 143).

Indeed, many contributors note the paucity of research on psychological issues in Africa, particularly regarding questions concerning the appropriateness of Western psychological assessments and diagnoses in the Africa context. For instance, Western psychometric assessments for career development are often inappropriate for use in the South African context, where narrative approaches and qualitative career assessments may offer a better fit (p. 290). Other issues in cross-cultural assessment include differing conceptualizations and classifications of illnesses, linguistic equivalence of instruments such as surveys, appropriateness of test content, measurement, and delivery method, and the cultural relevance of the assessment. For example, does a given assessment really measure cognitive ability or only amount of formal education? Since “in many societies the formal education system is essentially chauvinistic, patriarchal, racist, and sexist,” with “research based on dominant white groups in America and other Western countries” (p. 142), an assessment that in reality only measures such education and its correlates is problematic at best.

The present book never shies away from revealing uncomfortable information regarding racial oppression and the impact of colonization, or troubling statistics regarding health issues, yet it also offers evidence based reason for optimism and hope. For instance, readers learn that over eleven percent of South Africans have been victims of a violent crime in a one year period, twenty-three percent of adults there have been exposed to one or more violent events and eighty percent of adolescents in Cape Town have experienced at least one traumatic event (pp. 236-37). However, elsewhere in the book, authors point to inspiring stories such as how a community intervention in Stellenbosch (near Cape Town), based upon liberation and empowerment concepts transformed a group of youth. Approaches such as mentored field trips, including one to Robben Island, aimed at engaging youth with history and encouraging them to rise beyond adversities which may currently limit them. While such techniques seem far from the standard fifty-minute therapeutic counseling hour common in the United States, evidence presented in this book suggests that these positive psychological techniques are an appropriate fit for this African setting.

One concept that is referred to extensively throughout the book is *Ubuntu*. The importance of this concept for counseling is underscored by the fact that it appears in so many of the book's chapters. This complex term is difficult to simply translate, but Watson and colleagues offer an extended discussion of it in their chapter, explaining how this Nguni term and related terms are common in Southern Africa, and how it derives from a Bantu word referring to personhood (p.

282). The term implies, among other dimensions, the meaning of life through human relations, communal spirituality and ceremony, the importance of respecting, caring for, and helping others, group solidarity, and human interdependence. The authors emphasize the process dimension of the concept, in the sense of becoming fully (that is, a moral) human and note that Nelson Mandela refers to a proverb which reflects the *Ubuntu* concept: “A person is a person because of other people” (p. 282). The concept relates profoundly to the topic of counseling people of African ancestry as several authors make clear.

In sum, this book represents a landmark contribution to our understanding of counseling people of African ancestry and offers an indispensable resource for psychologists and other care providers working with such populations. Additionally, each chapter of the book is carefully designed with features that make the book attractive as an instructional text, appropriate for college and university level students. Such features include chapter overviews and learning objectives printed at the start of each chapter, and full bibliographies, lists of useful websites, self-check exercises, and field-based experiential exercises at the end of each chapter. Chapters also include ample research, discussion, and case study boxes, each of which includes several questions that will certainly inspire reflection and stimulating conversation. Beyond those helping professionals already mentioned, all who care about Africa should read this book.

Omar Ahmed and Grant J. Rich, *International Psychology Bulletin*, Juneau, Alaska

Mara Naaman. *Urban Space in Contemporary Egyptian Literature: Portraits of Cairo*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011. Xxv, 227 pp.

Mara Naaman’s *Urban Space in Contemporary Egyptian Literature* is part of the exciting growing literature situated at the disciplinary crossroads of literary/cultural studies and urban studies/social geography. Writing in the tradition of the theoretical explorations of space and place pioneered by the likes of Walter Benjamin, Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, Edward Soja, and Mike Davis, Naaman and other similarly oriented contemporary critics takes as their point of departure how—space being zoned, politicized, and symbolically laden—places produce texts, which in turn make these sites “legible” for readers (pp. 1, 11-12). Naaman’s study focuses on recent novelistic representations of the Wust al-Balad district of Cairo, a quarter developed—based on the model of Haussmann’s Paris—during the eighteen sixties and seventies in order to present a “modern” face of Egyptian to the wider (i.e. Western) world. In doing so, she focuses specifically on the manner in which Radwa ‘Ashur’s *A Piece of Europe* (2003), Khayri Shalabi’s *Salih Hisa* (2000), Idris ‘Ali’s *Poor* (2005), and Alaa al-Aswany’s *The Yacoubian Building* (2003) negotiate the confluence of colonization, incipient nationalism, modernization, and spectacle that Wust al-Balad marked over the course of the twentieth century.

Naaman admirably follows her program of charting literary responses to the manner in which “the battle over the modern Egyptian subject was waged in [the] space” of Wust al-Balad (p. 177), whose spatio-social psychological importance was recently highlighted by the

revolutionary protests that erupted in its Tahir Square during the early months of 2011, leading to the downfall of pro-American dictator Hosni Mubarak. In her analysis of *A Piece of Europe* Naaman argues that for 'Ashur Wust al-Balad represented a European model of modernity foisted upon the people of Egypt and thus alienating them until, with the looting and burning of January 1952, they could popularly resist and reclaim this exogenous spatial imposition. Shalabi's *Salih Hisa*, on the other hand, poses an alternative, indigenous form of being modern and urbane through its evocation of the society and cultural exchanges of a *ghurza* (hashish café) located adjacent to Wust al-Balad, according to Naaman. Much more critical of Egyptian society due to its marginalization of its Nubian population, as Naaman shows, 'Ali poses the rejection of European encroachments onto Egypt marked by the 1952 uprising celebrated by 'Ashur as a failed revolution that simply substituted an Egyptian military elite for the privileged Westerners whose former abodes in Wust al-Balad they came to occupy after Egypt achieved independence under Nasser. Finally, Naaman traces how in the popularly successful *The Yacoubian Building* al-Aswany nostalgically enacts "the literary version of a cultural heritage project [. . .] speak[ing] to a collective Egyptian past" (p. 140) by celebrating the grandeur of Wust al-Balad and the public spaces it afforded Cairo's population, while nonetheless critiquing the corruption and stark socio-economic stratification of early twenty-first century Egyptian society.

All told, *Urban Space in Contemporary Egyptian Literature* serves as a sterling example of how a work of literary criticism can take up the complex intersection of social and cultural forces that diachronically inform a people's sense of place. In restricting itself to not just one city, but one quarter loaded with so much cultural and political significance, this study maintains an accessible level of focus and illustrates how the different registers of urban place (immediate physical surroundings, neighborhood, city, nation, region, etc.) mutually inform each other. Recommended for students and scholars of Arab-Islamic literature, postcolonial literature, and critical place studies (aka geocriticism).

Michael K. Walonen, *Bethune-Cookman University*

Krijn Peters. *War and the Crisis of Youth in Sierra Leone*. London and Cambridge: International African Institute and Cambridge University Press, 2011. xvi, 274 pp.

By now there are a number of in-depth ethnographies that are essential if we are to understand properly the violent civil wars in West Africa in general and Sierra Leone in particular. For example, while Chris Coulter's *Bush Wives and Girl Soldiers* (Cornell UP, 2009) addresses the lives of young Sierra Leonean women under, before and after the war in a most powerful and straightforward way, Danny Hoffman's *The War Machines* (Duke UP, 2011) is an path-breaking ethnography that offers a completely novel analytical framework for the anthropology of war in general, and for the interconnected wars in the West African Mano River Basin region in particular. Another must read to add to the list is Krijn Peters's *War and the Crisis of Youth in Sierra Leone*.

Peters's book is fresh, provocative, and brilliantly honest. He stresses that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement started out as something unexpectedly coherent, which proves it as something very different from the chaotic agent of the coming anarchy so infamously declared by journalist Robert Kaplan and others. Peters's account in part builds on his PhD research in rural development sociology, mostly carried out in the post-war context, in three periods between 2001 and 2006, with some preliminary fieldwork carried out in 1996 and 2000. He ends his book with a useful chronology that helps the reader contextualize his fieldwork: the RUF rebels entered Sierra Leone in 1991, to finally demobilize and leave the scene around 2002, while the movement's leader Foday Sankoh died in custody in 2003.

In positioning his work, Peters notes that most of the material that has been produced on the RUF so far is based on the accounts of the movement's victims. It is a general story of the enemies and opponents of the RUF. Only a token effort, Peters argues, has been made to include information gathered from the RUF itself, whether leadership or rank-and-file. This is the gap that Peters sets out to fill, and he wants to "gain a better understanding of why so many young people proved to be vulnerable to militia conscription in general, and more specifically how the RUF was able to create an armed movement which did not fall apart for more than a decade." But also, his aim is "primarily ethnographic" as he wants "to aid understanding of how war was experienced by its protagonists," namely the cadres of the RUF. His methodology in achieving this, he says, is simplicity itself: "go there, listen, report, examine critically, and then try to understand" (pp. 11-12). It is a powerful portrayal of the simplicity of participant observation and reflection. Still I personally would have appreciated reading more about how exactly the ethnographic field unfolded in front of the researcher, e.g. the everyday procedures of going there and listen to stories of war that were narrated after the fact. Anyway, in pursuing his ethnographic agenda, Peters formulates the central hypothesis of the book. The RUF is to be considered, he says, an extremely violent revolt of marginalized young rural Sierra Leoneans. And, he continues, young people's involvement with the RUF was triggered by weaknesses in a collapsing neo-patrimonial one-party state.

Peters combines a background description with a contextual and qualitative analysis presenting the reader with a clear narrative of the rise and fall of the RUF. It started out as a genuine revolutionary movement which however, with no way out for those part of it, soon changed and became a world of its own, to finally plunge itself "into a fatally unstable paranoia" (p. 17). If this was the end station of the RUF journey, it has also become the generalized description of the movement. Peters' important analysis does in no way deny this end station; indeed, as already mentioned, he outlines the general crisis that gave birth to the RUF, but also the evolving crisis that changed the movement, and finally, with some kind of peace at the horizon, destroyed it.

What Peters basically does with his book is to start the analysis where many other observers effortlessly end up: if the RUF was something extremely unstable and unpredictably paranoid, the movement has only too easily been dismissed as incomprehensible. Even if the RUF indeed made itself into something that may be difficult to comprehend, emotionally more than intellectually perhaps, Peters offers an indispensable analysis of a violent social and

historical process of collapsing powers, oscillating from the local to the global and back again, whereby incomprehensiveness was made.

Well aware that he enters an academic debate that has turned out to be a bitter parallel to the Sierra Leonean war itself, Peters is careful to always position himself and his material in relation to the conventional wisdom he sets out to scrutinize. Written in a clear and frank way, it is a very revealing account, and an essential reference to the war in Sierra Leone. It is really suitable for any kind of readership, Africanists and non-Africanists alike, even if I doubt that students will think that they can afford yet another ridiculously expensive hardback of the International African Institute, now with a new partner in publishing, Cambridge University Press. There are Kindle and eBook editions as well, but also these are surprisingly expensive.

Sverker Finnström, *Uppsala University, Sweden*

William Reno. *Warfare in Independent Africa: New Approaches to African History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 271 pp.

Organizing the totality of post-independence African history may be considered a reasonably daunting task when reflecting on the multiple influences – from both the domestic and international environment – affecting the trajectory of state development. However, Reno's account of armed conflict on the continent, as viewed through the milieu of rebellion, provides an intriguing examination of African history that succeeds in summarizing the general characteristics of African state development while simultaneously contributing detailed descriptions of rebel groups and their operations through the post-independence period. In other words, by examining the history of rebellion and conflict one gains an insight into how such rebel groups comprise elements of the state building project in independent Africa, as well as an alternative perspective of the historical record with regard to the manner of intrastate conflict, as opposed to interstate conflict.

Through this lens of rebel conflict, Reno organizes post-independence African history by the nature of rebel groups operating in distinct periods. This includes a typology rebel groups categorized in five areas: (1) anti-colonial rebels (1961-1974), largely exemplified by rebel groups in Guinea, Mozambique, and Angola; (2) majority-rule rebels (1960s-1990s), incorporating rebel groups from Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe; (3) reform rebels (1970s-1990s), including the National Resistance Movement in Uganda, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front in Ethiopia; (4) warlord rebels (1990s-2000s), largely characterized by groups in Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of Congo seeking private interests with little regard to public administration; and (5) parochial rebels (1990s-2000s) consisting of groups with interests in protecting their perceived neglected communities. Reno organizes the text largely around this typology, with chapters dedicated to each type of rebel group. One noteworthy and recurring theme is the manner in which each type of group acted as a reflection of the state system in which they were embedded. As such, the manner in which rebels recruited supporters was heavily influenced by structural elements derived from within and outside of the state (p. 4).

Furthermore, Reno highlights how rebels of all types exploited available “fields of leverage,” described as areas of society where the state held little control, but where rebel groups could thrive through the extension of networks of support and obtainment of other needed resources (p. 32).

Unlike earlier explanations of statebuilding that emphasize the significance of interstate warfare in relation to capacity-building endeavors (Tilly 1992; Herbst 2000), Africa remains rather distinct in not experiencing a similar trajectory of capacity-through-warfare that other regions experienced. In contrast to explanations emphasizing the development of the state through conflict across political communities, Reno instead highlights how “leaders of these rebel groups had to build the extractive tools of administration to collect taxes in their liberated zones and ensure the compliance and support of local people through courts and effective policing. In short, they had to create a state-within-a-state.” (p. 30; Tilly 1985)

In sum, what Reno’s text provides is a means of explaining the development of the state in Africa in a manner that links with traditional explanations of statebuilding while also retaining its distinctiveness for an African context. Just as Tilly once wrote that “war made the state and the state made war” (1975, p. 42), so too may this assessment be relevant to African history with regard to rebel conflict in the post-colonial era. This text not only describes the evolution of rebel conflict on the African continent, it furthermore provides a link towards theorizing the relationship between rebellion and state development. As such, this text would be a worthwhile addition for anyone interested in the development of the African state, as well as for those with more general interests in international security and state building.

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Nicholas D. Knowlton, *University of Florida*

Mahir Şaul and Ralph A. Austen (eds.). *Viewing African Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Art Films and the Nollywood Video Revolution*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010. 237pp.

This a collection of essays focuses on contemporary African video and art cinemas. According to the opening acknowledgements, this book is the fourth and most recent product in a string of conferences and anthologies that began with the International Film and History Conference at the University of Cape Town in 2002 (p. vii). In the current volume, Şaul and Austen aim to bring together the two distinct traditions of art cinema and video films in Africa in order to “give readers a good introduction into what has been happening in African cinema over the last forty-plus years[,] and to analyze specific FESPACO and Nollywood films from a fresh

comparative perspective" (p. 3). Although ultimately this comparative analysis is somewhat uneven in its considerations of African art cinema, for those interested in African video films and culture the collection offers useful analyses.

The thirteen essays assembled in this anthology are organized into three sections. Following a brief introduction by Şaul and Austen outlining the volume's purpose and structure, the five essays in part one, titled "The 'Problem' of Nollywood," consider video films in Africa, and examine topics relating to the Nigerian video industry including its study (Haynes, Chapter 1) and criticism (Okome, Chapter 2), its impact on other national video industries (Meyer, Chapter 3 and Krings, Chapter 5), and a look at religion and censorship in northern Nigerian video films (Adamu, Chapter 4). In part two, "Imported Films and Their African Audiences," the focus shifts to issues of audience reception. The two essays comprising this section consider the ways African audiences engage with foreign films by discussing commentary and oral viewing practices (Bouchard, Chapter 6) and audience tastes in Tanzania (Fair, Chapter 7). Finally, in part three, "FESPACO/Art Film in the Light of Nollywood," the remaining six essays address African art films, covering topics including art and politics in francophone cinema (Şaul, Chapter 8), the art film industry in Tanzania (Bryce, Chapter 9), style in Sembene's *Emitai* (Rist, Chapter 10), differences between art films and Nollywood videos in pedagogy (Sereda, Chapter 11) and modernity (Green-Simms, Chapter 12), and California Newsreel's impact on African art cinema (Moore, Chapter 13).

Despite these many chapters on art film, the primary strength of this collection is in its engagement with African video films. In chapter 2, "Nollywood and Its Critics," Onookome Okome offers an insightful analysis of the critical discourse surrounding Nollywood, arguing persuasively that such practices are attempts at cultural mediation, and that they ultimately overlook the value and significance of the Nollywood video industry. In Chapters 3 and 5, "Ghanaian Popular Video Movies between State Film Policies and Nollywood: Discourses and Tensions" and "Nollywood Goes East: The Localization of Nigerian Video Films in Tanzania," respectively Birgit Meyer and Matthias Krings successfully articulate the effects of Nollywood on the development of the Ghanaian and Tanzanian video industries. In addition, although Lindsey Green-Simms' essay (Chapter 12), "The Return of the Mercedes: From Ousmane Sembene to Kenneth Nnebue," is located in part three of this volume because of its engagement with art films, it examines these films by putting them in conversation with video films, tracing the automobile as a metaphor for modernity through both forms and drawing meaningful conclusions about shifting attitudes in African society. Although the bulk of this volume is best suited for the study of video films and culture, for those interested in African art cinema, Mahir Şaul's essay (Chapter 8), "Art, Politics, and Commerce in Francophone African Cinema," offers a well-researched and clearly written analysis of celluloid cinema in francophone Africa. Similarly, Cornelius Moore also discusses art cinema in "U.S. Distribution of African Film: California Newsreel's Library of African Cinema: A Case Study" (Chapter 13). However, while the succinct history of California Newsreel and its relationship with African art cinema is enlightening, the essay is short and includes no citations for future reference.

Overall, *Viewing African Cinema in the Twenty-First Century* is a useful reference for those interested in African video cinemas; and despite the editors' assertion that it is more for students generally interested in Africa than for film and media scholars in particular, both are likely to find value in the anthology. Although the volume's organization is somewhat unfocused after the first section on Nollywood, most essays are thoughtful and well written, and provide a valuable contribution to the study of contemporary cinema in Africa.

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Symphony Way Pave Dwellers. *No Land! No House! No Vote! Voices from Symphony Way.* Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 2011. xvii, 141 pp.

No Land! No House! No Vote! is a campaign and a movement of the poor in South Africa. It is a campaign that demands for the boycott of the vote as a way to make the government deliver on issues of basic importance to the poor –such as land and housing. The title of this book is derived from this movement. It is written by some victims of South Africa's draconian land and housing policies. These people were illegally evicted from their homes by government with nowhere to go. They built shacks on pavements opposite the housing project from where they were evicted from and then organized themselves into the Symphony Way Anti-Eviction Campaign as a way to demand their housing rights. The theme of this book is hinged on their struggle for land and housing rights as well as for their dignity as human beings. The book is a compilation of different short stories from different persons and families in the pave-dwelling community.

Beginning with an introduction, each of the stories forms a chapter of the book. All stories in the book draw solely from the personal, family, or community experiences of the contributors. The book comes with high quality illustrative color photographs showing the numerous plights of the contributors. It also begins with a glossary of people, places, and terms. Then a Foreword written is by Raj Patel (activist and author) and an Introduction written by Miloon Kothari (former UN Special Rapporteur for housing). This does not mean that the book makes for very easy reading. It is entirely written in the raw street style of the pave dwellers – the Cape Flats slang. In general, the book challenges the assertion that there is only one genuine way of writing or speaking the English language. In keeping with the authors' desire, the book gives readers an authentic peek into their community. There is no thematic order to this collection of stories. The stories are only arranged according to where the authors live in the community. A community map showing aerial layout of Symphony Way community is included in the book (p. 6).

If the authors' main objective for writing the book is to expose the injustices inherent in South Africa's land and housing sectors, then this has been well achieved. They have been successful at laying the weaknesses of South Africa's housing and land policies to the outside world. To those who might have viewed South Africa as the "Eldorado" of sub-Saharan Africa, these writers may have bluntly exposed their ignorance by showcasing the poverty that lies in the heart of that country. The story of Lola Wentzel (p. 15) describing an unusual account of

sexual violence is bound to haunt a reader long after the book is read. The story of Florrie Langenhoven (p. 63) brings to fore the fact that poverty and hardship can have positive consequences –the spirit of sharing. The story of Sharon and Conway Payn (p. 117) describing their “sea of troubles in Symphony Way” would leave tears of sympathy on the cheek of readers. These true stories throw more light on the insecurity of poor South African urban communities and how such a situation could result to strong community spirit amongst residents. Furthermore, they depict how residents of an informal settlement developed survival strategies through media press statements, popular education; as well as legal through direct and solidarity actions.

In sum, the *Symphony Way Pave Dwellers* have written a uniquely unprofessional and thoroughly stimulating book. It will be of wide general appeal to many readers. However, it is an interesting anthology that seems primarily written for human rights activists, development experts, activist poets, and African politicians who have the courage to listen to poor voices on the street. Researchers with interests in urban community development, sustainable housing or land tenure security issues would find the book very resourceful. Readers with a general curiosity for the turbulent recent past of South Africa will find it really revealing. Within it covers many important issues related to South Africa’s development are identified and expanded upon.

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Aili Mari Tripp. *Museveni’s Uganda: Paradoxes of Power in a Hybrid Regime*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010. 222 pp.

Museveni’s Uganda serves as the case study of hybrid regimes, popularly known as semiauthoritarian regimes. Such regimes find themselves fraught with contradictions for while their leaders adopt trappings of democracy, they at the same time pervert democracy and this through patronage and largesse, use of violence, and repression for the sole purpose of remaining in power. And so, hybrid regimes like that in Uganda embody two divergent impulses: they promote civil rights and yet unpredictably curtail those same rights and liberties.

After two decades of authoritarian governments, Ugandans broke from chaos under president Yoweri Museveni who brought much of the country under his control, pacifying and drawing in various fighting factions under the rubric of a national army and, for a long time Museveni was widely acclaimed by foreign correspondents, donors, diplomats, and some academics as a new style of African leader to be emulated. But though the conception was that Uganda was an oasis of stability, economic progress, and democracy, many Ugandans felt that this was a frustrating mirage and grossly deceptive image which, to them the true picture was different.

That NRM government never built its house the way it said and was expected to build; its house became a troubled house and a home of dissention and NRM leadership experienced tensions between contradictory needs of maintaining control and pressure for greater openness

and democracy. A group of loyal supporters of NRM known as Malwa Group resisted the efforts to change the constitution in order to lift presidential term limits, and some of their members were fired. Moving from a no-party state, the country opened to multipartyism and brought about opening up space for civil and political society. And, when in 1998 parliament began to show some independence, it was soon beaten to submission, sometimes quite literally. Though the human rights and political rights situation in Uganda improved considerably after Museveni came to power and has continued to improve overall, it eroded.

Economic growth under Museveni's watch, which, unlike previous governments, has promoted business and is less apt to interfere with the private ownership of property, liberalization of trade, lifting producer prices on export crops and liberalization of investment laws to facilitate export of profits and encourage foreign investment, opening up of capital markets has encouraged not only export growth but at the same time encouraged legitimizing some of his more undemocratic tendencies. The same can be said of donor support, which with the intension of strengthening political liberation at times unintentionally done the same.

With Uganda as the case study, the book has brought to the fore the plight of semiauthoritarian states in Africa. However, the book has 'hidden' Museveni's direct role in building such regimes and presented him as a captive of the same system. If Museveni is only a captive of such, who is responsible for its construction or perpetuation? Does it mean the system builds and sustains itself? What is Museveni's direct involvement, encouragement or benefit of the system? If such leaders as Museveni step in leadership with an aim of democratizing and changing the leadership structures they find in place, what makes them not to go full throttle into system and leadership change? Why do they retract along the way?

I find a common characteristic in semiauthoritarian regimes, the need to hold on to power: presidents like Gabon's Omar Bongo, Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, Ali Abdulla Saleh of Yemen, Eduardo Dos Santos of Angola, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, Cameroon's Paul Biya, Daniel Arap Moi, Tunisia's Zine-al-Abidine, and Yoweri Museveni remained or have continued in power for more than twenty years. Elsewhere I have asked that when leaders lead for such prolonged periods, what enable them to remain in power for such prolonged length of time in leadership. Are they endeared, endowed with capabilities, entrenched, viewed as entitled, or simply oblivious? (Kihiko, 2010) Is Museveni's prolonged period of leadership based on his belief that he is the one who hunted and killed the animal (liberated Uganda from authoritarian regimes) and so is now entitled to eat at the table without being told to leave?

Indeed, another dimension to this is that after the father has stayed for so long in leadership, he feels that the only person he can safely and comfortably hand over power to is his sibling, especially his son. How can donors keep an eye on the situation in a way that they do not in any way fund and thus entrench such a system? What can citizenry do to get themselves out of such a system? This book appropriately brought to the fore the issues underlying such a system, but more questions must be confronted to heal the wounds the writer notes.

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Peter VonDoepp. *Judicial Politics in New Democracies: Cases from Southern Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009. vii, 185 pp.

Thus far, research on African democracy has focused predominantly on elections, political parties, and voting behavior. However, in a region traditionally characterized by powerful executives, Africanists increasingly are studying the pivotal role played by institutions of horizontal accountability. Peter VonDoepp's book on African judiciaries represents a very welcome addition to this small but growing area of scholarship.

VonDoepp's central goal is to understand why leaders in Africa's new democracies have either respected or undermined judicial autonomy and, in turn, how judiciaries have responded to instances of interference. VonDoepp argues that judicial autonomy in Southern Africa cannot be sufficiently explained by the "thin" strategic models that have been applied in other regions of the world. According to these models, judicial autonomy relies on the electoral market and the degree of power dispersion within the party system. Where electoral uncertainty is high and political power is broadly dispersed, political leaders are less likely to interfere in the judiciary because independent judicial institutions provide an insurance mechanism to such leaders when they leave office. By contrast, low electoral uncertainty and a high concentration of power encourage greater interference with judiciaries.

VonDoepp prefers a "thicker" model that incorporates three key variables. The first is "judicialization," or the placement of key policy and political questions in the hands of the judiciary (p.26). In his view, political leaders become more interested in restricting the institution's autonomy as judicialization grows. The behavior of judges themselves, including their preferences and patterns of decisions, constitutes a second important factor. Finally, VonDoepp asserts that the broader political system in which a judiciary is embedded influences leaders' incentives to intervene as well as determines the range of tools available to do so. In this regard, he focuses specifically on the prevailing degree of state weakness and neopatrimonialism.

To test his hypotheses, VonDoepp engages in a careful comparison across Malawi, Namibia, and Zambia as well as applies process-tracing techniques within these countries over time. Based on fieldwork conducted between 2001 and 2006, he examined parliamentary records, statements by government officials, and press reports on judicial issues as well as interviewed a range of knowledgeable stakeholders and analyzed high and supreme court decisions. He convincingly demonstrates relatively high levels of interference in the judiciaries across the administrations of Bakili Muluzi and Bingu wa Mutharika in Malawi and those of Frederick Chiluba and Levy Mwanawasa in Zambia. These leaders did not use overt means of interference, such as institutional restructuring or packing the courts with supporters. Instead,

he argues that as weak states with high levels of neopatrimonialism, the mode of influence was primarily through patronage, personal attacks, and personal linkages between executives and the judiciary. By contrast, in Namibia, where party concentration is higher and state weakness and neopatrimonialism is lower, judicial interference was relatively infrequent during the presidency of Sam Nujoma.

Yet, while he illustrates that greater power dispersion can lead to more interference in the judiciary than is traditionally acknowledged, it is not clear whether this contradicts the essence of a “thin” approach. If such strategic models are distinguished primarily by their emphasis on the electoral market and the party system, their explanatory power is reaffirmed by the cases. Leaders’ decisions to interfere in the judiciary, and in turn the degree of judicialization, was indeed very much driven by electoral uncertainty and the party system. Fissions within the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) in Zambia and inter-party competition in Malawi reduced leaders’ certainty over their time-horizons in office. Cases of interference in these countries often were more extreme near elections or bids to change the constitution to stay in office. By contrast, not only was Nujoma widely accepted by the Southwest People’s Organization (SWAPO) as the party’s leader but also SWAPO has remained incredibly dominant in Namibian politics since independence. Consequently, less was at stake for Nujoma, even when politically-relevant cases went to court. Thus, even though electoral uncertainty and power dispersion encourage *more* rather than less judicial interference in VonDoepp’s cases, this does not seem to contradict the logic of a thin model but rather simply reverses the causal patterns traditionally associated with such models.

An additional concern is the book’s relatively opaque data and operationalization of key concepts. The coding of judicial decisions as either anti- or pro-government is difficult for the reader to determine, as is the index of government interests that he presents in the Namibian chapter. Though he notes that these codings were done by expert observers, an appendix that briefly summarized what the cases were about and how the codings were deduced would have helped the reader draw her own conclusions about the strength of his evidence. Likewise, this would assist the reader with understanding how he differentiated between cases that were only “political,” meaning that they affected government, opposition, or civil society interests, and those that he classified as directly affecting the president or major opposition figures (pp.52-53). State weakness, an inherently relative term, also is not sufficiently operationalized and is equated alternately with neopatrimonialism, aid dependence, and a high penetration of the state by civil society groups.

Nevertheless, this book represents a valuable contribution to the literature on judicial politics and horizontal accountability. VonDoepp’s findings reinforce the importance of the underlying political context for judicial strengthening, which is a key lesson for the international democracy assistance community. In addition, scholars of African democracy should welcome VonDoepp’s observation that even when faced with interference by executives, the judges in these countries have continued to assert their authority. This indeed bodes well for many of the continent’s other nascent democracies.

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Elke Zuern. *The Politics of Necessity: Community Organizing and Democracy in South Africa.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011. xvii, 242pp.

The movement toward democratisation in South Africa in the 1990s has inspired a diverse range of academic study, from biographical accounts of key political and cultural figures, to investigations on the forms and evolutions of political representation. In *The Politics of Necessity*, Elke Zuern adds to this rich body of work by illuminating the often overlooked role played by community organising pre and post-independence. The end of apartheid presented new opportunities for South Africans, not least the extension of political rights for all citizens to participate in parliamentary democracy. In spite of this, modern South Africa is a country of vast socioeconomic inequality with significant challenges regarding access to food, housing, and jobs. Such economic disparities are at the heart of Zuern's "politics of necessity"; considered by the author as 'where engagement in the public sphere is defined in an environment in which many struggle just to get by' (p. 13). In tracing the development of community organising in South Africa, Elke Zuern argues convincingly that the success and sustainability of the democratic state is dependent on addressing such socioeconomic inequalities.

The book is structured thematically. The first two chapters are concerned with the construction of community associations and rights based discourses in South Africa, while the remaining three focus on the relations between protest and democracy at periods in South African history. Chapter 1 begins by tracing the rise of civic associations ("civics") in townships as forms of community organisation, exploring their expansion and relations with the apartheid state and exiled ANC leadership. Chapter 2 investigates the role played by community leaders in "conscientizing" citizens in South Africa, through linking local material demands to national political processes. The politics of resistance in apartheid South Africa were not uniform, yet activists drew common connections between rights, inequalities, and material necessities. Understandings of democracy were constructed that placed economic issues to the fore. Zuern shows how socio economic demands were not abated by democratisation; rather they remain central areas of concern around which people mobilise—not least due to the state's failure to reduce economic inequality, introduction of neoliberal reforms, and attacks on the right to protest.

Chapter 3 asks whether successful democratic organising is possible under a repressive regime, analysing the role of democratic principles in township organisation against apartheid in South Africa, and drawing from the experiences of social movements in Nigeria and Mexico. Chapter 4 explores the role played by community organisations in the formal democratic system, examining to what extent they are empowered by the creation of democracy and their relationship with the democratic state. In Chapter 5, Zuern moves to consider the viability of protest to effect change and the interactions between protesting groups and the state. As in Chapter 3, Chapters 4 and 5 draw from the experiences of movements elsewhere in Africa and in Latin America. In the final chapter Zuern exposes the evident divergence between the actions of the elites who shape the state on the one hand, and the expectation of citizens who

brought them to power on the other. At the heart of this is the peoples' loss of faith in what democracy offers them due to a failure to address material demands. South African communities succeeded in achieving a democratic state, yet many are still waiting for the socio-economic benefits which were so acutely present in calls for democratisation. Until these material concerns are addressed, Zuern contends that the South African state will continue to be challenged by social movements.

Eloquent, timely, and influential, *The Politics of Necessity* is rich in both comparative analysis and empirical data. The author conducted interviews with over two hundred local residents and activists during more than a decade of political change in South Africa, supplementing this with a significant study of archival records, court transcripts and national newspapers. *The Politics of Necessity* is a must read for those interested in the power of social movements to effect change and the challenges they face in doing so. Owing to its accessible and readable style, it will be of appeal to the scholar and layperson alike.

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