

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Beyond Words: Discourse and Critical Agency in Africa. Andrew Apter. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. 169 pp.**

When in 1976, Wole Soyinka presented us with *Myth, Literature and the African World*, and in 1986, Ngugi wa Thiong'o offered us *Decolonising the Mind*, both writers indeed set in motion the relative beginning of what has become a recurrent debate in African critical discourse; namely, the search for indigenous African theorizing. Soyinka and Ngugi are however not alone in this on-going and self-conscious effort to move beyond colonial mentality and archives. Innumerable works by African(ist) scholars have sought to bring into focus the need to "return to the source" in order to adequately explicate the African experience in letters and conceptualization. Colonial distortions of facts aside, the psychological implications of depending on the very "agency" of domination to assert Africanness (another term that is no longer reflective of belonging but problematized within varying identitarian and ideological convictions or negations) are not only damaging but raise fundamental questions regarding patrimony and power. Aimé Césaire could not have been more direct when he surmises in *Discourse on Colonialism* that the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer can only be conflictual. By its very definition, agency is a process that serves as a medium of activating change. Any postcolonial theory that articulates the subject on the surface without cultural and critical specificities runs the risk of facilitating some form of mental recolonization. And this is why Andrew Apter's *Beyond Words: Discourse and Critical Agency in Africa* should be welcomed.

Although still anchored on anthropological orientation and theoretical sophistication of previous seminal works, namely, *Black Critics and Kings* (1992) and *The Pan-African Nation* (2005), *Beyond Words* boldly injects an innovative critical vista into the discourse on Africa by a sensitive and informed cultural studies scholar. In proposing to transcend Africa's colonial past through a focus on ethnographic practice that takes socio-political contexts into paramount account, Apter advances a critical model in which the agency or thought is indigenous as opposed to the colonial. From ritual performances to the centrality of the panegyric in political discourse, *Beyond Words* transcends traditional anthropology's "colonial" orientation, by using praise poems and African cosmology to re-read African thought system in a trans-disciplinarily constructed and indigenously rooted frame. In six cogent chapters, Apter goes beyond a modest collection of essays per se, but offers something more systematically defensive in the sense of how "critical agency in Africa opposes the very conditions in which Africa is pathologized and the mechanisms by which the "Dark Continent" is continually reinscribed" (ix). Theoretically grounded and culturally provocative as his previous works are, Apter's *Beyond Words* provides a classic and much desirable interfacial text between anthropology, cultural studies, and critical theory.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v10/v10i1reviews.pdf>

Likewise, *Beyond Words* testifies to an effort to present African culture as a speech act that derives its nourishment from local, ritualized, and political languages in order to engage the global without any trepidation or inferiority complex. Whether its approach is recasting ethnophilosophy as engaged by V. Y. Mudimbe and Paulin Houtondji, revisiting Tswana-Zulu-Xhosa praise poetry as political criticism, establishing ambivalent connections between Swazi praise and insult, invoking the gendered nature of Yoruba songs of abuse, or revisiting Dogon cosmological system as symbolic and oppositional discourse, its central argument lies in what the author calls the “relationship of Africanist anthropology and empire” as a measure to not only indigenize colonial culture but challenge it using African frame of reference and knowledge system. It is quite refreshing to read this book and even question the “Africanist-ness” of the author for one hears the voice of an acculturated anthropologist in the positive sense.

When Apter states, “what is hidden is philosophical” (17), “Does not this most “radical” of critical positions in fact recapitulate the logic of colonial conquest—the negation of the other by a magisterial discourse that masquerades as its antithesis?” (30), “praises are the expression of public opinion and provide an effective means of social control” (39), “female elders are honored and feared for their secret knowledge and hidden self-contained powers” (70), and “what is interesting anthropologically is how the very decolonization of cultural tradition based on the rejection of imperialism proclaimed by FESTAC involved the nationalization of colonial tradition by the postcolonial state” (146), he departs from the traditional Western/colonial scholarship that was imposed on African studies by subjecting that same approach to rigorous critique through practical and contextual application.

In sum, *Beyond Words* further contributes to the decolonization of Africanist scholarship and should be a welcome addition to emerging critical interventions on contemporary cultural studies. I would have loved to see some references to North Africa and East Africa to provide a truly representative treatise about African critical agency, but with every work, the scope cannot be as exhaustive and representative as desirable. Andrew Apter has demonstrated his mastery by focusing on areas of African experience where the oral tradition may be said to be more pronounced.

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**Political Liberation and Decolonization in Africa: Lessons from Country Experiences. Julius Omozuanvbo Ihonvbere and John Mukum Mbaku. Westport CT: Praeger, 2003. 373 pp.**

African scholars who have first hand experience of political developments in the continent since independence in the late fifties constitute all of the contributors to this collection of essays edited by Julius Ihonvbere and John Mbaku. This is a companion volume to the earlier *The Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa: The Continuing Struggle* (Praeger, 2003). It provides a gory assessment of the performance of African states since decolonization, focusing particularly on the failure of the African elite to deliver on the promises of independence. It

paints a very sordid and unflattering picture of the lackluster performance of the post-colonial state (neo-colonial states) in most African countries, and the increasing alienation of these states from the civil society. The editors of the volume, both of whom have written extensively on African political economy, blame the current state of African political and economic terrains on the unpatriotic ambition of the new elite, whose primary goal is the pursuit of personal wealth at the expense of their people. The primary objective of this volume, according to the editors, is “to determine how best to proceed with the continent’s transition to democratic governance and economic systems that enhance wealth creation and sustainable development” (pp. xi).

The authors, in the introductory chapter, offer bold solutions to current African crises and suggest new paths to African future, which they claim could only be found in a transition to “democratic constitutionalism”. This magical transition to “democratic constitutionalism”, according to the authors, will offer new dimensions to African efforts in nation building including but not limited to peaceful co-existence of population groups, promotion and nurturing of entrepreneurship, and the establishment of adequate structures for the sustainable management of the environment in addition to protecting individual rights of the citizens and their properties (pp. xi).

While most of the ideas (or recommendations) proposed in this volume are hardly novel (see the UN Millennium goals), there are many arguments in the various chapters that will certainly open new debates about the failure of the African states particularly in those socialistic enclaves that offered so much promise to Africans during the revolutionary phase of the decolonization of the continent. Of course, I am referring here to formerly progressive states like Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Zimbabwe, and Namibia.

According to the editors of this volume, one of the central goals of many African independence movements was to transform African states into people focused states. Unfortunately, with the attainment of independence, these lofty goals were soon jettisoned, and the various neo-colonial states that emerged in Africa after independence were soon transformed into institutions that solely benefited the economic aspirations of the new elites. These elite(s), the authors argued, soon abandoned the platforms upon which independence was fought and instead, engaged in activities that were plainly unpatriotic, using the inherited colonial structures, laws, and institutions in the pursuit of personal accumulation of wealth and capital. On top of it all, the authors argued, popular forces were abandoned, radical opposition forces were subjected to repression while the democratization agenda of the nationalist elite soon degenerated into personal rule, one party state, and military oligarchies. Institutional reforms pursued by the new African elite(s), according to the editors, only reinforced elite power to plunder national resources for personal gain leaving the masses behind in extreme poverty and political doldrums (pp.4). Personal oligarchical rule soon replaced participatory democracy with patrimonialism becoming the norm throughout the continent.

Covering a period of fifty years of political independence, the contributors in their different chapters, showed how the achievement of political independence quickly degenerated into chaos with flagrant violations of human and property rights, and increasing marginalization of women, and minority nationalities, from effectively participating in resource distribution and politics. Political independence, the editors contend, soon led to the suffocation of the civil society, economic plunder, and the ‘denigration of popular forces’ (pp.2-5). The adoption of

“statism” (state intervention in the economic sphere) as a model for economic development, by some African leaders, failed to deliver the promises of the nationalist elite especially promises of reduction of poverty and the development of all sectors of the national economy. The adoption of “statism” as a favored model for economic development, the editors further contend, “actually exacerbated the many problems that have plagued the continent since colonialism” (p.5).

The editors, however, concur that the neo-colonial states (states under the artificial control of local elite), in the continent, were never hegemonic, and clearly lacked the legitimacy to enforce the rules that would promote the development agenda of the nationalist elite. By hegemonic, I presume the editors mean the lack of state autonomy from the former colonial bosses and the various local oligarchies including the national and comprador bourgeoisies. The new elite governed, the editors further argue, to the extent that they can garner brute force to maintain order in addition to exploiting old primordial loyalties to sustain themselves in power. Elite rule thus became a macabre of authoritarian dictatorships and personal dynasties like the case of Mobutu Sese Zeko in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo), and other military despots across the continent.

The authors attribute the failure of the states and democratic transition in Africa, to the lack of institutional arrangements that would provide for peaceful co-existence among different ethnic nationalities, and the absence of adequate mechanisms for creating structures that would allow for popular participation in politics. They recommend “democratic constitutionalism”, (which I take to mean the ‘good’ old western liberal democracy that has failed Africa woefully in the past), as the surest way of guaranteeing “bottom-up” reconstruction of the post-colonial states into state forms that would enfranchise the masses. “Democratic Constitutionalism”, the authors insist, would provide African states with “laws and institutions that would enhance peaceful co-existence of population groups, adequately constrain state actors (my words), and provide the environment for the creation of wealth that the people need to meet their needs (sic.) (pp.8). The overall task set for the contributors, in the various chapters, is to engage in analysis that would provide the basis for the transformation of the post-colonial states in Africa into independent states that would “provide transparent, accountable, and participatory governance structures and resource allocation systems that guarantee economic freedom” (pp. xi). Case studies are drawn from Zambia (Ihonvbere), Cameroon (Natang Jua), Nigeria (Isumonah), Benin Republic (Kunle Amuwo), The Gambia (Abdoulaye Saine), Liberia (George Kieh, Jr.), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Osita G. Afoaku), Malawi (Ihonvbere), South Africa (Roger Southhall), Eritrea (Kidane Mengisteab) and Zambia (Sam Moyo). Many of these chapters were already published in one form or the other; nevertheless all the contributors should be commended for their rigorous and thorough analysis of the failure of the post-colonial states in Africa. The bulk of the research in this volume was based on both primary and secondary sources, and the bibliographical entries covered a wide range of scholarship that had been produced on Africa over the past twenty or so years by noted authors. That much said, there are some unanswered questions in this volume, especially issues of theoretical concerns. Besides the theoretical questions, the eleven-point recommendations by the authors in the introductory chapter are nothing new; they are precisely a rehearsal of the UN Millennium goals.

The recognition of the gender issues by the editors, and the necessity to address these issues, is very laudable indeed given the fact that most African scholars (including this reviewer), have marginalized such issues in their works. However, situating the African crises in the context of corruption and the attitudes of the elite towards personal accumulation misses the crucial point of the reasons for the failure of modern African states to transition into independent statuses.

Historically, the granting of independence was largely a farce as independence only encompassed the transfer of political power to local elites whose charge was to continue to pledge their allegiance to the former colonial powers. With the exception of revolutionary states like Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, and to some extent, petty bourgeois states like Ghana and Tanzania, under Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere, political independence in much of Black Africa only reinforced the historic link of dependence between the former colonies and the imperialist metropolitan states of Europe. It is the same neo-colonial structure that essentially produced the likes of Mobutu in Zaire, Idi Amin in Uganda, Omar Bongo in Gabon, Gerry Rawlings in Ghana, and Sani Abacha in Nigeria. Therefore, analyzing the crises of transition in Africa in terms of elite conduct is ahistorical at best, and such analysis only reinforces the mentality that Africans are incapable of ruling themselves. By underplaying the structural determinants of the African problematic, Ihonvbere and Mbakwu, situate their work within the theoretical framework that is characteristics of petty-bourgeois scholars like Larry Diamond, George B. Ayittey, and other political modernization theorists.

It must be stressed that the neo-colonial states, in their present forms in Africa, are playing their historic roles of perpetuating European domination (and in the case of South Africa, Boer hegemony), and they can only be transformed through popular uprisings and not by any "democratic constitutionalism" as proposed by the editors of this volume. However, this popular transformation of both the economic and political terrains in Africa will be determined largely by the extent to which Euro-American imperialism, which relies on the fostering of global apartheid (driven by white supremacy ideology), will allow such a radical transformation in Africa.

Despite my reservations about the theoretical underpinnings, the editors of this volume, and its previous companion one, should be enthusiastically applauded for this project written entirely by Africans themselves, especially for their boldness in raising critical issues about the African conditions which are often taken for granted in western academic circles. This volume, and its companion volume, will be useful for scholars and students interested in the complicated politics of Africa and its crisis of political transition. It would also most certainly be a good resource text for students in Africana studies, politics, African history, African historiography, and African political economy.

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**Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed. W. F. S. Miles ed. London: Lynne Rienner, 2007. 221 pp.**

Given the spotlight on the roles of religion in public life thanks to the panic and anxiety that have accompanied the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States of America, no other times could have been more appropriate for the publication of this collection of critical essays by the experts. In setting the scene for the book, Miles is quick in arming the reader against what appears to be the mammoth disguise of the September 11 terrorist attack that turns to blur the intellectual pursuit of explaining the intensification of political Islam in West Africa. Skillfully, Miles provides the theoretical springboard that is underpinned by such dominant perspectives as the Westernization discourse, the centre-periphery dichotomy, the Occident/Gulf divide, the modernization paradigm, the much-trumpeted Islamic threat and the globalization theory. The authors of this collection were tasked to address three main themes namely, the local perceptions and ramifications of Al-Qaida's attack on the United States of America (USA) and the USA-led invasion and occupation of Iraq; the rise of Islamism and the ongoing trends regarding Islamist politics in West Africa; and the politicization of Islam in West Africa and the resulting implications for the dynamics between governments and societies.

As regards the local perceptions and ramifications of Al-Qaida's attack on the USA and the USA-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, the contributors provide a variety of answers. Vine traces the root of the growth of "Wahhabism" (p. 91) in Mali to the activities of the Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat (the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat). Loimeier explores how an Islam-based local resistance against some state institutions in Nigeria benefited from the globalizing effects of the high-profile notoriety of the Taliban regime. Charlick, Jourde and Darboe demonstrate to the reader a common pattern in the reactions of Muslims in Niger, Mauritania and The Gambia, respectively. Muslims in these countries saw the attack on the USA as a befitting punishment for the enemies of Islam. The Muslims in these countries, therefore, identified with the Muslims under the USA-led invasion.

Contrary to this foregoing pattern, Villalón explains how Senegalese Muslims refused to be drawn to the religious enthusiasm that the 11 September attack ignited amongst Muslims when their public opinion questioned the Islamic credentials of the perpetrators of the 11 September attack. Charlick and Jourde lead the reader to understand how Muslims in Niger and Mauritania mobilised grassroots support to show their dissatisfaction. The grassroots mobilization offered the governments of these countries the opportunity to suppress the Islamists in the form of arrests and detentions. In the case of the government in The Gambia the pattern was different. Darboe brilliantly establishes how the overt Islamic identity of the Jammeh administration carved a peculiar state-society relation on the issue of terrorism. The Jammeh government provided a forum for the Islamists to praise the attack when the regime was in a dire need of political legitimacy. As soon as the government encountered economic problems in the face of a soured relationship with the Arab world, it abandoned the Islamists and joined the fight against global terrorism.

Of the three broad themes of this collection, the best treated is the growth of Islamism. The contributors principally attribute the growth of Islamism in Niger, Nigeria, Mali, The Gambia and Senegal to the internal dynamics in the struggle for religious supremacy between the traditional Sufi brotherhoods such as the Qadiriyya, Sanusiyya and the Tijaniyya among others on one side and the reformist groups such as the Salafist groups and Jama'at Izalat al-Bid'a wa-Iqamat as-Sunna (the Movement Against Negative Innovations and for Orthodoxy) on the other. The contributors establish a connection between the different socio-political landscapes and the intellectual and theological dimensions that guided the struggle dialectically. They note how this internal struggle between the Islamic groups played out in the religio-cultural struggle in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the Mauritanian case offers an exception to this pattern of internal struggle among Islamic sects. With the strong Islamic character of the Mauritanian state, Jourde roots the dynamics of the growth of Islamism in the state/society relations on one side and the inter-ethnic or racial relations on the other. Concerned with the need to protect their regime, the ruling elites defined what true Islam is and arrogated the task of protecting it to themselves. Jourde explains how ethnic and racial consciousness engendered by the antagonistic relationship between the Moorish and Futanke groups has led to checkmating any religious development that would enhance the cultural standing of the other.

In connection with the interplay between politics and religion, the contributors provide fascinating accounts of various scenarios in their counties of expertise. Without a doubt, the contributors show that the border between politics and religion is porous, allowing the interpenetration of religion and politics. First, Charlick explores how the Nigerien Muslims' insistence on the traditional interpretation of women's role in society began to question the corporatist character of the state. Second, he establishes the impact of Muslims' grassroots mobilization on governance. He demonstrates how this mobilization which was informed by a deep-rooted suspicion over the sincerity of the West in funding and championing "immunization against polio" (p. 31) and "protection against the spread of HIV/AIDS." (p. 32) was blurring the true theological stance of Islam on issues such as the economic roles of women, birth control and discrimination against women. In Loimeier's paper, the reader sees how the extension of Shari'ah to the penal codes in northern Nigeria represents the most formidable onslaught on the character of the secular governance. Despite professing secularism as the core

of the Malian state, Vine painstakingly explains how the various regimes had depended on the religious leaders to boost their political legitimacy. Jourde's exposition on Mauritania is characterized by a notorious intrusion of politics in religion with the state's promulgation and implementation of "Mosque Law...which defined mosques as public spaces subject to the control of the state." (p. 115). In the case of The Gambia, Darboe leads the reader to understand how politicians and religious elites forayed into the religious and political spheres, respectively in order to exploit resources therein for their respective enterprises.

The principal weakness of this edited book is that it does not cover all the 16 countries of West Africa. The question of representation is even more pertinent when the reader is confronted with the status of Islam vis-à-vis politics in countries that have strong Christian character at the political level such as Ghana, Togo, Benin and Ivory Coast among others. Nonetheless, the greatest achievement of this collection is to question the need for a call for an internal debate within Islam. The call sees the necessity of an internal debate within Islam that can generate innovative ways that can be adopted by Muslims societies in order that they can comfortably go with the imperatives of the secular and human rights regimes of the contemporary world.<sup>1</sup>With rich data, the collection demonstrates that the internal debate has been going on in Muslim communities ever since they first encountered colonialism. If the debate is slow in generating the appropriate response for a smooth cohabitation with the secular order, then that is another matter.

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**Brown Water of Africa: Portuguese Riverine Warfare 1961-1974. John P. Cann. St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 2007. 248 pp.**

*Brown Waters of Africa* is the second volume in John P. Cann's planned trilogy of works that examine the Portuguese counterinsurgency in its former African colonies. This book explores the role of the navy in these campaigns from approximately the late 1950s until the end of hostilities in 1974-75. Cann closely examines the naval anticipation of and response to the largely overlapping insurrections in colonial Angola, Mozambique and Guinea in order to highlight the importance of the naval effort, which to date has been historiographically overshadowed by the ground campaigns. The author skillfully reconstructs the Portuguese navy's creative efforts to overcome a general state of unpreparedness, a lack of trained personnel, decades of statutory neglect, a "blue water" (deep sea) focus and acutely limited resources and transform itself into an effective, primarily riverine, or "brown water," counterinsurgency outfit.



The book squarely accomplishes its objectives, which include tracing this under-examined campaign, examining the navy's imaginative, flexible and adaptive approach and highlighting the marine force's myriad contributions. The author explains that "the military job of the Portuguese Navy was to control the waterways in enemy areas, inhibit insurgent movement, counter these small groups through ambushes in the riverine areas, project power ashore, and supply villages and troops." Cann's detailed examinations of the three theaters explore the execution of these various tasks. He also superbly captures the changes over time within the Portuguese navy's martial and political approaches, offering explications for both successes and failures. The author instructively places these developments within broader continental and geopolitical contexts to help readers better understand the local and international dimensions, ramifications and implications of the campaigns, which at times circumscribed the navy's efforts. Cann also cogently portrays the dominant Portuguese army as a conservative impediment to the forward-thinking navy, providing concrete examples of cases in which the former impeded the endeavors of the latter, thereby undermining its own objectives.

*Brown Waters* would be well received in a collegiate-level military history course. Yet, it might just as easily be plucked off the shelves of a mainstream bookstore and enjoyed for its accessibility and well-documented accounts of pivotal campaigns, decisions and maneuvers. For those readers who are not well-versed in the respective martial and political strategies associated with insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, the author deftly weaves explanations into the text, drawing upon his own experience as a U.S. Naval Officer.

Cann's evidentiary base is broad. He fruitfully mined little-used naval archives and augmented the written record with over a dozen interviews of Portuguese veterans (*fuzileiros*) of these naval campaigns. He also draws upon a wide collection of secondary source material, which enables him to include useful comparative scenarios, such as the French and American riverine campaigns in Indochina. However, for all of its strengths, the evidence that Cann marshals is ultimately unable to gauge the efficacy of the Portuguese navy's efforts because the insurgent perspective is never considered. Consequently, the authors' claims of naval successes come across as speculative, perhaps predicated on uncritically adopted declarations made by his Portuguese informants. Did the Portuguese navy really "control the waterways and deny the enemy usage of these passages," or did insurgents simply exert more care when using them, intentionally avoiding engagement, as the author occasionally acknowledges? Testimony from former insurgents would potentially either confirm or challenge Cann's claims; in their absence, readers are left to ponder these assertions on their own, with little supporting evidence.

This evidentiary lacuna also problematizes Cann's examination of the campaign to win the "hearts and minds" of the colonized population. While he correctly asserts that the political component of any counterinsurgency campaign is crucial, readers are presented with examples of the Portuguese opening new schools and clinics and vague and unsubstantiated allusions to "trust-building" and "new political and economic freedoms and financial prosperity" that the indigenous population was supposedly enjoying in the 1960s and 70s as evidence of Portuguese success on this front. If the population was the ultimate prize, as Cann compellingly argues, he doesn't make a strong enough case or supply sufficient evidence to convince us that the Portuguese actually won this battle. In fact, most scholars of Africa will object to Cann's broader portrayal of the colonized population's relationship with both the colonial regime and the

liberation movements. In this version, the Portuguese navy was comprised of “humane explorers, agents of bringing improvements to the lives of those whom they met,” heroically “protecting and supporting” indigenous communities against the insurgents, who aimed to “intimidate and subvert” them. In practice, repression at the hands of the Portuguese via violent pacification campaigns, brutal forced labor schemes and unremitting vigilance is what sparked the insurgencies in the first place; the time was well past when allegedly “humane” measures could turn the local population against their brothers-in-arms who were busy trying to remove the colonial yoke. Cann also extends his decidedly Cold War-inspired analysis to those neighboring nations that provided sanctuary to the insurgent movements. While the author’s strategic and military assessments of this support are insightful, he needlessly denigrates the sympathizing African heads of state, including Touré in Guinée, Kaunda in Zambia and Nyerere in Tanzania. For all of the dashed dreams, broken promises and ill-fated economic manipulation for which post-independence African leaders were responsible, the reality remains that Portugal oversaw the marginalization and devastation of African populations more intensely, more thoroughly and for a much longer time than did any of these indigenous administrations. Innumerable typos also detracted from the book, though this fault rests with the publisher, not the author.

Cann’s book is at its best when it focuses on the naval campaign and the remarkable exploits of this undermanned and underfunded branch of the Portuguese military. Detailed accounts of the navy’s endeavors in northern Angola in the wake of the 1961 uprising in the colony and the superb reconstruction of the invasion of Conakry in 1970 – Operation Mar Verde – are but two examples of what render the book such a valuable scholarly contribution. Thankfully, the majority of the book stays true to its primary purpose, featuring only occasional tangents to distract the reader from the otherwise interesting and well-organized narrative.

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**Women’s Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority. Shareen Hassim. University of Wisconsin Press, 2006. 355 pp.**

Shareen Hassim analyzes women’s political participation in South Africa during a dramatic period of that country’s history in *Women’s Organization and Democracy in South Africa*. Relying on extensive archival research, secondary sources, interviews and participant-observation, Hassim focuses on women’s organizations and the emergence of the women’s movement from approximately 1980-1999. She not only addresses debates about the relationship between women’s struggles and broader political struggles, but also the relationship between the contesting ideologies of feminism and nationalism.

The book’s structure follows the emergence of the women’s movement, and women’s organizations with the women’s movement, as an important social movement in South Africa. She specifically focuses on organizations such as the African National Congress’ (ANC)

Women's League, the Natal Organization of Women (NOW), the United Women's Organization (UWO), and the Women's National Coalition (WNC). Hassim provides an excellent discussion of her use of the terms "women's movement" and "women's organization" in the context of her research, as well as larger academic debates. An important and recurring theme in her work is the acknowledgment that women frame their actions in terms of a wide range of identities, including class, race, and geographic location. Hassim recognizes the delicate balance between oversimplifying the concept of "women's movements" and deconstructing their nuances to the point of denying the potential for such solidarity to exist.

Hassim relies on Maxine Molyneux's conception of autonomy to frame her discussion of the emergence and challenges of the South Africa women's movement. Molyneux argues that successful women's organizations must constantly hold a strong bargaining position if they are not to be co-opted by larger movements (i.e. nationalism) and external political environments have to be conducive to the achievement of feminist goals, in order for women's movements to succeed. She also provides three categories of analysis of autonomy, which Hassim, in turn, applies to her case study of South Africa: "the nature and extent of autonomy of women's organizations, their internal capacity to direct goals and strategies, and the nature of the external political environment within which women's organizations were located" (p. 12).

With regard to these three categories, Hassim does an excellent job addressing them across her analysis in the subsequent seven chapters of the book. She argues while some women's organizations pursued forms of associational autonomy, many were increasingly unable to find a balance between the demands of the women's movement and anti-apartheid movement. Throughout the book, and specifically in chapter one, she questions the opportunities and costs of nationalism for the women's movement. She credits the opportunity for participation in the nationalism liberation struggle for enabling activist women to "link race, class, and gender oppression and to universalize the demand for gender equality within the vision of national liberation" (21). The increasing adoption of the women's movement by the nationalism movement, however, also reveals questions about "whether and in what ways the project of national liberation and that of women's liberation were congruent" (p. 21).

In addition, Hassim raises an interesting discussion about the relationship among inequality, identity, and women's interests with women's movements. More than inequality between black and white women, she argues women's interests in the South Africa women's movement "were articulated in far more complex ways, with no direct correlation between racial identity and political identity" (p. 44). Nor do first world and third world concepts of "gender rights" and "gender needs" provide adequate explanation for Hassim's case study. Rather, she suggests broader struggles against oppression (anti-apartheid movement) can trigger multiple aspects of women's identities for mobilization. On the other hand, she also uses chapter four to demonstrate the link between "rights-based" struggles and substantive equality. For Hassim, the gender politics of South Africa provides an example of ways in which "rights-based actions can facilitate and enhance struggles to meet needs" (p. 45).

In concluding her discussion of the South Africa women's movement, Hassim places the women's organizations in her analysis on a continuum of autonomy, ranging from weak and directed collective action to strong, independent action. The ANC Women's League and Federation of Transvaal Women are placed on the directed end of the continuum, while the

UWO and WNC are classified as stronger and more independent (p. 249). Part of her conclusion also consists of assessing the current shape of the women's movement in three distinct arenas: "policy advocacy at the national level, an intermediary arena of networks and coalitions, and grass-roots level of community based women's organizations" (p. 254). Hassim acknowledges that there has been a decline in women's effectiveness in Parliament (although not unusual and points to US as similar case) and strong women's organizations are the key to revival of the women's movement influence.

Moreover, she calls for a reinstatement of "real politics" into democracy discourse and a "debate about who articulates needs and how they become integrated into policy choices" (p. 265). Hassim's work certainly provides a starting point for such a debate. She uses a "detailed historiography of South Africa women's movement" to engage theoretical debates between feminism and nationalism and practical discussions of struggle for social policy change (p. 246). Her book would be excellent for use in women's studies, history, political science, or sociology classrooms, particularly for those interested in social movements and political mobilization.

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**One Hundred Days of Silence: America and the Rwanda Genocide. Jared A. Cohen. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006. 232 pp.**

During its colonial rule of ethnically diverse Rwanda, Belgium supported the minority governing Tutsi, which ensured the majority Hutus' continued second-class status. After granting Rwanda autonomy in 1961, Belgium reversed course and incited Hutus to rebel against the Tutsi aristocracy. Ethnic tensions peaked in October 1990 when civil war erupted between the Hutu-led government of President Juvénal Habyarimana and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front. The conflict officially ended in August 1993 when the two sides signed the Arusha Accords creating a power-sharing government.

Then on April 6, 1994, a surface-to-air missile downed a plane carrying Habyarimana, killing everyone on board. Hutu extremists immediately blamed the Tutsi for the assassination. Within hours, a government-backed Hutu militia systematically set about murdering both Tutsi and moderate Hutus. Over the next 16 days, more than 250,000 perished. By the time the killing ended in mid-July, the number had reached 800,000. Even by the grim standards of the twentieth century, that deadliest of all centuries, the Rwandan genocide stands out for its sheer intensity.

Despite clear warning signs, the Clinton administration remained silent throughout the genocide, focused on other matters. Perhaps most shockingly, the administration actually lobbied for the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers from Rwanda, thus allowing the killers to go about their deadly task unimpeded. America's behavior marks an especially ignoble chapter in the country's history.

Explaining how U.S. diplomacy operated and why it failed to act despite the many signals of impending genocide is the goal of Jared Cohen in *One Hundred Days of Silence: America and the Rwanda Genocide*. A Rhodes Scholar, Cohen joined the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff in 2006 at age 25. There he provides counsel on "counter-radicalization," youth, and education, especially in the Muslim world. Before taking this position, Cohen held internships in the U.S. government that afforded him access to U.S. officials who served during the Rwandan genocide. He also traveled to Rwanda to interview key officials on both sides of the genocide.

Cohen argues the main reason the United States failed to intervene stemmed from the backlash generated by its disastrous experience in Operation Gothic Serpent (August 22 - October 13, 1993), a military undertaking designed to capture Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid. During the Battle of Mogadishu (October 3-4, 1993), later turned into the film "Black Hawk Down", 18 American special operations forces lost their lives. This event transformed U.S. foreign policy. Afterwards, Congress renounced sending American forces in harms way unless the nation's vital interests were clearly at stake. Unwilling to challenge Congressional opposition, the Clinton administration ruled out military intervention.

In addition to Congressional restraints, the administration faced other challenges, including an attempt to restore civilian rule to Haiti and to end the Bosnian War (1992-1995). The White House deemed these missions more important than intervening militarily in Rwanda. Moreover, the highly publicized deaths of Kurt Cobain (April 8), Richard M. Nixon (April 22) and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis (May 19), as well as public interest in the completion of the Channel Tunnel (May 6), the inauguration of Nelson Mandela (May 10), and the arrest of O.J. Simpson (June 17) pushed Rwanda to the margins of international consciousness.

The U.S. bureaucracy also prevented a response. State Department lawyers cautioned U.S. officials to avoid using the term "genocide" when describing the killing in Rwanda in the mistaken belief that it might obligate the United States to take action. Pentagon officials saw their duty as implementing policy, not creating it. Absent orders from the civilian leadership, the military establishment refused to take up the issue. Cohen also faults U.S. officials for erroneously thinking that intervention automatically meant sending military forces. Few considered actions such as delivering a stern public warning to stop the genocide, publicizing the names of the killers, or even jamming the radio the Rwandan government employed to orchestrate the killing. By failing to think creatively, U.S. officials missed a chance to save thousands.

Beyond explaining how America's lumbering bureaucratic process enabled genocide to occur unobstructed, Cohen also identifies specific individuals who, by either committing sins of omission or commission, allowed the genocide to go forward. President Bill Clinton had the power to overcome the bureaucratic gridlock, but chose not to expend his political capital. Secretary of State Warren Christopher knew little about Africa and seemed to care even less. Dick Clarke, the chief counter-terrorism adviser on the U.S. National Security Council, was adamant that preventing genocide fell outside his professional responsibilities. National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, who knew Africa well, declined to act because he did not see Rwanda a priority. The U.S. ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson claimed not to know

genocide was unfolding, even though he grew up in the region, spoke a regional language, and witnessed the initial stages of the killing.

There were, however, courageous individuals who risked their careers by speaking out. Prudence Bushnell, the U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, arose at 2:00 a.m. each morning to call the warring factions in Rwanda, going so far as to falsely claim to speak for President Clinton. Another was Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, the Force Commander of the UN peacekeeping force for Rwanda. Although outgunned and outnumbered, Dallaire and his staff labored to save as many people as possible. There were others who also took risks, but they were low-level officials who lacked the clout to goad the bureaucracy into action.

Alongside the book's strengths are a few weaknesses. Cohen's almost step-by-step account of U.S. policy during slows the narrative considerably. His account is also repetitive, as he retraces his steps time and again. Acronyms also abound, forcing the reader to repeatedly consult the three-page list of abbreviations. The book is certainly not for the lay reader.

Despite these reservations, policymakers would profit from reading Cohen's book. They would see human costs of a policy stridently indifferent to moral considerations. And as we again face genocide, this time in the Darfur region of Sudan, the current and succeeding administrations should ponder whether inaction in the face of mass murder is a price the world can afford.

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**Masquerades of Modernity: Power and Secrecy in Casamance, Senegal. Ferdinand De Jong. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2005. 216 pp.**

It is always a pleasure to find insightful Anglophone treatises on the Casamance region of Southern Senegal, and *Masquerades of Modernity* is an excellent new addition to this relatively small body of literature. De Jong skillfully frames his material in relation to prominent themes in social theory including modernity, globalization, and the challenges of ethnographic writing and authority. The dialogue with contemporary sociological and anthropological concepts and the erudite but accessible nature of the writing make the work an engaging read.

The argument is based on extensive field research. While intriguing tidbits and anecdotes about the research are scattered throughout the text, a more comprehensive and focused discussion of methodology would have been useful. De Jong avers that sacred forests and masquerades are central to the power dynamics and social politics of the Casamance. Contemporary manifestations of masquerades are not expressions of tradition; they are discursive responses to changing conditions. Masquerades, like other rituals and secrecy, are thus part of the ongoing renegotiation of social life and have many functions such as shaping, reinforcing, and marking identity boundaries.

As the group most commonly associated with southern Senegal, the Jola (or Diola) are most prominent in the text, but there is some comparative material and considerable discussion of the Mandinko (or Mandinka). Although the Wolof commonly symbolize the subordination to northern Senegal that is central to the rationale behind Jola revitalization movements and the Casamance secessionist struggle, the Mandinko represent the immediate Other who are juxtaposed against “Jolaness” (my term). De Jong delves into the fascinating identity politics between the Jola and the Mandinko, and like most researchers and local residents, he emphasizes Mandinkoization of the Jola at the expense of the reverse concept. While both scholars and locals emphasize the dominant narrative of Mandinkoization, the cultural exchange has been bilateral; many persons commonly identified as Mandinko engage in practices associated with Jola lifeways and worldviews. The specific nature of such exchanges vary by locality and sub-populations concerned. In neighboring Gambia Mandokization is even more pronounced, but Jola customs have also influenced members of other groups. There are also cases of Mandinko patrilineages in Jola dominated villages who over the course of two generations have largely adopted what are considered to be “typically Jola” lifestyles, for instance.

Significant portions of *Masquerades and Modernity* discuss Islam and gender. As De Jong alludes to, religious affiliations are deeply intertwined with identity discourses, and Islam in particular is a key construct for identity formation and inter- and intra-group differentiation. He also examines inter-generational tensions, cleavages between the sexes, and the gendering of identity politics. Masquerades and ceremonies are variously interpreted as Jola, Mandinka, and/or Islamic, and the differentiation in interpretations and narratives strongly correlate with ethno-linguistic identities and attributes such as age and especially gender. Masquerades are also said to facilitate the maintenance and reproduction of gerontocratic authority and gender-based and other social hierarchies.

The text is rich with allusions to fascinating phenomena. These include the aforementioned role of masquerades in promoting social control, the potential commodification of ceremonies and the interplay between the secret, sacred masquerades and (profane) tourism, and much more. There are numerous possibilities for further theoretical development of the case material by elaborating on existing points and applying through elaboration of existing points and application. The analysis of ritual and performance could but does not address Victor Turner’s (1969) work on those subjects and his concepts such as ritualized inversion of status hierarchies. The work also offers ample opportunities for examining or applying other models such as Barth’s (1969) work on inter-group boundaries.

In conclusion, this stimulating and rich monograph is strongly recommended for both neophyte and seasoned regional specialists, and it may also be of interest to scholars and students of Africanist anthropology, modernity, globalization, and secrecy. *Modernity and Masquerades* would also be a good potential text for upper-level undergraduate and postgraduate courses on modernity and ritual.

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**Makishi: Mask Characters of Zambia. Manuel Jordán. Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2006. 84 pp.**

From the art historical perspective of traditional African art, the distinction between the systems of thought and the supporting visual traditions among the continent's ethnic groups, especially living within the same geographical region, is more of artificiality than reality. Yet that given African ethnic group may have certain peculiar traits that set it apart from its immediate neighbor is not contested. For instance, prior to, and even after, the partition of Africa by European powers following the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, there have always been traces of intercultural exchanges, borrowings, and assimilations. As this relates to the ethnic groups or subgroups in central Africa, Manuel Jordán's *Makishi: Mask Characters of Zambia* underscores this "unity in diversity" nature of traditional African arts.

Echoed in the foreword by Mary (Polly) Nooter Roberts (p. 6), Jordán states clearly the two-fold aim of the book. First, it sets to complement and update existing scholarship by offering more insight into the form, function, and context of *makishi* visual traditions prevalent among the ethnic groups in the 'three corners' region of northwestern Zambia, northeastern Angola, and southwestern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It also intends "to develop an alternative form of categorization highlighting a variety of individual mask characters by their defined physical attributes and those that become evident in performance" (p. 16).

Targeting very large, diverse audiences from across disciplines, Jordán divides the study into three sections, all strongly attesting to, and confirming his in-depth knowledge of the Zambian *makishi* masquerades traditions. Jordán's rich primary information sources were mainly Zambian natives and practitioners of *makishi*, which included the mask makers and performers and the *mukanda* camp leaders. Also of great inestimable value was the author's persistent and unending study of visual traditions of the peoples in northwestern Zambia and surrounding territories for "nearly twenty years" as noted in the preface by Allen F. Roberts (p. 8). The reader is particularly overwhelmed by Jordán's role as not just an observer in the *makishi* contexts, as is often the case among scholars researching the visual traditions outside of their own cultural boundaries, but also as someone with insider knowledge, based on his life-long unrivalled mutual relationship with the local narratives.

The first section of the book spells out the concepts and general contexts of *makishi*, explicating the masquerade characters, in which the author proposed four for the Zambian *makishi*—sociable, ambiguous, aggressive, and royal. Jordán's *makishi* typological model is based on the masks' physical (formal) attributes combined with their behavioral, performative



contexts (p. 23). Jordán deserves commendation for offering this clear, straightforward, and all-encompassing *makishi* character categorization, especially when compared to the two previous less clear-cut and somehow loose classifications by art historian Marie-Louise Bastin (1982) and historian Patrick Wele (1993).

The book's second section concerns essentially the *makishi* from the collection of the Fowler Museum at UCLA, representing the sociable, ambiguous, and aggressive characters functioning exclusively in the *mukanda* initiation process. The royal-type *makishi* character is conspicuously missing in the collection. This is an attestation that royal-type *makishi*, according to Jordán, is not only rarer than the *mukanda* initiation-related category, but is as well "considered the most sacred of all *makishi*" (p. 31). Jordán's in-depth analysis of the collection, in which he frequently interjects with his own firsthand information and personal field photos concerning the *makishi* contexts, is praiseworthy. The section also clearly confirms and authenticates the suitability and reliability of Jordán's quadruple categorization of the *Zambian makishi* characters.

However, the catalogue photos (in this second section of the book) were accompanied by only the pieces names/ titles, locations, medium/ mediums, and dimensions. There is no information on the names of artists and dates the *makishi* were made or collected. Such vital information, if available, could foster reader's better appreciation of the donors' efforts, Jay and Deborah Last, which had led to the Fowler's acquisition of "a collection of such breadth and depth from a single region" (p. 6). More importantly, according to Jordán, owing to the secrecy nature of *mukanda* initiation, the primary context for *makishi*, *Zambian* tradition compels the immediate destruction of the masks after use "so that they are not discovered by women or the uninitiated" and to enable the *makishi* with the camp return "to the world of the ancestors" (pp. 28). Thus, information concerning the masks' acquisition dates and/ or circumstance(s) could shed some light into two important contemporary issues concerning traditional African art. First, are the *makishi*, like other traditional African art, also forfeiting their sacred values and sanctions against their access to the public, in making them collectible? Are the masks, as is now the case with virtually all other traditional African sacred art, not immune to commoditization and/ or commercialization? Nonetheless, Jordan and the Fowler Museum should be well commended for providing this powerful and well-illustrated book with over eighty color pictures, making it stand-out when compared to the usual black-and-white photos of traditional African art collections/ publications.

The third and last but not least important section of the book concerns the performance contexts of *makishi* (in the *mukanda*-related and royal ceremonies), which with few exceptions, were collected by Jordán from 1991 to 1993 and in 1997 and 2004 in northwestern Zambia (p. 57). The section provides Jordán the avenue to expand on not only the *makishi* characters represented in the catalogue from the collection of the Fowler Museum, but also on the author's initial *makishi* character categorization (social, ambiguous, aggressive, and royal). Here the information provided by Jordán underscores and corroborates his impressive familiarity with *Zambian makishi*. However, at least a brief juxtaposition of *makishi* with other visual traditions in the region, such as divination-related art, the theme for the author's doctoral dissertation, would have better corroborated the 'unity in diversity and/or complexity nature of traditional African art evident in the *makishi* traditions of the peoples in central Africa.

On the whole, *makishi: Mask Characters of Zambia* is a well researched and primary information laden book. It is particularly of great interest to learn how the character or demeanor of a given *likishi* or *mukishi* (singular of *makishi*) could be better understood by observing not only the mask's physical and behavioral attributes, but more importantly by also comparing and contrasting such attributes with that of others. It is as well remarkable to learn that the masks' surface decorations, especially the scarification marks, have status and maturity allusions and that "they also contain codified information that may be "read" or understood at different semantic levels" (p. 40). I strongly believe that this well established fact would put to rest, such argument as to whether or not Africans have any aboriginal forms of writing.

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**Internet and the Construction of the Immigrant Public Sphere: The Case of the Cameroonian Diaspora. Kehbuma Langmia. University Press of America, Inc., 2007. 100 pp.**

Langmia's book is a contribution to the rapidly emerging literature on the use of the Internet by Diasporic communities worldwide. It has been observed that the Internet is a medium quintessentially suited to Diasporas because they share transnational, trans-temporal and trans-spatial dimensions. Just as cyberspace has no physical location, the Cameroonian Diaspora has been spread across the globe. Cyberspace is ideally suited for the reconstitution of lost networks and the development of new ones that cross old lines.

Langmia analyzes the way in which the Internet has become the public sphere for the Cameroon Diaspora. Essentially his Ph.D. dissertation, he sets out two goals in this work: to apply [neo-Marxist philosopher Jurgen] Habermas' concept of the public sphere to the study of the use of the Internet by the Cameroonian Diaspora and to study gender differences in the Cameroonian public sphere.

Langmia does this by posing two research questions: What do the dominant themes of Cameroonian Internet discourse reveal about the political views of Diasporic Cameroonians? What are the gender differences in the dominant themes in Cameroonian Internet discourse?

He conducts his research by doing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of two months of discussions on four Internet discussion groups frequented by the Cameroonian Diaspora. Coming from the discipline of linguistics, critical discourse analysis studies language and discourse in social institutions, drawing on poststructuralist discourse theory and critical linguistics and focuses on how social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed through written and spoken texts in communities, schools and classrooms.

With regard to his first goal, Langmia concludes that Cameroonians in the Diaspora have used cyberspace to advocate meaningful change in their home country and that the Internet has become a democratic public sphere, "for both Cameroonian men and women to come together and question the role of their government and opposition leaders on the kind of policies and goals they envision for Cameroonians at home and abroad."

In coming to this conclusion, he does not engage in any critical discussion of the applicability to the Internet of Habermas' definition of a public sphere separate from the life of family and work and the state as a place for free communication and discussion of ideas. Ideally the public sphere should be marked by open access, equal status of participants and rational analysis of alternatives. A debate has arisen as to whether the virtual public sphere of the Internet does indeed create such an ideal public space. Does the Internet public space embody new politics? Does it lead to a democratization of views? Does discourse on Internet discussion sites constitute rational analysis? Do all have an equal voice to state their views? Langmia does not raise any of these issues.

On the second theme he concludes that men and women discussed the dominant political themes differently, that the Cameroonian Diasporic women on the Internet were more in favor of the incumbent president than men and that they were more constructive than men in their criticism of the opposition parties.

The book overstates its reach in its claims to employ feminist theory. Especially bizarre is the blurb on the back cover of the book that states, "The study builds on Habermas and other leading feminist authors' conceptualization of the democratic public sphere . . ." Habermas would be very surprised to be classified as a feminist author! Feminist theory is highly critical of Habermas' blindness to gender issues and his negative assessment of the feminist movement and his androcentrism.

Langmia's discussion of gender issues does not constitute what is generally regarded as gender analysis. He doesn't deal at all with questions of differences in gender socialization, of why men dominate Cameroonian debates. At times Langmia seems to blame women for not using the opportunities that the Internet offers to realize the equal status that they have been awarded in the Cameroonian Constitution. As he observes, "The Internet has come with manifold advantages for both parties to form dependent and independent systems of communication that give each person the freedom to express his/her views with little or no constraint. The question then is whether Cameroonian women are using it to their advantage." He does not ask whether there are differences in computer skill levels or linguistic or educational attainment between Cameroonian men or women in the Diaspora, or, perhaps more importantly, whether women have equal access to the Internet, especially in terms of their multiple roles and workloads.

Langmia supplements Critical Discourse Analysis with a review of the literature on immigrant use of the Internet in the public sphere, women and minorities' use of the Internet, and virtual versus physical reality of the Internet. The author says that little research has been done on the role of the Internet in the formation of the Diasporic public sphere especially as related to Africa. However, he seems to have missed the sources most relevant to his research: Victoria Bernal's article on the Eritrean digital Diaspora that focuses explicitly on the issue of the public sphere would have been particularly useful to Langmia's analysis (Bernal 2005). Other sources on the African Diaspora in cyberspace that he might have looked at include Camilla Gibb's perceptive study of the Ethiopian Harari community in Canada on the Internet (Gibb 2002) and Amina Loukili on the Moroccan Diaspora on the Internet (Loukili 2007). He also would have profited from looking at Terence Lyons' work on African Diasporas and homeland politics on the Internet, dealing specifically with conflict in Ethiopia (Lyons 2004,

2007) that show how rigidities in Diasporic communities can have negative implications for homeland politics. This might have tempered Langmia's optimistic view that Diaspora discourse on the Internet provides "solutions" to Cameroonian political problems, as he states, "Cameroonians in the Diaspora have decided to use the Internet to air their grievances and provide solutions to the political predicaments of their country" (p.11).

The book is marred by many cases of awkward language (e.g. "English alphabets", "a man of 71-years' old", "pile of vocabularies") and would have profited greatly from editing. This book will be of interest to the growing audience of Diaspora studies and media studies. Its gender analysis is of a caliber to merit recommending it to those interested in gender studies.

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**Intimate Enemy: Images and Voices of the Rwandan Genocide. Scott Straus and Robert Lyons. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2006. 192 pp.**

The genocide in Rwanda was unparalleled in its transparency, expediency and brutal intimacy. Neighbors slaughtered neighbors, most often with machetes. As a result, Rwanda's "ordinary killers" have increasingly become the subject of both popular and critical attention: Raoul Peck's film "Sometimes in April", B.B. Diop's novel *Murambi: A Book of Bones*, J.P. Stassen's graphic novel *Deogratias*, Jean Hatzfeld's testimonial collection *Machete Season* or Yolande Mukagasana's interview/ photography collection *Les Blessures du Silence*. In their glossy coffee-table book, Straus and Lyons capitalize on the fascination with mass murderers, while

aiming to offer a deeper, more personal and realistic perspective about Hutu killers, culled from their field research in Rwandan prisons in 1998-2002. Straus, a former journalist turned political scientist, concomitantly published *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* stemming from this research. Photographer Robert Lyons previously published the collection *Another Africa*, which included text by Chinua Achebe.

This volume consists of 60 pages of interview excerpts with incarcerated Rwandan perpetrators, and a section of 50 black and white photographs portraits of Rwandan killers, victims, witnesses and judges. However, the interviews do not correspond to the photographs, as this collection pulls together two disparate projects. As such, this "representational experiment" (p.16) aims to create a series of "accidental encounters that allow readers to confront the genocide in unforeseeable ways." (p.17) As Straus explains, "the book does not make sense of this raw material but allows readers to make their own discoveries." (p.14) To provide some cohesion and context, the primary material is complemented with a short reflection by photographer Lyons, as well as a brief introduction by Straus, which outlines his anthropological methodology and provides a succinct summary of the history of Rwanda.

In his introduction, Straus explains that this project was compiled as a rebuttal to stereotypical, sensationalist media representations of Africa, yet ironically, in this lavish, glossy tome, with heavy virgin paper and wide margins, the reader also consumes morsels of these killers' chilling experience, as well as aestheticized portraits of Rwandans on display. Lyons' photographs manifestly counter clichéd images about Rwanda, such as bloated bodies floating in rivers or piles of corpses on roadsides. Moreover, Lyons' set-up encourages viewers to interact with the Rwandans on display. Since the portraits are without caption, as readers examine the head-shots of Rwandans set against a neutral background, they must discern if this individual is a perpetrator, victim or witness, by reading their facial expression and posture. If they flip to the back of the book, their suspicions are either confirmed or challenged. In so doing, Lyons manifestly seeks to emphasize that physically, killers are "ordinary people." Yet subtly and disconcertingly perhaps, this line-up and mug-shot exercise may also serve to reaffirm the racist stereotype that any Black person could be a threat.

Certainly, the most fascinating part of this collection are Straus' interviews with these "pedestrian killers" (p.17). As in his critical study, Straus dismisses the genocidal masterminds, the Rwandan elite or intelligentsia, and focuses on mob mentality: "ordinary, unremarkable" folks "swept up in a tide of unanticipated violence" (p.24). In 2002, Straus interviewed 230 imprisoned local killers from various regions in Rwanda, this collection contains excerpts from 23 of these interviews, some 2% of his material (p.20). All of Straus' interviewees are male Hutu prisoners who have been either convicted or tried. As such, Straus' explains, they have less incentive to lie. However, throughout the interviews, readers are exposed to a "mix of truth, self-interested reconstructed memory, fantasy, exaggeration, distortion, speculation and lies," as they attempt to unravel the complex and unfathomable question – why? (p.20). Why did these ordinary people become killers?

The killers' testimonies resist any simple or uniform explanations for the genocide, but rather confirm a multiplicity of scholarly theories (eg. Straus, Prunier, Des Forges, Uvin, Mikondo), including the mob effect, pillaging, obedience to authorities, economics, hate propaganda, personal gain and individual rivalries. Interestingly, the oft-cited roles of the West

and the radio RTML are downplayed in these testimonies, as are, manifestly, the inculpatory issue of ethnic divisionism and remorse: all of the subjects claim they had no issues with their Tutsi neighbors, and demonstrate shame and guilt for their actions. All claim to have killed fewer than 10 people, most often admitting to only one or two murders. Most of the accounts are structured in the same way: they typically start with the catalyst for the genocide – the plane crash of president Habyarimana – and detail the first few days of the genocide. A select few mention previous pogroms of the Tutsi (1959, 1963, 1973) or in the preparatory genocidal campaign in the 1990s. Notably, in contrast with Hatzfeld's testimonies, very few of the killers describe the killings as "work." Rather they deploy military vocabulary: the Tutsi were "enemies"; they were at "war"; they had to "defend their country." Since these interviews were collected before the release of some 60 000 prisoners after 2002, aside a brief aside there is nothing in this text about gacaca or the return of these killers to their communities. (p.23).

While interested readers will certainly appreciate this volume, sedulous scholars may be disappointed by its brevity, its haphazard assemblage or its marketing aesthetics. Those wishing to learn more are encouraged to read Mukagasana or Hatzfeld. With its photographs and interviews, this compilation closely resembles Mukagasana's *Blessures du silence*, a relatively unknown text, because it has not been translated from French. Yet Mukagasana, herself a Tutsi survivor, interviews killers, survivors and witnesses alike. By contrast, Straus and Lyons' collection reflects the Western, outsider perspective; the interviews are translated thrice (Kinyarwanda, French, English) and we learn nothing about the Rwandan translator's subject position. Hatzfeld's impressive *Machete Season* is an even more detailed killer testimonial collection, and is complemented by survivor interviews (*Life Laid Bare*) and by interviews by both killers and survivors after the release of prisoners (). In all, Lyons and Straus' text offers an engaging and accessible introductory glimpse into the psyche of the genocidal killer.

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**The African Manufacturing Firm: An Analysis based on Firm Surveys in Seven Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Dipak Mazumdar and Ata Mazaheri. New York: Routledge, 2003. 451 pp.**

Spanned over thirteen key chapters, besides two introductory and concluding ones, this book by Mazumdar and Mazaheri aims at providing a comprehensive examination of the African manufacturing sector (only organized) in Sub-Saharan Africa through data made available by the World Bank's RPED (Research Program in Enterprise Development) surveys for the period 1992-96. The authors have made a genuine effort in examining carefully the entirety of available data and thereby have come up with a detailed analysis of the African manufacturing firm. Beginning with various aspects related to the economic structure and production relations in the African manufacturing firm, the analytical exercise focuses on

examining various factors of production along with providing a detailed analysis of the dynamics of firm behavior, and its competitiveness and export performance.

In an informative introduction, the authors provide an economic profile of the (focused) seven African economies viz. Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the first chapter. As background to the study, this chapter examines their status in terms of their economic development attainments, fiscal and monetary situations, and their external and manufacturing sectors. Chapters two and three are devoted to the examination of the economic structure and production relations in the manufacturing sector of these economies. Chapter two specifically reveals that the African manufacturing sector is biased towards large firms – a result derived primarily due to the specific nature of the data. Nevertheless, the authors do not deny the existence of dualistic structures in the African manufacturing sector. Chapter three specifically aims at examining the relative productivity of small manufacturing firms vis-à-vis large ones so as to explore “the popular thesis of ‘small is beautiful’” (pp. 63).

Chapters four to eight constitute the subject-matter of the third section that is focused on examining various factors of production in the African manufacturing firm. Chapter four examines the aspect of entrepreneurship in these firms. The aspect of finance (capital) is covered by the fifth chapter and the aspect of labor is covered by the sixth chapter. Similarly, the seventh chapter examines the impact of regulations and infrastructure relative to other problems faced by the firm. It is found that credit constraints have the most affect followed by infrastructure and regulatory constraints. Chapter eight examines contract flexibility and enforcement in the African manufacturing firms and reveals various methods in the form of guarantees and penalties used by firms to avoid the problems besides highlighting various other aspects of contract enforcement and flexibility in these firms.

Chapters nine to twelve reveal the inherent dynamics in the behavior of the firm. Chapter nine analyses capacity utilization whereas chapter ten focuses on examining technical efficiency. Other aspects of investment and growth are examined in eleventh and twelfth chapters. Chapter nine reveal a low degree of capacity utilization in manufacturing firms in comparison to the international standards, with large dispersion among the firms. Chapter ten reveals inter-country differences in African manufacturing firms' ability to attain their potentials of technical efficiency by using the stochastic frontier production function approach. Chapter eleven looks at the dynamics of investment in these manufacturing firms by revealing various insights related to the magnitude and the financing of investment besides diagnosing the determinants of investment. Similarly, chapter twelve provides a time-series analysis of the growth of the manufacturing firms. Amongst other aspects, it explores the determinants of growth of these manufacturing firms. Similarly, competitiveness and export performance is examined at length in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters. The fifteenth chapter finally concludes the inferences derived from the detailed empirical analysis of the African manufacturing firm.

From a careful study of this volume, it is learned that the authors through a detailed examination of the African manufacturing firm have provided insights into various operational aspects of these firms. Given the state of knowledge on the manufacturing firms in Africa, this book containing detailed analyses is a welcome output. Nevertheless, there are a few reservations. Since employment is one of the desirable outcomes of the industrial process, the

analysis remained more or less confined to examining labor only as a factor of production and no effort has been made to highlight the human aspect of labor. What could have been more desirable is to let the readers know about the type of employment generated by the manufacturing firms in Africa. There is also a large prevalence of informal sector in Africa. In such a situation, the given analytical exercise does not reveal much about the linkage of (organized) manufacturing firms with the small (household) manufacturing firms. The authors make it clear at the outset that given the nature of data, the analysis focuses on organized manufacturing. But, as the authors have done some adjustments with data in few chapters like twelfth focusing on growth, here too they could have supplemented the findings with other data source revealing the plight of working masses in manufacturing firms in Africa. Such a suggestion is relevant only to extend the scope of the study to readers like this reviewer who besides industrial performance are also interested in looking at the aspect of labor.

Nevertheless, the book really reveals a commendable research effort of the writers. The writers have made a novel attempt to provide a detailed and rigorous analysis of the data available from World Bank's RPED surveys (covered in three waves) for the period 1992-96. Moreover, the authors also tried to locate their findings in a comparative perspective with other studies and relevant literature. This exercise increased manifolds the usefulness of the study. The questions explored are equally relevant and hold significance mainly for their relevance in providing policy inputs to strengthen the manufacturing base of Africa. Owing mainly to its detailed analytical exercise, this book deserves a wide readership. I will be of great use to those who wish to know more about Africa, its economy in general and the manufacturing sector in particular. Specifically, it is of relevance to policy makers, researchers and academicians working in the area of industrial economics.

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**Schooling and Difference in Africa: Democratic Challenges in a Contemporary Context.** George Sefa Dei, Alireza Asgharzadeh, Sharon Bahador and Riyad Shahjahan. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2006. 331 pp.

Five decades after political independence, African countries continue to search for democratic ways of delivering social services to its populations. One of the most important but least addressed issues in this challenge is that of educational equity, specifically how schooling in Africa can serve diverse student populations in equitable ways. Although African societies are characterized by some of the most blatant diversities—for example, socio-economic class, ethnocultural, linguistic, and religious diversities, to name a few, relatively little attention has been paid to issues of diversity and difference in schooling in Africa. Attention to diversity and difference is particularly important because of how the issue impinges on power and equity as significant factors in determining learning outcomes and social opportunities for students. A review of the literature reveals some previous work on inequities, exclusionary practices, and



unequal access to education in African countries.<sup>1</sup> Overall, however, it is fair to say that this is an area that still needs to be explored further in research on education in Africa.

*Schooling and Difference in Africa: Democratic Challenges in a Contemporary Context*, by George Sefa Dei et al, makes a significant contribution to this area by researching and discussing several different aspects of student diversity and difference — ethnicity, gender, religion, class, language, disability — and how these are perceived and addressed in African schooling systems, specifically schooling in Ghana, a country similar to many other African countries in terms of the multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual nature of the society. The book emerged from a three-year empirical study in which the authors, all of whom share a passion and belief that equal access to education is important, set out to investigate how schools in Ghana deal with difference and diversity within and among student populations. Their stated objective “is to offer understanding of and engagement with African education in postcolonial times through the stimulation of critical discussion regarding the relevance of responding to ethnic, gender, class, linguistic, and religious differences within African schooling” (p. 5).

The bulk of the research employed for this book centers around analyses of data from several sources including interviews with students and other stakeholders from diverse backgrounds of difference, policy documents, and classroom observations of teaching practices. The results are reported in eleven chapters of thick, multifaceted descriptions, with each chapter undertaking a relevant and in-depth description of a specific aspect of diversity and difference in schooling from the perspectives of different stakeholders in schooling in/from Ghana. Through these thick descriptions, readers are able to feel, see, and hear the world the authors inhabited during the course of this study. This review of the book is based on how well the authors/researchers provide an understanding of inclusive schooling in an African context and whether this understanding produces possibilities for educational inclusion and equity in school settings in Africa.

Chapter 1 presents cogent reasons why attention should be paid to diversity and social difference in schooling processes in Africa, buttressing the argument around issues of equity, equal access, and social opportunities for all students. Measures which have been taken to address diversity issues in various African countries and the remissness that needs to be addressed are also provided in this opening chapter. The chapter, therefore, usefully sets the context for the study and the book. Chapter 2 describes the research procedures employed, identifying anti-colonial and anti-racist discursive frameworks as the theoretical and conceptual lenses through which the research data were examined and analyzed. While some may question the place of such methodological details in a book like this, these details lend tremendous credibility to the book as a product of a research study. Furthermore, research is not a neutral process and it behooves researchers/authors to provide readers with their own positionality within the research processes and how they come to analyze and interpret the data they collect.

Understanding notions of difference, minority, and majority in African contexts requires an understanding of how local subjects themselves perceive and articulate these concepts. Chapters 3 and 4 provide local perceptions and articulations of these concepts from the vantage points of respondents’ cultural, ethnic, gender, and class backgrounds and geographic locations in Ghana. These backgrounds are presented as clear determinants of how the respondents understood issues of diversity, difference, minority and majority locations. Chapters 5 through

10 focus on essential elements of diversity and difference considered to be of critical importance in multicultural, multiethnic societies, namely ethnicity, gender, class, (dis)ability, language, and religion. In some ways, the chapter divisions can be artificial. For example, ethnicity, class, and access to language (Standard English, the language of opportunity) often become interwoven, particularly when we consider that, in Africa, access to social opportunities is sometimes facilitated or even determined by membership of particular ethnic groups. Similarly, attitudes and beliefs about gender and sexuality are firmly rooted in religious beliefs. Still, that the divisions allow the authors to focus on one element at a time, thereby providing a closer and more in-depth analysis.

Ethnicity, in particular, brings up issues of power and privilege and, as the authors point out, although there have been some strides in the elimination of educational disparities based on race and ethnicity (e.g., in primary education in Zimbabwe and Tanzania) disparities along ethnic lines still continue in many other African countries. (p. 25). Chapter 5 examines how ethnicity and power issues are played out in Ghana's education system. The data suggested a substantial difference in educational opportunity and resources among students who come from the provinces where the ruling elite originate and students who do not. Individuals and groups are ethnicized for rewards and punishment, with significant consequences for national development and national unity. The topic of gender, that cogent determinant of access to education in many African contexts, is taken up in Chapter 6 where respondents reflect on the gender-based inequalities in the Ghanaian schooling system. The authors' thesis is that gender is central to schooling if education is to promote social development (p. 150). They, therefore, examine the gendered dimension of schooling with a critical lens, focusing on the social and cultural construction of power, access, equity, voice, and transformative possibilities (p. 151). Results of their analyses suggest that the gendered dimension of schooling cannot be underestimated. Economic factors play a determining role in the educational aspirations and attainments of students. In the developing countries of Africa, economic factors "determine whether one can or cannot become a student in the first place" (p. 202). Chapter 7 explores this important source of educational inequality. Poverty related issues such as access to textbooks, basic nutrition, and local transportation to school are examined through the eyes of the respondents. In Ghana's education system, like elsewhere, students from wealthy families have better chances of school success than those from poorer families.

Ableness is another area where, historically, people with disabilities have faced serious and persistent forms of discrimination and exclusion and, among some African ethnic groups, elimination. Interviews with physically disabled students in Dei, et al's study revealed deep feelings of alienation and marginalization which are reported in Chapter 8. Constructive solutions are suggested by the students for schools and policy makers. Language issues in education in Africa bring up historical questions, among others. Chapter 9 challenges the dominant role of the English language in both the Ghanaian society and its education system. While the authors acknowledge the challenges embedded in developing fair and equitable language policies in multilingual African contexts, they nevertheless urge the continuation of a search for viable African solutions to the problems and concerns emerging from linguistic plurality. Chapter 10 takes up notions of religion and spirituality which are presented as distinct although inter-related aspects of human life. The perpetuation of a religious hierarchy

in Ghana, which privileges and gives pride of place to the colonial missionary Christian religion to the exclusion of Ghanaian indigenous religions and students who practice them, is deplored in this chapter. As religion and spirituality play an important role in the learner's engagement with the learning process, educators and school administrators are urged to consider ways of delivering education that allow learning to happen in the context of religious and spiritual education in the schools (p.254).

Chapter 11, the final chapter, concludes the book with a comparative look at issues of diversity and difference in the Ghanaian and Canadian education systems, arguing that African schools are well placed to learn from strategies for inclusive approaches to education in other pluralistic contexts, while understanding their own unique contexts and histories (p.305).

Overall, the book does deliver on its twin objectives of interrogating existing approaches and practices that alienate minority students in Ghana's education system, and providing research-based educational knowledge that could be used effectively to inform debates on educational change and guide policy initiatives on fundamental structural changes. It is interesting that the book remains almost silent on sexual orientation as a marker of difference in African schooling. Views about sexual differences, which have roots in religious and cultural beliefs, would have enriched the discussions on religion and gender (including the sexual harassment of girls by teachers and male students) and thrown much needed light on this topic in an African schooling context. Also, in comparing the multicultural scenes in Canada and Ghana, I question the authors' claim that Canadian multicultural policy "allows all its citizens to flourish as individuals....," considering Canada's woeful failure to deliver on the social equality dimension of multiculturalism. (p. 300). Castles points out that multiculturalism as a public policy has two key dimensions: recognition of cultural diversity and social equality of members of minorities.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, education has a central role to play in both. With regard to the first, multicultural education is based on the idea that students come from diverse cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds which should be respected and maintained by building diversity into school curricula, classroom practices, and the organization of the school. The second aspect, social equality, requires that students are not disadvantaged or isolated due to differing cultural and social backgrounds. This requires measures such as special instruction in the main language for students from other linguistic backgrounds and measures to compensate for differences in educational experience due to migration and other factors. Recent studies conducted by this author on the educational needs and barriers for Canada's Aboriginal and African refugee students and school drop-out among Black students in Canadian schools revealed that schools in Canada have failed to meet these responsibilities on both fronts due to reductions in the state's funding to schools, among other reasons.<sup>3</sup> One can hardly refer to citizens (students) as "flourishing" under such conditions.

In a similar vein, the authors are invited to reflect on this question: To what extent is the lack of attention to diversity and difference in schooling in African countries due to (a) leaders' or policy makers' limited understanding of what constitutes inclusion and (b) the lack of resources to address the needs of diverse students, as opposed to the authors' perception that diversity and difference are ignored or seen as a problem or as a pernicious disease in African schooling contexts? (p. 7; p. 12). Where resources are severely scarce it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to provide inclusive education even when understood and desired. As the authors

themselves admit, state cuts in educational funding throughout the world have been “at the expense of issues of equity and social justice” (p. 9). One can only imagine how Africa, which has still not benefited from the spread of economic globalization and information technology, would respond to demands for inclusive education.

These concerns notwithstanding, the book is a major contribution to the field of diversity and schooling in the African context, a context that is still largely under-researched in terms of diversity and difference in education. By exploring diverse and salient aspects of inclusive education in an African setting in a single volume, this book significantly extends and broadens educators’ understanding of the construction of inclusive educational environments, especially in light of the limited African perspective in the available scholarship on this important aspect of contemporary education. It is based on sound research, informed by a broad scholarship on its subject matter, and is a timely addition to contemporary curriculum and pedagogical discourses of educational reform. The parallels and intersections between Ghanaian and Canadian understandings and practices of inclusion/exclusion in schooling make this book highly relevant for education in these two contexts and beyond.

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## Notes

1. See, for example, Obanya on inequality in Obanya, P. (2004), *Promoting basic education for women and girls: A survey of structures, programs, and activities in Africa*. Paris: UNESCO; Mukudu on socio-economic class differences in Mukudi, E. “Education for All: A framework for addressing the persisting illusion for the Kenyan context”. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 24 no.3(2004a); 231-240; and Lorenzo on disability in Lorenzo, T. “No African renaissance without disabled women: A communal approach to human development in Cape Town South Africa”. *Disability and Society*, 18, no.6 (2003); 759-778.
2. Castles, Stephen. Migration, citizenship, and education. In *Diversity and citizenship education: Global perspectives*, ed. James Banks (Jossey-Bass, 2004), pp.18-48.
3. Kanu, Yatta. “Educational needs and barriers for African refugee students in Manitoba”. *Canadian Journal of Education* (in press for fall 2008); George Dei, et al., *Reconstructing dropout: A critical ethnography of the dynamics of Black students’ disengagement from school* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

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Castles, Stephen. Migration, citizenship, and education. In *Diversity and citizenship education: Global perspectives*, ed. James Banks (Jossey-Bass, 2004), pp.18-48.

Maiga, Hassimi. “When the language of education is not the language of culture: The epistemology of systems of knowledge and pedagogy”. In *Black education: A transformative*

*research and action agenda for the new century*, ed. James King. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005, pp. 159-182.

**Law and Disorder in the Postcolony. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. 357 pp.**

The collection of essays being reviewed consists of seven case studies of local patterns of violence drawn from experiences in ten countries – South Africa, Brazil, and the six countries of the Chad Basin (Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, Niger, and Central African Republic), and two theoretical essays.

In the Preface the authors present a problem – is there “anything distinctive about (the) contemporary predicament (of post-colonies in Africa, Asia, Europe & Latin America), about the kinds of criminality, coercion, corruption, conflict, even chaos often attributed to them?” (p. vii). A presumption which they reject, that the answer to the above question is yes. And a paradox that law, rather than morals, ethics, or custom has become the measure of action, even as its spirit and letter are violated.

The editors argue that the corruption and crime in post-colonial countries are “discernible elsewhere as well, if not perhaps as acutely or as vividly – or living under a legal alias,” for instance, campaign contributions to politicians by interested businesses (p. 39). The case studies belie this easy symmetry. Several discuss local circumstances of, at best, governance without legitimacy. The gang and drug violence, and arbitrary police behavior in many of America’s inner cities no doubt is similar to that in the urban slums of the postcolony. However, for the vast majority of Europeans and Americans there is little or no direct experience or even exposure to violence other than as a media event. In the countries described in this collection and much of the post-colony, it would appear a significant percentage of people are personally, even physically affected by violence.

The conviction with which the editors of this volume, along with Derrida, Agamben, and Benjamin, identify law with violence, or even as violence, occludes the real difference between force, the effect of the physical coercion of the law, and the other forces and effects of law (p. 31). Violence at its core expresses violation. It is best understood as a morally condemned use of power. It is a normative concept; power, force, even coercion are descriptive. What is violated when force or coercion is exercised by properly constituted authority in a reasonable, culturally common sensible manner, bounded by duly adopted rules? If all law is violence, why bother with concerns about legitimacy and due process?

How then to see the “disorder,” the violence of the title and as described in the case studies? There is physical violence and political-economic corruption or structural violence in every society and system of government. Certainly, all governments and societies are capable of “extraordinary evil,” however, the frequency, duration, and breadth and depth of violence varies from place to place and time to time. Similarly with its causes and cures. For instance, looking at violence from the perspective of the perpetrator of the violent act, is it ordinary criminal behavior or something of more systemic significance? Is the violence resistance to or rebellion against government abuse; or to development and modernization; or to the impact of neo-colonial economic and ecological decisions? Or is it more properly seen as an internal

matter, a civil war, over property, (think diamonds for instance); or about identity (think kin, ethnicity, or religion)?

Violence is defined or delimited by law-- the life of the law is the lived experiences of people. And experience as either colonized or colonial affects, distorts, even corrodes people's personalities, values, and their institutions. Thus understood, neither law and its concomitant disorder or violence, nor the postcolony can be defined, they can only be illustrated. That is the value of the seven case studies in this collection; they provide a concrete text and context to study

How the same violent phenomenon can be seen differently by its perpetrators, its victims, and by the law is powerfully illustrated in Rosalind Morris' study of rape in South Africa over the last 30-40 years. As in many societies, crimes against women receive scant attention from law enforcement. Under apartheid and in other racist systems the one exception is an attack on a woman of the dominant ethnic or racial group by a male of the oppressed group.

The Truth & Reconciliation Commission, in its efforts to get past the past, distinguished political violence including rape from personal or random acts of violence also including rape. Its records are replete with testimony showing the general difficulty of such distinctions in what was essentially a civil war; and the absurdity of such a distinction when the violent act is rape. Since then, as a semblance of "normalcy" has been established, violence against women has been seen as either a public random act of ordinary crime, or as a private intra-family act which again is of little or no concern to the police. In 2000, "less than 50 percent of all reported rape cases (went) to trial, and . . . less than 8 percent of these led to convictions" (p.85).

The Comaroffs' more theoretical study of the public and police obsession with criminality and disorder in South Africa focuses on spectacle, a reliance by the government on both dramatic state conducted and mass media enactments of crime and punishment. Police actions, presentations and performances, museums, detective novels, TV crime shows, and gangster films are used to "construct a minimally coherent world-in-place..." (p. 292).

There are two studies of situations in Brazil that illustrate how the rhetoric of rights can be perverted or "counterfeited" by officials and others to justify oppression (p.13-16). One by Teresa Calderas of three circumstances in which notions of rights, justice, violence, and crime were central: efforts by poor urban dwellers to have their "rights to the city" recognized; efforts by human rights advocates to advance the rights of prisoners in the midst of a crime wave; and the hip-hop generation's articulation of community in an environment of corruption, police violence, and high unemployment. The other is by Nancy Scheper-Hughes on the killing of street children by local "guardian angels" in the northeast of the country.

They perhaps more significantly show what might be called the primacy of order. In conditions of extreme disorder and threat all else becomes secondary. This quest for order often manifests itself as a withdrawal from the public square, from politics into the quotidian, thus presenting a challenge if not a threat to representative democracy. Another reaction to extreme disorder is to grab hold of a fundamentalism, perceived of as a fixed certain truth. This phenomenon and its challenge to the law are presented in Peter Geschiere's study of witchcraft in Cameroon and South Africa. Tragically, even merely perceived rather than real disorder can have the same or worse effects, such as the death squads' attacks on street children.

Patricia Spyer's study of a 1999 outbreak of communal violence in Ambion City, Indonesia in is a thick description of the "swirl of images, vocabularies, sound bites, slogans, and vectors" operating just before, during, and to end the violence (p. 99). Speyer describes its focus on the climate within which the acts studied occurred as one of "hyperhermeneutics — or a compulsive need to interpret and mine just about everything for hidden meaning . . ." (p. 206). Charles Tilly's study of the mechanisms of violence – network based escalation, setting based activation, and brokerage - is a necessary supplement to this otherwise very valuable study of "climate, ambiance, atmosphere and milieu" (p.190).<sup>1</sup>

Janet Roitman's study of "The Ethics of Illegality in the Chad Basin" recognizes that unregulated economic activities and gang-based road banditry are crucial to the urban economy, as well as to the financing of local administration. She focuses on how the participants in these legal and illegal activities see these acts and themselves. The participants in the economy of the Chad Basin were, as they saw it, engaged in "practices that, while not lawful (hence illegal), are nonetheless not forbidden . . . Neither outlaw nor moral activity, their practices are rather a means to participate in prevailing modes of accumulation and prevailing methods of governing the economy " (p.249). Roitman concludes that because the self-evaluations of the interlocutors are derived from the behavioral standards of the official government, the practices, even those of resistance "are necessarily generated out of states of domination" (p.265).

The theoretical essay which ends this volume is rough going. Mbembe certainly makes a credible case that the large scale changes discussed in the Introduction and throughout the case studies operate across Africa in different ways. At the same time, he sees deep convergences that have resulted in a politics marked by "more concentrated forms of power and accumulation, rooted in brute control over life and death" (p. 7). His argument is that this current warlike form of politics is grounded in the psycho-sexual idiom of Bataille. The essay begins its analysis of "politics as a form of expenditure" by affirming "following Bataille's discussion of the exclusionary act, that the war like act in contemporary Africa contains an erotic dimension. It is an aspect of anal eroticism, just as sovereignty is . . . one particular form of sadism" (p. 299). These eroticized and militarized figures of speech continue throughout the essay, leaving one to wonder just how one would go about (re-)establishing a more peaceful politics.

The editors see "great historical tsunamis" occurring in the twenty-first century (p. ix). They identify a shift from Weber's bureaucratic government to a more privatized government-by-franchise. They see this privatization eventually encompassing the police and military. They also see a diminishment of the political and its replacement by the legal; the substitution of rule for practical reason. Similarly, they see policy matters becoming increasingly viewed as technical challenges reducible to single right answers. And they see all of this taking place in an increasingly commodified culture and an identity politics (p. ix-x).

Finally, the Comaroff's see these tsunamis "breaking first" on postcolonial shores or "if not first, then in their most palpable, most hyperextended form" (p. ix). That being the case, the postcolonies become especially valuable sites for the study of social theory. Essays like those herein, and similar "re-storying(s)" of empirical studies of how the law affects and is effected by people and institutions as they make decisions about social practice become essential material

for critical legal analysis.<sup>2</sup> The key notion when all is said and done, is that of Montesquieu, that the laws of one country could not be simply transported to another country without causing great harm.<sup>3</sup>

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### Notes

1. Charles Tilly. *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003.
2. Chinua Achebe. *Home and Exile*. Anchor Books, New York, 2000.
3. Montesquieu. *The Spirit of the Laws*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989. Part 1, book 1, chapter 3, p.8-9.

**Performance and Politics in Tanzania: The Nation on Stage. Laura Edmondson. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007. 175 pp.**

This fascinating book adds to an ever-growing literature on contemporary identity in Tanzania, tracing the contestation of national identities and national politics through the lens of popular Dar es Salaam theatre. What is essentially a history of three performing groups – Tanzania One Theatre (TOT), Muungano Cultural Troupe and Mandela Cultural Troupe – is laced with observations about the way in which the country’s transition since the collapse of *ujamaa* socialism has impacted upon popular understandings of politics, development and the nation.

Two themes recur through the book. The first is that, in the author’s own words, ‘nationalism works’. Although many of the social and political dynamics through which Tanzanian nationalism was constructed during the 1960s and 1970s have been dismantled or pulled apart, Edmondson finds that the nation is alive and well, and all the better for its contestation. In this sense her work echoes that of Kelly Askew, who has argued that “through their shared performances, the citizens of a state congeal and bring the nation - however variegated – into being”. That the nation means different things for different people is hardly extraordinary, but nevertheless carries significance in Tanzania simply because of the civil strife its citizens have observed in the countries around it.

The ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party in Tanzania have certainly played on the idea of stability amidst such regional turmoil, and have consistently invoked the language of nation-building and continuity, even as their policies have changed fundamentally from the *ujamaa* era. A shift towards a more pro-market, multi-party politic has not been reflected in a shift of support away from CCM.



What Edmondson seeks to show is that, under the surface of this steady support for the status quo there exists a deeply politicised undercurrent, wherein political ideas are fiercely contested, and 'Tanzanian' values unpacked. This is where the book is strongest, as the author shows how fundamental binaries are explored within the arena of popular theatre. *Vichekesho* (comic skits) play out arguments over the value of tradition versus modernity, village versus city, local versus national, and, inevitably, poverty versus wealth. At times these arguments read like a soap opera, weaving in and out amongst engaging storylines about families, friends, love-lives, sex and death.

The author wastes no time in setting out a distinction between the three groups – TOT as representing the power and privilege of CCM; Muungano and Mandela as the struggling opposition. The way in which *vichekesho* are resolved on stage reflects this relationship, often resulting in TOT lauding the trappings of the modern, sophisticated Tanzanian over characters representing 'traditional' or 'village' behaviour. Conversely, Muungano and Mandela's plays emphasise the struggle of the ordinary Tanzanian amidst the moral minefield of money, sex and urbanity.

Within this context, notions of 'fidelity' and 'truth' are hinged to electoral loyalty to CCM, and the message of songs such as *mambo sasa* (matters now) evoke the language of unity and togetherness. The promulgation of 'Tanzanian-ness' as unity in the face of regional disharmony has long been an effective campaigning tool of the ruling party, so in this sense Edmondson tells us little new. The value of her account is rather in the detail of how political values are disseminated as everyday scenarios within popular sketches and songs.

Herein lie the real strengths and weaknesses of the text. Its achievement is in bringing political contestation in Tanzania to life for the reader through a very enjoyable series of vignettes and commentaries. It is clear that the author developed a deep and nuanced understanding of the groups she analyses, and I for one felt almost as upset as she obviously did at the demise of Muungano and Mandela as vigorous and active players on the Dar es Salaam scene in the early 2000s.

The theoretical reflections drawn by Edmondson on her experiences are less well-formed, however. Her principal observations – that politics permeates public performance, and that nationalism is subjective – are relatively uncontroversial, and have been addressed before with some distinction in Tanzanianist literature.

Where the author does propose a theoretical framework it is given a level of depth through her fieldwork, but not enough analytical rigour. In page 7 of her introduction for example, the author declares that "I employ a variety of terms throughout this book such as *collaborative nationalism, alternative nationalism, strategic nationalism, and cosmopolitan nationalism*" (original italics) – all of which remain relatively underdeveloped during the next six chapters in terms of their relationship to established perspectives on the origins and reproduction of national identity. Does her work chime with a constructivist perspective, wherein nationalism is socially engineered from both above and below? Does it correspond to more post-modern ideas of fragmentation and hybridity? Or might Edmondson have developed Lonsdale's application of 'moral economies' to expressions of Tanzanian-ness? I would suggest that Charles Taylor's work on 'modern social imaginaries' might be a good fit with her observations, but these avenues are left largely unexplored.

What this leaves the reader is a part-historical, part-discursive account of a tumultuous time in Tanzania's post-colonial history, observed at the coal-face of change in urban Dar es Salaam. The empirical content of the book adds depth to established accounts of political liberalisation in the country, and shows that the remoulding of Tanzania post-*ujamaa* is conducted as much through popular culture and everyday life as it is through economic and developmental discourses. To this end Edmondson concludes her account by venturing that, under the 'boring' surface of party politics in the country, democracy and nationalism are still vehemently contested in a 'messy' and 'vibrant' fashion. Whether or not this really does defy theoretical frameworks as the author suggests, readers of this book will certainly have fun judging for themselves.

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**Vanguard or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa. Jon Abbink and Ineke van Kessel. Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2005. 300 pp.**

This diverse collection contributed by NGO activists and academics revolve around the very unitive focus of youth in Africa, whose problems are seen as sensitive barometer of crises in various African societies. Indeed the besetting temptation to avoid when commenting on youth is to wallow in Afripessimism, though the commitment of these writers to the subject of study is such that redeeming features are to be found in unsuspected places, even in Sierra Leone (where there is now a remarkable social recovery). There is then the aim not to fall back on 'the bleak picture' (p. 2), but to do justice to the many positive exceptions of youth, and to their versatility, survival skills, agency, and intentionality of action, while paying due attention to real inter-generational tension and violence. The contribution to scholarship then is correct the Africanist discourse that has denied them this justice and promoted the perception of their being problematic in essence. Youth are not only socially undesirable, unemployed, or criminal, but also engaged in the creative growth of popular aesthetics, new religious movements, local NGOs, the appropriation of ICT, sports, and politics. The editors identify three main academic responses to counter despair (pp. 8-10): to demonstrate the agency of youth; to devise interventionist policies to transform situations; and to set out descriptive-analytic accounts to explain current scenarios.

The aim of this collection is thus to present, through a variety of cases, a comprehensive overview of all crucial socio-cultural and historical factors involved in the youth experience in contemporary Africa. There is a predictable diversity in theme and approach but all contributions are based on original fieldwork and attempt to address the conflict-generating processes, test hypotheses on generational tensions, and assess the the political impact of youth problems in society. (p. 10)

Have these objectives been met?

One of the contributions, Murray Last's on Hausa youth, comes out of a long engagement with a people or part of Africa through history and social science, but most of the contributors are themselves relatively young, or at least nearer the beginning of their academic career. Of these, Thomas Burgess on youth in Zanzibar, goes to the archives, but lack of years and of historical sources are not surprisingly par for the course in this study. How interview material is considered to be representative of youth is seldom clarified, and when this is spread over a few far-flung parts of Africa, united only in their descent into violent conflict, suspicions of superficiality arise. One of the most memorable contributions is that by Yves Marguerat for his personal encounter with Lomé street-boys. Though inviting them into his home might raise ethical issues of fieldwork, the reader is given an insight into thinking seldom transmitted, even in this book, by distanced academic work or by scheduled interventions. Because of the alienation and the violence it is not straightforward to reproduce the thoughts of those who are not prepared to articulate them easily to an outsider.

Inevitably agency is not always identified and the 'bleak picture' restored. Jok Madut Jok writes out of a long war-torn situation, yet he could have criticized Sharon Hutchinson on the Nuer and found some hope in the rise of the church and local autonomy as the herds are regenerated. Simons concludes that with pastoralist youth, 'there is no basis on which sustainable governance and security can be built' (p. 263), yet fails to observe that there has never been so many young pastoralists as today, and they have a meaningful autonomy that could be the envy of many youth.

Compared with Western youth, the religious factor is a significant one. Murray Last (p. 51) finds that Islam empowers the young and gives them a special expertise. Revivalist movements may assist youth to find a future in a failing society, precisely because of the requirement for a 'total break with the past', but this may also further rupture it. Pentecostalism has often been mentioned as a means for youth to relate to globalizing trends with their fleeting promise of empowerment, but African youth are involved in many different kinds of traditional religions, world religions, and new religious movements that may react against either for the imagined good life. Religious commitment usually crystallizes in the life-stage of youth, so could have been addressed as more central in more of the contributions, when religion mediates change in Africa and is so often associated with marginalization, identity, and violent conflict or its prevention.

Inter-generational tension and the violence of youth is directly addressed by two contributions, each focusing on East African societies that have had age-class systems, which normally function to express, yet manage, tensions between formal generation-sets. Simon Simons communicates to the editor that such social order has broken down, victimizing women, and making pastoral societies 'internal war zones' (p. 29). Ignoring the relatively effective system of social control, he defines Karamojong *ngikaracuna* as warriors, when actually the word means those who pull at the aprons; they are kept down as children. It is not an 'age-grade', for most youth have to wait many years for initiation, and so seniority in the traditional polity. The distinction he needs is between the warriors (*ngikajok*) and the bandits (*ngikokelak*). Neither have to be initiated, but one acts for the benefit of traditional society, while the other acts outside it, often bringing trouble to it. The first are accountable to the elders, the latter are outlaws, who would include pupils who 'collect their school fees by staging ambushes on the

road' (p. 254). The latter is a witness to the failure of modernity, not the traditional polity, as is the government becoming entangled in conflict, ending up (he might just as well have said 'beginning') 'as just another warring party in a cycle of revenge' (p. 254). Simonse also descends to alarmism on the spread of 'warlordism' and 'the omnipresence of arms' causing conflicts 'to become more deadly and more difficult to solve' (pp. 252f.). Employment in NGO projects has allowed him to see misplaced European concepts and technology as determinative and this piece is quite the worst academic contribution he has made. All my publishing on Karamoja has tried to show the vanity of this kind of interventionist superiority.

Peter Kagwanja is a Gikuyu emigré, who has often written on youth and politics in Kenya, and his paper deals with another popularly demonized group, the Muingiki, who are a sharp reaction to the intense modernizing direction of the Agikuyu. They 'embraced a vision of generational transfer based on a traditional Kikuyu system *Ituika* ('break'), which guaranteed a transfer of power from the elders to the younger generation' (p. 83). He writes of them in terms resurrecting the defunct generation-set system, 'Imagining themselves as the Iregi warriors of old' (p. 103). He commends the self-discipline at which the movement aims: 'its crusade against drunkenness, drug addiction, broken families, prostitution, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS has been highly successful' (p. 97). He concludes optimistically. 'The road to democracy in the future lies in strengthening the social movements of the youth and a break with the prevailing powerlessness and marginality of the youth in politics.' (p. 106). This would domesticate their violence, but the trouble is that there still remains a strong drive towards modernity among the Agikuyu and even the Muingiki, for unlike the Karamojong there can be no return now to a generation-set system. Nevertheless this is the best academic contribution he has published for its insight into social forms, and a reminder of the postmodern poverty on relating the generations so that they can serve one another for the common good.

There is then a predictable diversity in quality as well as in theme and approach, but that too denotes the life of youth in Africa. If they are your interest, have a dip here!

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**Transforming Museums: Mounting Queen Victoria in a Democratic South Africa. Steven C. Dubin. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 339 pp.**

A very rich book that tells so much more than what its title announces, *Transforming Museums: Mounting Queen Victoria in a Democratic South Africa* explores in ten rigorous chapters the cultural mutations that occurred in South African society just before and after the end of Apartheid. The year 1994 is set at the official turn of history: when democratic elections were held in South Africa. Professor Steven Dubin, from Columbia University, focuses on South African museums — from art galleries to science museums — as they remain the dedicated places where national identity and collective memory were and still are being constructed and narrated. From the first pages, it is clear Steven Dubin has an excellent knowledge of the recent

theories in social sciences and in museum studies. He presents the four main concepts which are used throughout the book: 1) the transformation of discourses related to South African history and society in museums; 2) the politics of representation of the various groups; 3) the politics of reception by the diverse audiences who visit the new exhibitions; 4) the social and collective memory (p. 5).

The book's odd title echoes a painting in the Tatham Art Gallery, "State Coronation Portrait of Queen Victoria", which is immense and, say, embarrassing, because it symbolizes at best the colonial era in South African history. Moreover, this work celebrating the British power is so huge it can not be easily removed or stored. Hence, this painting brings very bad memories to many groups and individuals (p. 5). Colonial traumas have to be explained and re-visited, not censored. Hiding the past could have been perceived as a denial of the true facts of history. As a solution to this dilemma, Steven Dubin refers to a "marriage of convenience" (p. 246): a new painting from 2003, showing former Zulu King Cetshwayo kaMpande, was exposed nearby. A b/w reproduction of that noble work by Helene Train is shown in Chapter 9; I believe it is so interesting it could have been on the book's cover, although it is a sharp contrast with the title of the book (p. 252).

The author recognizes as well the fact that nowadays, "South Africa is an extremely complicated, challenging, and perplexing society to make sense of" (p. 4). In order to understand this complexity, the author uses various sources and perspectives; he refers to scholarly publications, speeches, interviews and even many anecdotes (as the "State Coronation Portrait of Queen Victoria" affair). Among numerous elements and debated issues, there is an overlooked quote from President Nelson Mandela, who in 1997 inaugurated the Robben Island Museum that was built on the site where he was himself prisoner during 18 long years. On that very day, Mandela insisted on the fact that still in 1997, 97 percent of the displays in South African museums "reflected a colonialist and apartheid point of view" (President Nelson Mandela, quoted by Steven Dubin, p. 2). Some curators who were present refused the critique. For instance, Marilyn Martin, from the Iziko Museum in Cape Town, declared that she felt "no guilt", but "some anger because President Nelson Mandela has never been to [Iziko Museum]" (p. 2). During the last two decades, the museums in South Africa have faced a dilemma regarding their national history: not to forget the past, not to reproduce colonial ideologies, but nevertheless trying to acknowledge the unfair practices that occurred in a recent past. Steven Dubin situates his book's aim in just one sentence, with an idea so important and central that it is repeated twice in the book:

"The apartheid legacy is most apparent in cultural history, natural science, and natural history museums, where the ideology was interwoven into the narratives that their curators composed, and it dictated the decisions they made about what to highlight, and how they chose which phenomena 'innately' belonged where" (pp. 4 and 242).

*Transforming Museums* does not only focus on "ancient" works from the Victorian era displayed in "old" museums, however, for many new institutions are presented and studied here, [e]specially in Chapter 8 and 9. Human rights appear as a conducting theme in some recent exhibitions in the "new" South Africa (p. 163). Another of the main issues is the burden of the European heritage in South African institutions for new audiences who mostly want to discover "the other side" of the South African culture, as put by Ann Pretorius (from the

William Humphreys Art Gallery) who simply asked while being challenged : "What do you want us to do? Throw out all the white people? Throw out all the European legacy?" (p. 35).

As we can see thorough all chapters, many questions and some former debates still remain unsolved or re-emerge unchanged, for example when Steven Dubin concludes that "South African museums face a delicate balancing act today: how to shed the ideological corsets of the past without replacing them with similarly restrictive fashions" (p. 255). Moreover, former classifications of South African groups like the Zulus and the Bushmen were once useful to name and distinct different groups, but nowadays most historians and curators using these categories from the past must be aware that by doing so, they also reproduce the not-so-old segregated terms from the Apartheid era.

Among many qualities, Steven Dubin's book is interdisciplinary, and therefore would be suitable for various readers, even undergraduates beyond the network of African Studies. These could include those in sociology of art, museology, social sciences, ethnicity, but also in cultural and citizenship studies. Perhaps some open-minded art historians could appreciate as well its innovative approach and contents. To my view, *Transforming Museums* is so coherent and salient that its strong theoretical framework could even be adapted to other contexts and inspire some younger scholars who would like to study state-building, national identity and collective memory in other countries.

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**The Oral and Beyond: Doing Things with Words in Africa. Ruth Finnegan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. 320 pp.**

Ruth Finnegan's body of work in the field of African oral literature is foundational, and this book stands as another vital contribution, one which no scholar in the field will be able to ignore. A collection of variously updated older essays, framed by a new preface and epilogue, this work is overtly retrospective of the history of the study of oral literature in Africa, yet fundamentally targeted, as becomes evident in the book's final sections, towards assisting, if not affecting, a paradigm shift in the study and conception of the oral in Africa.

Arguing that the study of African oral literature has expanded so much since her foundational *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970) that she could not possibly address such changes comprehensively, Finnegan's expressed intent at the outset of this volume is "to extend, contextualise and in some respects qualify [her earlier positions] from the perspective of later research and thinking" (p. 1). And, indeed, Finnegan does achieve this, bringing a broad range of sources from disciplines as diverse as linguistics, performance studies, anthropology, new media, and literature to bear on key issues such as the recording and transcription of performance events, the textuality of oral utterances, and the centrality of performativity in

many oral forms (with her title strongly echoing J.L. Austin's 1962, *How to Do Things With Words*). Yet, qualification itself is a somewhat modest goal, and if it were truly the prime value of this book it would be difficult to consider it to be more than a historiographic supplement to her earlier groundbreaking works. And, indeed, Finnegan's intentions can at times prove somewhat slippery and confounding in the book's early sections. In that this volume is surely targeted at a specialist audience who are already aware of Finnegan's existing contribution to the field, reading some of her earlier essays, many of which are republished here with only minor changes (including, most conspicuously, the first chapter of *Oral Literature in Africa*), one may wonder at some points where and when the bite of this volume will manifest beyond modest qualifications, or whether, in fact, this book should be billed more as a 'Ruth Finnegan reader' than a monograph.

Yet, while this volume never loses its retrospective stance, sometimes to the detriment of highlighting the urgent relevance of some of its points, as the blurb on the book's cover promises this work does come to a "provocative conclusion." The more pointed arguments of the final sections of the volume are of tremendous import, and in many ways justify the particular make-up of the volume as a whole, in that Finnegan's somewhat quiet approach to these more timely issues proves to provide a rich context in which to consider them. The most notable conclusion that Finnegan comes to derives from her seemingly innocuous initial observation that "Africa is celebrated above all for the treasure of her voiced and auditory arts, and as the home of oral literature, orature and orality, and the genesis and inspiration of the voiced traditions of the great diaspora" (1). Yet, as this volume progresses Finnegan demonstrates that this notion is ultimately dubious, not only empirically in the study of expressive forms, but also ethically. Finnegan links the continuing characterization of 'Africa-as-oral' to the age-old binary dictating the overall conception of Africa as fundamentally Other. She argues that, whether applied in denigrating terms to characterize Africa as 'primitive' and the like, or more romantically by those wishing to champion orality as Africa's ancient and distinct domain, the primacy placed upon the oral as that which defines Africa distorts the dynamics of expressive forms themselves (of which words are only but one, albeit often important, factor), and fastens Africa time and again in the slot of absolute difference. Concomitant to this argument is Finnegan's disavowal of the broader world-wide "linguistic myth," defined as "a cognitive language-centered model of the nature and destiny of humanity," and which ties the evolution of humankind to its relations with words (p. 206). Whether tethered to notions of writing and the printing press as fundamental leaps forward in human nature, or in the championing of orality as Africa's patrimony, the very infatuation with the word as the key portal through which human evolution can be judged disturbs Finnegan.

Of course, these observations are not entirely new (nor does Finnegan claim they are), with earlier studies such as Vail and White's *Power and the Praise Poem* (1991) having forcefully made these points. Yet, Finnegan uses these observations in an original way, pushing towards a more dynamic approach to African expressive forms. This reconceptualization requires an understanding that, "[s]peech may have been pictured as the essential human attribute but it does not stand on its own: it is inextricably intertwined with other modes of human interaction, gestural, bodily, visual, artefactual, tactile" (p. 209). Thus, tapping into the general turn towards interdisciplinarity in the academy, Finnegan argues that 'oral literature' is itself an illusory,

incomplete, and drastically confined characterization of the dynamic and multisensory nature of expressive forms in Africa. In this light, *The Oral and Beyond* points not just beyond Africa to art forms and scholarship generated from abroad, or beyond the ethnocentric stereotypes which studies of the oral seem to inevitably buttress, but also fundamentally beyond the oral as the defining characteristic of African expressive forms. In this manner, this volume is a strong antidote to the conceptual and ethical stagnations produced by what Isabel Hofmeyr (1994) has decried as dominant and ever-lurking 'literary formalisms' in the study of verbal arts. Ultimately, *The Oral and Beyond* translates and synthesizes many of the best past and contemporary insights of a range of disciplines within a perspective only to be derived from the half-century of Finnegan's own career, and pushes the study of oral literature beyond its contemporary boundaries.

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**African Art and the Colonial Encounter: Inventing a Global Commodity. Sidney Littlefield Kasfir. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007. 381 pp.**

This study is a complex comparative history of how colonialism affected warriorhood and its aesthetic practices among the Nigerian Idoma and the Kenyan Samburu communities in the early to middle British colonial period from the 1880s to the 1930s.

In the first part, Sidney Littlefield Kasfir argues that colonial literatures created a discursive field around the institutions and practices of warriorhood in what became the British colonies of Nigeria and Kenya. The inscriptions differed in the two locales and resulted in radically different governing policies. And because these policies, according to the author, had a direct effect on artisanal practice related to warriorhood, they set the conditions for artistic and technical innovation. In the second part, Littlefield Kasfir turned to a close scrutiny of the power and limitations of the Idoma sculptor and the Samburu smith within a larger cultural script of Africa practice.

Among the key art-historical issues the book addresses are the ways artisanal knowledge (that of Samburu blacksmiths and Idoma sculptors), embedded in particular cosmologies and cultural scripts was related to systems of objects such as weapons and masks; and how these undergirded cultural practices. It discusses the classificatory problems generated by the fact that western museums and collectors began to subsume these objects into their own systems of classification. It also introduces the idea of warrior theatre, using the metaphor of the script to describe the construction of masculinity through body arts, masquerades, dance and behaviour.

In this book, Littlefield Kasfir explores an unexpected source, colonial authority, and traces the ways widely different late-nineteenth-and-early twentieth-century Europeans impressions of Nigeria and Kenya and the subsequent British colonizing policies toward their improperly understood subject peoples intervened in and altered the objects and practices of the Samburu and Idoma African artists.

This book is, of course, about real people, the warriors, the artists and the blacksmiths and how they designed strategies and made choices to circumvent the authority of colonial rule and



to create new forms. It is also partly an attempt to comprehend these two cases' shared experience of colonial power and their construction of masculinity within its confines in these widely different situations.

This work on cross-cultural encounters versus the implementation of colonial policy is based on a rich and diverse set of sources. For the nineteenth century colonial period, the author used missionaries, travelers and settlers' accounts, novels, colonial government reports and the popular press. She also relied on Hollywood safari film genre for the 1950s. More importantly is Littlefield Kasfir's use of objects as sources. The assertion that objects are constituted as texts has gained some level of acceptance in art-historical, archaeological and ethnographic research. Objects or artifacts are increasingly considered as valuable forms of historical evidence. But differently from other sources, objects, like masks, spears, pots, textiles and photographs, are stable, difficult to falsify, and exist in ways that are easily separable from the interpretations attached to them. In addition, objects have a non-discursive quality as inert things with geographies and histories, which make them sites for contestation and ongoing revision. They are, therefore, interesting sources and adequate analytical tools.

Drawing on Robert Farris Thompson's principle that icon defines itself as act: both Idoma and Samburu assemblages of form and performance are kinds of masks. She also draws on Herbert Cole's notion of African art as processual in order to understand the ways blacksmiths and sculptors were able to create new forms in the face of repressive colonial regulations. Through doing so, Littlefield Kasfir structured her study, which spans the early colonial to the postcolonial time periods and two cultures, in four parts which discuss warriors and warriorhood, the artists and artistic processes involved in representing them, the objects themselves and the commodification and subsequent globalization of objects and of warriorhood itself.

At a more thorough level, this story can be read as a story of innovative aesthetic practice in the face of a radically transformed patronage system. The core thread running through both the historical and aesthetic narratives concerns representations: first, the widely divergent British official representations of warriorhood in the two places; second, the changing representation of warriorhood's objects as art or ethnographic specimen and finally as commodity; and in the end, the image of the warrior himself, on movie screens, on postcards and seen from a Land Rover in safari. The earliest are written inscriptions such as travel accounts, memoirs and colonial reports. The more recent ones are produced in the camera's eye. All of them, however, speak to iconic power and the use of representations as a rhetorical medium in both colonial and postcolonial spaces.

British popular and literary representations of Kenya and Nigeria acted as filters in the enforcement of colonial policies, but uncovering the aesthetic account that lies beneath the historical one means recuperating not only artisanal knowledge but also the practices that embodied that knowledge.

With the imposition of the Pax Britannica came the inevitable aestheticisation of warfare and warriorhood in which the former enemy cranium became a carved mask and the warrior himself a performer of masked dance or masquerade that represents but no longer actually is the successful outcome of fighting an enemy. But in neither Samburu nor Idoma culture has the pre-colonial order been overturned or cast off decisively. Colonialism seems to have created a

larger overlay on the indigenous center-periphery model, in which all African centers were now also peripheries to the European metropole from which power and policy derived.

This intriguing history of how colonial influence forever altered artistic practice, objects, and their meaning, questions mainstream ideas about artistic production and impression.

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**Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa. Richard C. Keller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. 294 pp.**

In July 2008, the French President Nicolas Sarkozy implemented the next stage in his pet project to build a geopolitical Mediterranean Union linking Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. Maghrebian critics were quick to voice their suspicions at this EU-endorsed plan which revived bitter memories of French colonialism, especially given Sarkozy's grandiose allusions to ancient unity under the Roman Empire. Libya, in particular, objected to the project with Moammar Qaddafi highlighting the cultural differences between Europe and the Maghreb:

Do we share a culture with Europe? Absolutely not. We each have our own culture. In Scandinavia, people walk around naked. Can you walk around naked in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, or Libya? They would stone you and throw you into a mental hospital. But in Scandinavia, it is common to see people walk around naked. That's their culture. Is it conceivable for a union to be formed between somebody naked and somebody who considers this to be crazy? This is an example of the differences between our cultures. We don't even share the same religion (The Middle East Media Research Institute, July 15 2008).

This passage neatly encapsulates an inversion that has taken place in Franco-Maghrebian relations, for in his contrast between Maghrebian sanity and European insanity Qaddafi utilized the same cultural logic that characterized French colonial-era thinking about the Arab Other. This is therefore a propitious time to be examining the traumatic relationship between France and North Africa. In his thoroughly researched and intellectually ambitious study, *Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa*, Richard C. Keller does precisely this by showing how the political relations between metropolitan France and its North African colonies were to a large extent mediated through the field of psychiatric medicine.

Building on the work of Jean-Michel Bégué and Robert Berthelier in the history of North African psychiatry, Keller traces the idea of the Maghreb as an exoticized space of insanity and irrational violence. Situating his subject in a wider historical field, Keller demonstrates how, from the late-nineteenth century until the decolonization of North Africa, psychiatry maintained the cultural and racial rift between colonizer and colonized. Citing the legacy of the great reformer Philippe Pinel, French psychiatrists represented themselves as humanitarians seeking to modernize the barbaric conditions that the mentally ill endured in the Maghreb. Yet this ideology of emancipation disguised the implementation of an asylum-based model of

confinement that worked in tandem with colonial exploitation – expressed through the concept of *mise en valeur* – and discourses of scientific racism.

The North African context was further complicated by religious sectarianism: as both Arab and Muslim, the North African male was labeled by French psychiatrists as innately irrational and incapable of adapting to French civilization. This undermined official assimilationist policies and further distanced the populations of the Maghreb from French metropolitan identity. As the discipline of ethnopsychiatry developed from the 1920s, the ‘primitivism’ of the Algerian mind was frequently used to justify French authoritarianism, heralding an independence struggle in which psychiatry featured on the frontlines.

Focusing primarily, but not exclusively, on the Algiers School of French North African psychiatry, Keller draws on the stories and day-to-day realities of psychiatrists and their patients to frame his analysis of a complex social field involving the mental state of colonial settlers, North Africans, and Europeans. At the centre of Keller’s narrative lies the Hôpital Psychiatrique de Blida-Joinville, an asylum southwest of Algiers that began admitting patients in the late 1930s. Run by the Lyon-trained neuropsychiatrist Antoine Porot, Blida represented a turning point in the ‘biopolitics’ of colonial and metropolitan psychiatric care. Rejecting easy dismissals of the Blida hospital as a coercive element of colonial authority, Keller highlights the progressivism and latent utopianism of a project that sought to place Algeria at the forefront of psychiatric innovation. “With its emphasis on reform and professional reorganization, the progressivist rhetoric that surrounded colonial psychiatry testified to the ways in which colonialism was about science, modernization, development, and process as much as it was about exploitation” (p.80). In this revisionist vein Keller brings in the work of Michel Foucault and Bruno Latour to support his thesis that French psychiatry was a discipline in crisis which used North Africa as a space for medical experimentation and professional renewal.

The use of mental stereotyping as a weapon in the colonial mission is familiar to many, but Keller complicates the matter by arguing that in French North Africa psychiatry could also act “as a tool for the emancipation of the colonized, an innovative branch of social and medical science, an uncomprehending therapeutic system, a discipline in crisis, and a mechanism for negotiating the meaning of difference for republican citizenship” (p.4). This approach places Keller in dialogue with the powerful critique of Frantz Fanon, who in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), attacked colonial psychiatry, and the attitudes of Porot in particular, as nothing less than medical racism. Fanon, it is crucial to note, resigned from his position as Head of Psychiatry at Blida in 1956 to devote himself to the struggle for Algerian independence. Perhaps the principal achievement of *Colonial Madness* is Keller’s contextualization of the Fanonian critique, for by placing Maghrebian anticolonialism within a broader history of psychiatric theories, institutions, and practices, he complicates any simple reading of the role of psychiatry during the Algerian war. In later chapters Keller branches out from case histories and psychiatric treatises and uncovers in Maghrebian autobiographies, fiction, and cultural memory “the development of an intellectual culture of resistance that took medicine and psychiatry as its object” (p.162).

If Keller’s narrative is sometimes difficult to work through, this is chiefly due to the complexity of issues and wealth of detail offered. *Colonial Madness* would therefore be best appreciated by the advanced student. In demonstrating the extent to which mental health issues

regulated the colonial and postcolonial relationship between France and North Africa, Keller has fashioned an important work that is as much a history of ideas as it is a social history or history of psychiatry. The cultural logic deployed by Qaddafi, it is shown, has a fascinating context.

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**Yoruba Bata Goes Global: Artists, Culture Brokers, and Fans. Debra L. Klein. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007. 220 pp.**

the 1980s, Yorubaland (Southwestern Nigeria), like most African societies, continue to experience a mixture of a depressed economy, increased encounter between modernity and tradition, and the challenges of globalization. *Yoruba Bata Goes Global* analyses these issues. Undoubtedly, a book on a Yoruba art form, *bata* drumming, it situates this old but esteemed vocation within the context of local, national and global studies. Rather than merely describing *bata*, a double-headed percussion instrument with one cone larger than the other, and used mainly for religious and secular purposes in Yorubaland, and its position in Erin Osun, nay Yoruba society, the book revolves around mini-histories of peoples, places and events: Lamidi Ayankunle, Iyaloja compound, Erin Osun, Yorubaland, art-tourism, client-p(m)atron relationship, Nigeria under the Structural Adjustment Program, 'World Music' and Euro-American fascination (curiosity) with African 'tradition' all of which are integrated to provide a grand narrative.

Members of the Iyaloja compound, Erin Osun pride themselves as bearers of a family heritage that dates to the heyday of Oyo kingdom in the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Following the collapse of Oyo, people who survived the evacuation of Erin-Ile during the early nineteenth century Yoruba wars took refuge in the southern forests and established Erin-Osun safe from marauders. In this new location they continued the family tradition of entertainment: drumming, dancing, and masquerades. These are some of the few Yoruba vocations perpetuated in specific lineages thus the prefixes 'Ayan' and 'Oje.' As Klein points out, contrary to the perception in the West, not every African is a drummer. Indeed there are degrees and processes of becoming an 'Ayan.' A good Iyaalu drummer might not play the *bata* or *omele* well. An Ayan progresses from playing the most basic drum and graduating with *iyaalu* or *bata*. So one of the major features of the Ayangalu family, like most Yoruba, is deference to senior lineage members including Lamidi Ayankunle, a major subject in the book.

In the mid-1970s, Nigeria was so swollen with petro-naira that a Nigerian ruler declared 'money was not Nigeria's problem, the problem was what to do with it. One way of disbursing 'excess' money was to encourage 'local tradition' as epitomized in the much celebrated 2nd Black Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC '77). After FESTAC provincial administrations in Nigeria periodically sponsored 'cultural' shows at which Lamidi made his primary 'public'

appearance and which he sees both as a dialogue between tradition and modernity but also his recognition/acceptance as a culture conductor. This recognition builds upon Lamidi's awareness that the world is interested in Yoruba 'custom'. In the 1950s, Ulli Beier and Susanne Wenger, two German artists cum cultural revolutionaries settled in Osogbo, near Erin Osun. There they developed and encouraged local artists and trained new ones. This was the beginning of a lasting global collaboration of Yoruba and Euro-American artists and cultural brokers. While Wenger revived and reinvented Osun grove at Osogbo, Beier opened doors for Yoruba artists to perform in Germany and other European capitals.

The adoption of the IMF/World bank induced SAP by the Nigerian military-led government in 1986 set in motion a spiral decline in the quality of life. The Nigerian currency depreciated rapidly against Western currencies leading to skyrocketing commodity prices. Those who thrived during this period were people with access to the dollar, sterling, and other high value currencies. Access to money depended partly on establishing links with 'Ilu Oyinbo' (overseas) and there many artists and non-artists went—many permanently.

The book identifies, rightly, that the outcome of global artistic collaboration and economic depression redefine Yoruba 'tradition' in various ways. For instance, Osun Osogbo grove, as it currently exists, is tradition as imagined by Wenger. Similarly, Yoruba artistic performance overseas is structured in ways that appeal to Western buyers so as to repackage this art form. In effect, cultural brokerage becomes a two-sided mirror with which 'whites' reinvent Yoruba traditions in ways akin to Yoruba's representation of European behavior.

In some ways, global collaboration is beneficial to the parties involved. It provides valuable market and sorely needed income for Erin artists and raises the demand for and value of successful cultural brokers. These are genuine needs in an era when the internal Yoruba market is incapable of supporting local art forms. Individual, especially young *bata* performers were willing to circumvent tradition and negotiate their own path to stardom. With diminishing market for *bata*, young Erin artists favored the incorporation of Fuji, a more popular and youth-oriented music tradition and American hip-hop dress. Meritocracy took ascendancy over hereditary privileges as in the Yoruba proverb *owo ni so egbon d'aburo* (money turns the senior into the junior kin.) The local saying *aso nla ko ni eniyan nla* (big cloth/dress does not make a big person) was stood on its head. Overseas travelers usually had enough money (at least temporarily) to live 'big' and appropriate senior status. The importance of clothes as physical manifestations of status and socio-economic inequality is shown in the quality, cost, size, and the design of clothes. Therefore, more than an exploration on an art form, anthropologists Klein gives insights into Yoruba material culture, the politics of representation and how people make 'fashion' statements.

Yet there are problems and perceived bastardization of 'tradition.': More than a few people became 'emergency'/'overnight' cultural traditionalists to smoothen their overseas visa applications and foreigners and diaspora Nigerians became 'beautiful brides' with countless local suitors. Brokerage also resulted in: the exploitation (real and imagined) of Erin-Osun art/ists by local and global bureaucrats, entrepreneurs and collaborators in the name of cultural and global advertisement; the endangerment of *bata* drumming by the encroachment of 'World' music—*okuta*-percussion and Fuji music; the breakdown of social relations whenever culture entrepreneurs chose to circumvent kinship norms; and the over-commercialization of culture.

Overall, Klein provides an insightful description of the persistence, invention, and transformation of tradition, opportunities and problems of collaboration, generational tension, family life, apprenticeship, and the challenges of everyday life in an era of socio-political transition and economic depression. Of particular interest are the glossary (pp. 191-93) which provides information on local terminologies that many readers might be unfamiliar with as well as a long list of primary and secondary sources, especially photos, encoding various aspects of the narrative and interviews conducted over nearly a decade with Erin Osun artists, their clients and patrons and local chiefs. This book will appeal to a broad audience of scholars and lay people.

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**The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria. Andrew Apter. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005. 334 pp.**

FESTAC 1977 and indeed, the entire gamut of Pan-Africanism or Negritude stem from the experience of slave trade, slavery and colonialism. Apter's book could be viewed from the historiographical tradition of a-historical Africa (Afro-pessimism) that re-affirms the influential notion of a dark continent bereft of a history except the activities of the Europeans, civilizing mission of colonial rule and the failure of the post-colonial state.

Divided into eight chapters, this book is an account of the author's frustration with African (Nigerian) condition which he described as his ten year odyssey "personal note." It's a fascinating combination of autobiography and odyssey "in search of the primitive (?)...the deeper into the bush one went, the more authentic the culture one found" (p. 2). To Apter, FESTAC 1977 represented not the celebration of African culture but the appropriation of a colonial tradition. He discusses afresh a Nigeria steeped in savagery but civilized by colonialism.

According to Apter, "Nigeria's black and African world was clearly an imagined community, national in idiom yet Pan-African in proportion. Artistic directors and cultural officers invented traditions with pre-colonial pedigree" (p. 6). Apter notes that FESTAC was a mere reproduction of colonial culture which incorporated Africans into indirect rule. FESTAC denotes the appropriation of colonial culture and the failure of postcolonial state capitalism. FESTAC's commodification of culture masked ethnic cleavages and the lack of indigenous production of indigenous culture.

Apter explains the paradigm of failed state-predatory violence, endemic corruption, lack of interest articulation and a national bourgeoisie. To him, FESTAC was "directed from above and dispersed from the center-it became a model of mystification and false historical consciousness."

Regatta and Durbar were indigenous as claimed by the Nigerian leaders and communities, historically it emerged as central mechanisms of colonial interaction. Apter demonstrates that Regatta developed between European traders and Africans on the coast and up the inland waterways while Durbar emerged as a form of power relations between British officials and

northern Emirs during the consolidation of the northern protectorate. In his analysis, the Benin sculptures were described as 'fetishes' of colonial knowledge, power and desire. The colonial roots of traditional costume exhibition were emphasized and FESTAC was described as the expansion of colonial precedent.

In a constructivist episteme, FESTAC was explained not in terms of innovation but replication of colonial culture. The genealogy of FESTAC was colonial exhibitions and commemorations. On the contrary, in order to ensure loyalty, colonial authorities maintained certain institutions beneficial to the traditional rulers and the imperial power. It was an effective cooptation technique employed by the colonial state. The continuation of Durban was to legitimize colonial order through traditional institutions.

FESTAC illuminates how the state produced culture and locality from above. To Apter, FESTAC was a demonstration of state failure and corruption rather than a celebration of African culture and heritage. Apter uncritically absorbed the first generation of colonial civil servants trained by the British from the emerging corruption of the post-colonial state when in reality they instituted corruption and nepotism in public service. In terms of chronology, he attributes the phenomenon of corruption to post-coloniality.

According to him, the aim of FESTAC was the remapping of blackness and the African world. Its ambition was to seek "common generic and genetic origin in Africa." But more than the question of origin, the collective memory slavery and colonialism brought blacks together within the matrix of cultural consciousness and renaissance. The logic of FESTAC converted differences into expressions of common heritage and identity. On page 79, he stretches that "FESTAC's narratives of black unity and heritage, it converted Nigerian oil into black culture and blood, and transformed the nation into a privileged homeland."

He underscores the social distance between the state created national culture and the people. He documents ethnic imbalance, the near exclusion of some groups and over-representation of others in the process of "ethnic substitution." Apter explains structural tension between federal and state levels of cultural politics and administration. FESTAC, as Apter notes, valorize ethnic division and alignments in the post-civil war era.

He identifies key processes of cultural commodification and denunciation of the festival by renowned politicians, intellectuals, musicians and dramatists. There was equally the question of power struggle and ideological tussle between Nigeria and Senegal over the cultural project; and tension between succession and usurpation.

In a profound way, Apter demonstrates that FESTAC was characterized by fiscal recklessness and corrupt enrichment. Oil money gave rise to patronage networks and distribution rather than production within the national economy. FESTAC was a 'festival of awards and contracts.' It should be noted that the 'spending spree' itself was a legacy of political patronage and social distribution under colonial economy, access to markets was controlled and determined by the state.

With highly selective information, especially the impact of Structural Adjustment Programme on socio-economic lives, Apter explains the emergence of the economics of greed as a mode of survival without considering the international dimension of financial crimes and corruption. The Great Nigerian scam, predatory regimes of fraud and financial dissimulations

of the 1990s, occurred in different economic context of neo-liberal reforms, capitalist tendencies and massive impoverishment of the masses.

Using failed state paradigm, the dislocations of neoliberal reform attracts less attention in Apter's book. There is undue emphasis on unstable identities, misleading images, failed elections, tragic pipeline explosions, petro-shortages military coups and cultural phenomenology of the 419 scam. There are printing errors, Dogorai (Dogarai) on page 194 and Ugoji (Udoji) on page 202. These shortcomings notwithstanding, the book is an excellent example of indepth fieldwork. It's recommended to students interested in African cultural issues, challenges of development and oil politics.

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**Africa: A Guide to Reference Material (2nd edition). John McIlwaine. Lochcarron, Scotland: Hans Zell Publishing, 2007.**

Is reviewing a print-only research guide in an online-only journal anachronistic? It shouldn't be. As an Africanist librarian colleague aptly puts it, "while Google may be pretty good for Goethe, it is not nearly as good for Gao" (Henige 2005:2). My own library experience and nearly ten years of teaching graduate students effective methods to pursue their own library research on African-related topics supports my belief (along with generations of librarians) that quality printed guides such as this one remain valuable and have a significant, continuing role to play in scholarly research on Africa. This is true even as academic libraries themselves become increasingly digital, virtual and, it may seem at times, infinite. Research in the library, with the advice of a specialist librarian if available and using high quality print resources in combination with the catalog and an array of useful tools now available online, shouldn't be unfamiliar, unusual, or anachronistic for Africanist scholars. This is especially true for beginning researchers and anyone working outside his or her established area of expertise.

Electronic full-text, indexed or abstracted resources accessed at home and in the office are, of course, a great benefit to most researchers. They save us time, gas, and the inconvenience of multiple trips to the library as we rush to complete complex work on deadline. A vast and diverse array of online resources enriches our professional and everyday lives while enabling entirely new kinds of research. My own work and that of people I assist every day is enhanced by quick, easy access to scholarship via powerful web search engines, free library catalogs online, links to scanned books, subscription databases and electronic journals with hypertext-citations. While I'm not an early technology adopter, I advocate and promote the usefulness of a range of electronic tools and resources, especially as they begin to mature and become reliable for researchers in the fields I support.

It may be difficult to imagine that the solutions to all one's research problems aren't available online. This is especially true at any major academic university in the developed world, where it's likely that on behalf of faculty and students the library spends several million



dollars each year providing access to research resources and the tools to locate these effectively. However, it's worth reflecting on what might be lacking from connected computers, because print publications (old and new) are sometimes the best tools available despite the prevalence, convenience, and astonishing growth of electronic resources. Importantly, the disadvantages of relying solely on online searches (for scholarly research, especially in interdisciplinary or area studies fields) may remain hidden.

There is no single, comprehensive or best online index for all of African Studies. It's easy to overlook a standard work or an important set of foreign language sources within a web search engine's often overwhelmingly large number of returned results, the order of which are based on a fine-grained, full-text keyword analysis automatically sorted by "relevance."<sup>1</sup> Technical and proprietary issues can undermine online searches in purely scholarly tools too, as when an otherwise effective query appears to be conducted on scanned page images as displayed to the reader (e.g. in JSTOR), but which in fact is implemented on hidden plain text files that remain inaccessible to the end user and which are generated by notoriously error-prone optical character recognition (OCR) software. While some such problems may be effectively addressed in the future, others may persist for various reasons (including potential conflicts of interest in search engine companies' business models). In any case, scholarly standards require researchers to understand a defined aspect of the literature completely and with great confidence; it's incumbent on us to practice the most reliable methods available to assure adequate intellectual coverage and eliminate gaps in literature reviews and research writing.

Employing a library reference collection for searches, especially one that has been developed and managed with a focus on African Studies, is an important part of an effective, reliable and highly complementary overall strategy to the many available online search approaches. The value of reference materials "to find the best information quickly" is widely misunderstood and underappreciated (Mann 2005). It's a misconception that reference sources should simply find something factual on a particular topic. This former (always low level) function of library reference services now largely has been replaced by online tools, which generally is a good thing. The more important role of reference work in the scholarly research process has not at all diminished: with proper training and perhaps occasional professional guidance, a researcher can learn to identify the best quality information from reliable sources with great efficiency. Within one's own field of expertise such tools are not generally necessary. However, beginning scholars, non-specialists and advanced researchers outside of their area of expertise can all benefit greatly from the support provided by a specialist librarian or a high quality, printed reference guide and a good reference book collection. Relying on the expert guidance of an author such as John McIlwaine (Emeritus Professor of the Bibliography of Asia and Africa as well as the 1998 winner of the ASA's Conover-Porter Award for Excellence in Africana Reference) is a particularly good way to get started with a few of the best quality resources available.

Printed sources in specialized, financially risky markets such as reference publishing for African Studies are becoming scarce, while lucrative, large market, general resources proliferate online and on library shelves (Zell 2005). Can the purchase of such a specialized guide be justified (at a list price of \$260) in light of the convenience, popularity and general coverage of so many other reference tools? For any library with a modest African Studies collection or with

a reasonably large general reference section, McIlwaine's guide proves its worth beyond a doubt. It can serve multiple purposes for a range of users and will save readers time while guiding them quickly to some of the best information sources online and in library print collections.

The introduction to McIlwaine's guide is a valuable review of the publishing history of African Studies reference works. He offers a survey of essential sources and complementary works that itself could be used to create the foundation of a good reference collection. Several excellent internet guides are included (e.g. those of Karen Fung at Stanford, Yuusuf Caruso at Columbia and Peter Limb at Michigan State University), all admirably comprehensive, reliable starting points for specialized African Studies research on the web. A good reference guide such as this one also can be of great value in identifying "flagship collections" in unexpected places, hidden collections under one's own nose and archival resources available for interlibrary loan in microfilm format, allowing one to limit the need for expensive and time-consuming research trips to distant archives or libraries. It has further value as a checklist of resources to confirm coverage or to remind oneself of valuable standard sources online and in print.

The guide itself reflects McIlwaine's long and distinguished experience in the service of generations of researchers, developing and using some of the world's foremost collections for scholarship on Africa, Asia and British relations with these world areas. The preface and introduction clearly outline the guide's purpose, scope, coverage, goals and organization. Entries, arranged regionally and topically, then by author or title, frequently incorporate brief comments from independent reviews, traced to their sources in over 80 journals. It sets a very high standard indeed for future reference book authors.

Coverage is for sub-Saharan Africa from 1938 forward for non-arbitrary reasons clearly set forth but also to save space for material not covered in the first edition, which therefore remains valuable itself. Excluded from consideration are bibliographies, single language dictionaries, handbooks for specific organizations, compilations of laws and treaties, indexes and abstracts in favor of other reference sources. Included and considered are many statistical compilations, organizational directories, biographical sources, encyclopedias, historical dictionaries, atlases and gazetteers, handbooks and yearbooks, and a number of specific series such as those by the War Office and Admiralty of Britain and similar series from France and Germany. Unlike the preceding edition, sources on the biology, habitat, geology and earth sciences relating to Africa are included, with particular attention to flora and fauna. The organization is practical, convenient and logical, with excellent indexing, clear headings and multiple points of access making it a pleasure to browse while still providing quick access to authors and titles. There is no question in my mind that this will be a valuable addition to reference collections worldwide and will prove its value many times over even as online sources become even more prominent and available for African Studies researchers.

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## Notes

1. Relevance rankings are based on a search engine's proprietary, "black box" algorithm—another topic all together, but one that deeply concerns some writers, who question the commercial motives, scholarly appropriateness, language coverage and cultural sensitivities of the engine's software engineers and their corporate employers. For example, Meng (2008) notes "the conflict-of-interest inherent in Google's business model" and asks "are Google's customers really the individuals searching for information, or are they the advertisers who actually increase Google's revenues and stock value?"

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## **Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Consumerism. Jeremy Prestholdt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. 272 pp.**

This elegant investigation of consumption in Zanzibar in the nineteenth century deserves a wide audience among Africanists as well as readers interested in the politics and cultural tensions within consumption. Like so many other scholars, Prestholdt critiques facile understandings of "globalization". He notes how Western discussions of consumption abroad still rely uncritically to the racial and political hierarchies of the age of high imperialism, by contending that Europe and North America remain the standard by which others are ranked.

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v10/v10i2-3reviews.pdf>

Thankfully, he does not simply stop at that rather obvious point. Instead, he furnishes a holistic and creative set of approaches to understanding the social and cultural meanings and struggles embedded in Zanzibari and European discussions of consumption. His essays skillfully introduce a wide range of issues related to consumption that both reflect the state of the current literature and press research in new, exciting directions.

Several themes are particularly novel and important here. One subject that Prestholdt deals with in an apt and provocative way is the local understanding of Zanzibari consumption. Though a close reading of European accounts and nineteenth century Swahili poetry, the author contends that local people believed several aspects of an individual's personality could become enthralled by the need to acquire goods. Although obtaining foreign and local goods was seen as a key element in social success and a vital element in patronage, Zanzibaris also feared that desires to acquire goods to attain the dreams and fantasies of respectability that came with them could overwhelm right judgment. On the other hand, Zanzibaris derided the unwillingness of foreigners to perform their respectability through consumption, particularly different Indian communities. People thus had to walk a fine and constantly changing balance as they bought and used goods to display their taste.

The effects of Zanzibari consumption were felt far beyond East Africa. Much as David Richardson has noted the importance of West African consumption of imported goods for the British economy, Prestholdt traces out the changing fortunes of Indian and American companies who exported cloth to Zanzibar. Changing local tastes drove American and Indian companies to alter their merchandise and their methods of marketing. While Massachusetts firms struggled to retain their foothold over local cloth commerce between the 1840s and the American Civil War, Bombay-based textile mills gradually took over the Zanzibari market in the late nineteenth century. Local people could thus have a dramatic impact on production outside Africa, rather than being merely passive pawns in global flows of goods and money.

Another innovation in this study is how slavery and commoditization were intimately linked in nineteenth century Zanzibar. Prestholdt terms the symbolic subjection of slaves treated as objects that denoted the tastes and authority of their owners. Owners could impose their own narratives of backward and faceless chattel redeemed by civilized townspeople by renaming and redressing slaves. Colonial officials and missionaries claimed to be opponents of the horrors of the slave trade, but in reality, they also enjoyed providing names and outfits for Africans rescued from bondage. Some former slaves, such as David Livingstone's African associate Jacob Wainwright, adopted European tastes and dress through their travels in England, East Africa, and India.

Other topics covered are far more familiar. Rulers and ordinary people in mid-nineteenth century Zanzibar shared a taste for imported European goods and architectural styles with their counterparts in Egypt, Madagascar, Siam, Morocco, Hawaii, and other independent kingdoms. Since mobility was a crucial element of life for slaves, traders, clerics, and most other people living on the island, interest in foreign goods permeated through different social classes rather than remaining solely the purview of the powerful. However, these objects and styles reflected local understandings of global connections rather than acquiescence to the supposed innate superiority of European consumption patterns. Prestholdt coins the term *similitude* to describe how Comoros Island communities could try to develop bonds with visiting English ships

through consuming English goods, adopting English dress and manners, and through speaking English. This tactic succeeded in building a sense of solidarity between local people and the English particularly before the mid-nineteenth century. However, East African coastal consumption practices became by the mid-nineteenth century an object of scandal and mockery by English and other European visitors. By deeming local consumption of foreign goods a sign of "semi-civilization," they could present the region's negotiations with other parts of the world as a failure and a sign of African inferiority. Only Europeans could legitimately claim to be modern in their view. Such sentiments naturally fit with other justifications for colonial expansion. Historians have certainly treated the same issues in many parts of coastal West Africa, but the author does review them in a thorough way.

There are only a few minor complaints this reviewer can make here. One wishes this book had more clearly tied together internal debates over consumption with struggles over social status, as Jonathan Glassman and Laura Fair have done in *Zanzibar and the Tanzanian coast*. Perhaps Fair and Glassman's work led the author to believe these subjects had already been covered, but the agency of slaves and ordinary people at times fades from view. Indian-Zanzibari and Omani-Zanzibari connections do enter the discussion at times, but a further exploration of these links would have even further cemented the author's hopes of analyzing local understandings of global connections. Despite these quibbles, instructors of courses on imperialism, consumption, and African history for upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses should seriously consider using this book. It reads very well and addresses issues of critical theory in a very lucid manner. All in all, this is a major new contribution to the fields of African history and consumption.

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**An Economic History of South Africa: Conquest, Discrimination and Development. Charles Feinstein. London: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 326 pp.**

This book seeks to "...provide a broad overview of the character, transformation, initial growth, and final decline of South Africa's economy, and an interpretation of the major factors that explain these developments" (p. xviii). It does not contain original research, but rather aspires to be a synthesis of information already in existence. If I remember correctly, it was Harrison White who thanked his professional colleagues in the "Acknowledgments" section of his *Identity and Control* by stating that all ideas are already present in networks from which we borrow, thus legitimizing once again the important role of "synthesizers" in social science. Feinstein's synthesis is astonishing and of high quality, and the book's main arguments are skillfully argued.

The author first makes observations about South Africa's economy in an international context. Most notably, growth in South Africa appears to have been slow up to 1870; from 1870 to 1913, there was "...the early development of globalization," with expansion and prosperity

throughout the world economy; from 1913 to 1950, the world economy fared poorly, though South Africa did well through the 1930s gold boom and during World War II; 1950 to 1973 was a "...golden age' of dynamic growth"; from 1973 to 1994, there was a general decline in economic performance, and South Africa shared in the "stagflation" (pp. 4, 7). It should be noted that there was quite extreme income inequality between whites and blacks during these periods.

"A strategy of conquest and disposition was pursued energetically by both Dutch and British settlers..." (p. 34). White farmers, the British government, and from the 1870s on, mine-owners, though divided over many issues, were united in their suppression of independent African polities as a means to achieve their objectives. To illustrate this, the author next provides a detailed look at the case of the Pedi, a Sotho-speaking tribe in northeastern Transvaal that clashed with the Boers and later the British, in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The author next considers the use of African labor by whites in more detail. African labor on white-owned farms took four forms: (1) rent tenancy, whereby whites with too much land rented the land to Africans; (2) sharecropping, in which Africans were allowed use of land and a place to live in return for half or more of their crop; (3) labor tenancy, in which Africans agreed to provide a given amount of labor in return for housing accommodations and a small plot to cultivate for themselves; and (4) wage labor, which was extremely popular by the 1930s and predominant after World War II. Employment in mines started to pose serious competition with agriculture for labor by 1890. The mining industry wielded much power over workers, through a system of fixed-term contracts, penal sanctions imposed on workers that broke such contracts, and controlled compounds where workers would live for the duration of their employment. Although initially high, wages became rather low with little recourse by workers, as the industry sought profit.

Discrimination by color had been present since the beginning of the colony, but the explicit use of discrimination did not take place until the mining boom. The national government first did so in 1911 through the Mines and Works Act. The Act was intended to regulate mines for safety purposes, but the government took advantage of it to impose color bars, the "...fundamental reason for [which was]...the desire of white miners to protect their jobs and their very large income differentials" (p. 75). Specific lists were created of skilled trades and occupations reserved for Europeans, including mining specific occupations as well as generic trades required for the repair and maintenance of equipment and buildings. However, conflict arose: due to the gold standard, mines received a fixed price for gold, and thus could only profit by managing expenses. Because Africans were paid low wages, the mining industry had an incentive to allow Africans to participate in white semi-skilled and skilled work. Needless to say, white workers sought to maintain their privileged position, and there were a series of white union organized strikes. Major strikes occurred in 1913, 1914, and 1922.

The role of the country's natural resources in its economic development (from the 1860s on) must be considered. Unlike other areas that depend upon the export of minerals for growth, South Africa was successful in exploiting, most importantly, its gold, and its diamond resources to promote general growth. The author describes the character and expansion of the mining industry in detail, but it suffices to note here that both the gold and diamond industries grew rapidly upon the discovery of the minerals, and that production was concentrated in the hands

of a few large companies. It was not long until agriculture was dwarfed by these industries in terms of exports.

Later on, manufacturing would become more important for the economy. Ever since the colony's founding, there was almost no domestic manufacturing industry. Despite a brief pickup in activity during WWI, the industry did not experience sustained growth until 1924. In this pivotal year, the government decided it was in the country's interest to diversify beyond the "wasting asset" of minerals and into manufacturing. Protective tariffs were imposed, and the government set up and owned an electric and a steel company, thus ensuring the requisites for a mature industrialization. The state also owned the railways. The results were generally successful, as specifically detailed by the author (p. 126).

Next the author considers the country's economic performance from after World War II to 1994. The performance from 1950 to 1973 was decent, with a 2.2 percent per annum growth in real GDP and about 3 percent in labor productivity. Mining continued its strength during this period due to the discovery of new gold mines, an increase in the price of gold, and a new demand for uranium. Manufacturing, too, was strong with the help of foreign investors and the demand from the mining industry, though dependence on government protection and assistance remained. A financial sector developed alongside these industries. Finally, commercial agriculture was able to improve its efficiency from the mid 1960s through increased mechanization. However, subsistence farming in the reserves showed no improvement, and South African farming was still sub-par by international standards. The author discusses each of these topics individually in more detail.

The period of stagflation in the early 1970s affected South Africa severely; in fact, real GDP per capita growth was -0.6 percent from the period 1973 to 1994. Other problems included soaring inflation, high unemployment, and a balance of payments problem caused by foreign aversion to the country's apartheid policy. There are three main economic explanations for the country's decline during this period. First, there was the impact of gold. The richest gold mines by this time were becoming exhausted. Additionally, gold had lost its special place in the international monetary system with the demise of the gold standard, and prices started to plunge in the 1980s. The second cause is "...a succession of adverse external economic and political changes" (p. 202). This included a worldwide slow-down in growth from the prior "golden age," a surge in oil prices that created inflation, and a weakening exchange rate that made it harder for manufacturers to export. Finally, the low efficiency and high costs of production in the industrial sector became more significant as the country increasingly relied on this part of the economy to drive growth.

International hostility to apartheid was also starting to cause problems for South Africa. Apartheid as a policy, involving the subjugation of blacks, was implemented in 1948 when the National Party won elections. The party pursued a policy of reversing African urbanization, which, despite the efforts of earlier governments to control it, had proceeded. Of course, such a policy would empower white domination, but it ran afoul of the needs of industrialization. "The government relied primarily on enforcement of an elaborate set of laws and procedures..." to this end, which in part involved non-whites carrying passes which restricted their movement (p. 154). "At the core of the apartheid system was a colossal bureaucratic apparatus of influx controls and labour bureaux, backed up by the oppressive powers of the police" (Feinstein,

2005; 154). The government spoke of a plan to encourage socioeconomic development in the "homelands" (reserves), though nothing much came of this. Africans were further suppressed through these measures: blacks were prevented by law from striking, and were excluded from collective bargaining with their employers; further legislation was enacted to displace blacks from more categories of jobs, so that these could be reserved for whites; and African education was taken over by the national government in 1953, offering a sub-par education designed to prevent competition with whites. The government at the time maintained that apartheid was a system that would encourage economic growth and one that was in the Africans' best interests. However, there was considerable debate and dissent from this view among whites.

Criticism of South Africa's apartheid policy started to gain traction in the mid-1980s. In 1985 and 1986 the European Community, the Commonwealth, the United States, the United Kingdom, and other governments voted to ban trade with South Africa in many products. "Restrictions or bans were also placed on government and bank loans to South Africa and on private investment" (p. 224). A general level of political hostility also made it difficult for South African exporters looking to expand into new markets. The author states that although the trade sanctions had only minor effects, the financial sanctions were much more damaging. Changes in the labor market also put pressure on the economy. Black labor unrest spilled into strikes in 1972, 1973, and 1974. Blacks eventually achieved large real raises in their income, greater than the rate of productivity growth per worker. The policy of job reservation was also being eroded, and the black labor participation rate increased. All of these factors, in addition to a dismal GDP growth rate and the obviolation of labor by capital, led to high rates of unemployment.

The author finally describes the demise of apartheid. The government started a gradual retreat from the policy in the 1970s when its economic cost became more apparent. A commission was established in 1977 to look into labor reforms. It recommended that Africans be allowed to unionize, that job reservation be abolished, "pass laws" be eliminated, and an increased focus on African education and training. These policies were in fact phased in over time, though education, while improving, remained inferior to that received by whites. "By 1986 many of apartheid's major economic institutions and policies had been dismantled," thought blacks still were "...denied access to decision making over all aspects of economic" and political life (p. 244). The country finally transitioned to a non-racial democracy in 1994.

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**States of Violence: Politics, Youth, and Memory in Contemporary Africa. Edna G. Ray and Donald L. Donham, eds. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press. 268 pp.**

Watching a documentary on the siege of Leningrad, a friend (of African descent) muttered to me during a particularly lethal battle, "Would you look at those Europeans? They're worse



than Africans!" The popular myth that Africans are brutally tribalistic surely is a legacy of European stereotypes of the "savage" in need of "civilization" (and, of course, colonization). "Hotel Rwanda," "Blood Diamonds," and "Last King of Scotland" all depict Africa to Western movie-goers as a site of extraordinary cruelty. Charles Taylor's alleged cannibalism, pre-pubescent child soldiers slaughtering their parents, mass rape in Central Africa, torched huts in Darfur, election warfare in Kenya and Zimbabwe, and al-Qaeda operatives plotting catastrophe are the footage of Africa that appears on Western television (if Africa appears at all). These have not helped to improve Africa's vicious image. However, as the World Wars, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and forced labor under European colonialism evidenced, Africans do not hold a monopoly on inflicting massive violence.

The goal of the edited volume *States of Violence: Politics, Youth, and Memory in Contemporary Africa* is to explore the tragedy of violence in contemporary Africa. For decades in some regions and centuries in others, Africans fought – and eventually won – the wars of liberation. Now that Africa is free, why do one-third of all the current wars in the world take place there? To answer this question, political scientists such as myself might begin with the international level of analysis. The contributors to *States of Violence* are overwhelmingly anthropologists, however, and instead they employ a micro-level, ethnographic approach. Most importantly, they astutely sidestep the problem of whether a particular episode of African violence is political and instead focus upon the relationship of the state to such violence.

Much more common in the post-Cold War era than conventional wars are low-intensity, identity-group conflicts between or among a hodgepodge of actors, varying from armies to thugs. Examples of this politically ambiguous violence in *States of Violence* include teen gangs in the Western Cape and vigilante youth groups in Nigeria. It is not always clear whether such violence is an expression of political or personal animosity. Nor is it clear whether the motivation for the violence is advancement of the ethnic group, or merely self-enrichment. The distinction between crime and political violence becomes blurry. A strength of this volume, *States of Violence*, is that it tackles the complicated interplay of today's micro- and macro-level violence.

The editors had an unenviable task of collating wildly different subjects and genres into one volume and should be commended for the effort. "Mau Mau" (liberation fighters in colonial Kenya) is the image that introduces the volume, but I am not sure why or how well it works. The chapters in *States of Violence* were originally conference papers and are disjointed stylistically and substantively. Some of the authors write in abstract jargon and other authors write crisply. Some chapters draw from long periods of field research; the descriptions of Zimbabwe veterans and neighborhood relations in Guinea-Bissau are especially strong. The provocative chapter on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission clearly involved over a decade of research (and participation) by the author. Three books would probably not do justice to her findings, much less one chapter. However, some of the authors rely exclusively on archival sources and some appear to use no data at all. A few authors "read" suffering as "text," as in literary criticism, which left me uneasy both methodologically and morally.

The uniting themes of "memory" and "youth" that the title promises appear inconsistently. Not every chapter directly addresses youth and not every chapter directly addresses memory. Additionally, as the editors themselves admit, the case selection is peculiar. Of the eight

empirical chapters, two are on Sierra Leone and two are on South Africa. With exception of Rwanda, there are no case studies of Central Africa, East Africa, the Horn or North Africa. Surely there has not been an absence of violence in these regions to study.

One trait common to all these disparate pieces, however, is that none of the research involves quantitative methods. The work stands as a refreshing contrast and complement to the plethora of statistical investigations of conflict that already exist. Moreover, the individual topics that appear in this volume are not ones that have already received excessive scrutiny.

Different chapters of *States of Violence* will appeal to social scientists who research the specific communities described therein. It is quite possible that conflict scholars in general will find the ethnographic approach of this volume interesting (for instance, the chapter on gangs in South Africa would be a useful comparison with gangs on other continents). It would be an unlikely choice for a textbook in an African Studies course because there is too much emphasis on two regions of Africa at the expense of the rest.

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**Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals: Power, Practice and Performance in the South African Rural Periphery. Patrick A. McAllister. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2006. 355 pp.**

Patrick McAllister's latest book draws on over twenty years of fieldwork in South Africa and brings together the fruits of a long publishing career on Xhosa ritual, oratory, and beer. *Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals: Power, Practice and Performance in the South African Rural Periphery* is a compilation of participant-observation ethnographies that convincingly demonstrates the social significance inherent in Xhosa beer drinking rituals. Through an analysis of the preparations and practices of beer drinks, with special attention to the content and pattern of speech and performance during the rituals, McAllister successfully presents Xhosa beer drinking rituals as an index of Xhosa speakers' simultaneous cultural adaptation and resistance to colonization and postcolonial apartheid experience.

Originally charged with uncovering the connection between labor migration and rural life among the Xhosa during the twentieth century, McAllister's research grew from the work of Philip Mayer (for whom he was an assistant in the 1970s) and led to questions about the Xhosa's preservation of rural tradition in an increasingly urban and capitalist South Africa. These considerations of tradition and cultural independence in the climate of colonialism and apartheid illuminate the importance and complexity of ritual and recreation, specifically beer drinks.

*Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals* argues that the transition from primarily rural agrarian work to urban wage labor effected a transition from a kin- to community-based economy for Xhosa speakers. These economic changes were reflected in cultural practices as well. McAllister identifies the prevalence of large communal beer drinking rituals over smaller, family-based animal killing rituals, since the beginning of colonization. Therefore, beer drinks were and are

not static cultural practices; rather they continually change and improvise to meet present conditions. Thus McAllister posits the significance of beer drinks as a gauge of Xhosa cultural reaction and meaning.

McAllister reminds the reader that the beer drinks he found so common during his fieldwork were far less prominent before the colonial era. He finds the shrinking size of homesteads, caused by compounding factors of land shortages, migrant labor and disease, coincided with a changing agricultural focus from sorghum to maize that demanded brief but labor intensive periods of harvesting and clearing. These factors all led to a community-based economy requiring cooperation to complete tasks, and often engendering remuneration for the help of neighbors. In this context, beer brewed from excess maize was more available, and communal beer drinks as compensation for community labor were more frequent. Eventually, then, McAllister argues that beer drinks came to reinforce a kind of “traditional” significance in a relatively new Xhosa lifestyle.

One particular form of beer drinking ritual is posited as a lens to view the Xhosa reaction to colonialism and urbanization. McAllister uses the *umsindleko*—a beer drink celebrating the return of migrant workers—to demonstrate that Xhosa speakers both accepted the necessity of their young men sojourning for wage labor in urban centers and yet resisted urban, colonial, and capitalist invasions into traditional, rural, Xhosa culture. To McAllister, the celebration of migrant laborers safe return to the village in a traditional forum is a hidden transcript of the Xhosa; he argues that it is the resistance of colonial and urban domination by protecting, even while refining, the rural habitus which signify an independent Xhosa culture manifested in beer drinking rituals.

By revealing the beer drink as both a vehicle of cultural change as well as a symbol of cultural tradition, *Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals* is important for a reconsideration of Xhosa speakers’ adaptation to colonization and apartheid. But the choice of subject—beer—as a source of autonomous culture, also marks significant scholarly contribution. The sympathetic description of Xhosa beer drinks forms a counter-narrative to the body of literature on alcohol in Africa, which has predominantly associated a rise in the use of alcohol during the colonial period with socially destructive habits. McAllister’s book emphasizes that the process of ritual is more important than the product of beer. This presents a more general challenge to western epistemology which tends to privilege the text at the expense of the spoken word, and thus often excludes the importance of the ritual of speech that McAllister suggests is the most important source for analyzing the trajectory of the ritual.

The wealth of McAllister’s first hand accounts and original photographs personalize his series of narratives and make for an engaging read. However, *Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals* is most valuable for specialists in the fields of African anthropology, sociology, and cultural history, who will take interest in the evolution of McAllister’s research and conclusions, and appreciate his interaction with noted scholars and theorists such as Mayer, Mary Douglas and Pierre Bourdieu. Although the relatively sparse documentation in endnotes will not be of great help for graduate students crafting research agendas, *Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals* will certainly stimulate discussion in graduate seminars surrounding the subjects and methods of researching indigenous African experiences in the colonial and postcolonial eras.

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**Dreams of Africa in Alabama: The Slave Ship *Clotilda* and the Story of the Last Africans Brought to America.** Sylviane A. Diouf. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. 340 pp.

In July 1860, the schooner *Clotilda* carried to Mobile, Alabama, the last African slaves imported into the United States. Sylviane Diouf carefully reconstructs the experiences of the 110 captives from their origins in Dahomey to their life on the outskirts of Mobile. Half were women. Half were under fifteen years old. Through an impressive study combining a historian's analysis of archival and published sources with an anthropologist's fieldwork in Africa and Alabama, Diouf provides a narrative of the *Clotilda* Africans and an insightful discourse on race within the United States.

Diouf begins with a rich description of conditions along the Bight of Benin and in the American South. As sectional tensions heightened and as rising slave prices generated class fissures among white southerners, voices calling for resumption of the international slave trade, closed in the United States since 1808, grew louder. Illegal importation likely brought thousands into bondage each decade of the antebellum period, particularly through the Republic of Texas and along the Gulf Coast. The trade persisted through a combination, according to Diouf, of "Southern justice, Northern complicity, and Federal apathy" (p. 23). Nevertheless, a federal crackdown after the seizure of the *Wanderer's* over 200 captives in 1858 inspired Mobile slaveholder Timothy Meaher to import a shipment of Africans on principle. Involved in economic enterprises ranging from shipbuilding to cotton cultivation, Meaher arranged for Captain William Foster to sail to Dahomey. British efforts to foster palm oil production and wean the Dahomey economy from the profitable international slave trade in the early 1850s actually increased the domestic trade. By the late 1850s, King Ghezo, lured by Napoleon III's "free immigrants" scheme in Martinique and Guadeloupe, the resurgence of the Cuban slave trade, and American slaveholders' smuggling efforts, openly resumed the trade. Diouf reminds readers of the international similarities of these slave societies, noting for instance how slaveholders used threats of sale – from being sold "down the river" in the United States to being sold overseas in Africa – to maintain stability. Furthermore, both African and European societies shared a sense of cultural superiority, considering the other ugly and cannibalistic.

Particularly striking is Diouf's revelation that the *Clotilda* Africans occupied an often overlooked racial middle ground in the United States. The Africans, arriving when only one percent of American slaves recalled an African ancestor, struggled against perceptions of their primitiveness. Naked as they stepped from the *Clotilda* (a practice meant to reduce filth during a voyage that averaged 45 days and on which temperatures below deck could reach 130°), they adapted clothing given by their masters into African garb, such as using shirts as baggy pants. Whites and African Americans frequently ridiculed the *Clotilda* Africans, many of whom bore symbols of seemingly barbaric traditions such as ritual scarring and filed teeth. With emancipation, the Africans – in a pattern similar to ethnic immigrants later in the century –

pooled resources, bought land, and developed an enclave called African Town north of Mobile. Diouf meticulously scans conflictive evidence to identify the locations from which these slaves came. As Diouf demonstrates, local customs formed their ethnic identities and contributed to the creation of their new pan-ethnic identity in Alabama. Diouf astutely notes that the slave trade produced a "tragic succession of separations" that united – whether in the pens of Ouidah, the hold of a ship, or the Alabama plantations – diverse individuals facing uncertain futures (p. 58). These Africans "used their Africanity as a cement transcending cultural differences" even while "to outsiders, they were all the same, Africans, with the negative connotations the term often implied" (p. 156). African Town, for example, was surrounded by a fence with eight gates as traditionally appeared in towns from which most of them came. They replicated their homeland by selecting a community leader, judges, and laws. Here they created the first African community in the United States since the maroon colonies of the seventeenth century, a place that "was a black town on the surface and an ethnic one at its core" (p. 156). Suspicion of the Africans by neighboring blacks encouraged community cohesion. Yet "their very Africanity played in their favor" as whites and blacks perceived them as "'heathens,' savages, most likely cannibals, whose reactions one could not predict and should fear" (p. 101). Such trepidation in others was reinforced by the Africans' strong sense of community which allowed them on several occasions to usurp white supremacy and African American codes of conduct. Whites tread lightly around the "novel situation" of having a cohesive group of Africans in their midst (p. 101). Likewise, the Africans looked with suspicion on African Americans given African constructions of race which identified lighter skinned blacks with whites. The Africans, in turn, informed white officials of activities within surrounding black districts, thereby gaining valuable allies within white society.

Diouf's work skillfully blends established scholarship into her analysis, situating the *Clotilda* Africans in their transatlantic world. The story is one of cultural survival and transition. Members of the community enlisted in the Federal army during the Civil War, supported organizations seeking pensions for former slaves, sued railroads, and survived the convict-lease system. By the time Cudjo Lewis, the last survivor of the community, died in 1935, the *Clotilda* Africans had inspired numerous stories and even investigative visits by author Zora Neale Hurston, among others. Mobile absorbed African Town in 1948, yet numerous descendents remain, promoting their unique history. Although Diouf largely focuses on the *Clotilda* Africans, her study calls for more attention to these subsequent generations and their transformation into African Americans. African American perceptions of these Africans deserve more examination as well. Nevertheless, by restoring ethnicity to the discussion of black America, certainly a timely issue given the rise of Barack Obama, Diouf provides a stimulating account not only of the last slaves to arrive in the United States but also of the meaning of race in America. Her book suggests numerous launching points for further research. In the meantime, Diouf's highly accessible study will certainly stimulate intense discussion among academics, students, and, hopefully, Americans in general.

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**Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760-1900. Kristin Mann. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007. 473 pp.**

Professor Mann is a well known scholar across the Atlantic. Her latest volume about Lagos (Nigeria) is no doubt a meaningful contribution to scholarship. The uniqueness of her latest study is its clarity, succinctness, and lucidness. Grounded in facts and knowledge of existing literature in the field, Mann set out to re-explore areas studied by leading scholars such as Robin Law, Sandra Barnes, Pauline Baker and Martin Lynn to mention a few. Mann's work is both rich in oral and archival sources collected over a decade in Nigeria, England, and the United States of America. These sources are meticulously woven with secondary sources in the field. Although she could be regarded as one of the pioneers of serious scholarly study of Lagos and its environs, she nonetheless presents a detailed historiographical analysis of the state of knowledge.

This made it easy to read and comprehend *Slavery and the birth of an African city*. Mann introduced a unique angle in analyzing the causes and consequences of the trans-Atlantic slave trade; the post-abolition period – emphasizing transition from slave procurement to trade in palm kernel – linking the narrative of international slave markets to those of the regional suppliers and slave dealers. She vividly shows how Lagos was transformed from a satellite of the Benin Kingdom into a wealthy and successful town. The introduction of international slave trade and its profitability was significant in this transformation. Mann tells readers how the traditional ruling class and peoples of Lagos adapted to the new situation and how wealth transformed social stratification and class in Lagos.

The book is instructive in that she was very meticulous in her documentation of sources and demonstrates her familiarity with local idioms and customs – an outcome of her momentary residency in Lagos and continuous relationship with Lagosians since 1970. She paints a vivid picture of central characters, both local and foreign, in emergent urban Lagos before the beginning of the twentieth century. Further, the book organization is unambiguous and allows the reader to easily comprehend issues and events to be discussed. It is well sequenced, and clearly outlined for all readers. Divided into eight chapters, Mann focused on three main questions – how the slave trade was conducted, who profited from it; and what those who benefited did with their new income. Her answers to these questions illuminate readers' knowledge about the complex nature of the trade – slave trade and the trade in palm kernel that followed in post-abolition era.

Generally, the work detailed the role of the upper and lower class; the rich and the poor; the leaders and the followers. But more importantly, it chronicled how Lagosians adapted and responded to the new way of life – “Legitimate Commerce” and the “New Lords” (British). Her assertion that Lagosians were not passive is rooted in evidence – and the objective interpretation of the evidence; this is a challenge to Eurocentric views about the nature and dimension of the Atlantic trade and general Euro-African encounter that gave birth to colonialism

Despite few typos and spelling errors, the book is a lucid historical narrative detailing events, issues, and personalities that contributed to emergent urban Lagos. Perhaps the period

covered and the title should reflect 1603 to 1900 instead of 1760-1900. The reason is that earliest history of Lagos can now be conveniently date to 1603 as Mann would agree. The period 1760-1800s remained a watershed in the trans-formation of Lagos and that she adequately elaborated to readers. This is indeed the African side of the events eloquently told by a Caucasian, who other than the color of her skin, can be referred to as an honorary Lagosian.

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**The Silence of Great Zimbabwe: Contested Landscapes and the Power of Heritage. Joost Fontein. New York, NY: UCL Press, 2006. 246 pp.**

In *The Silence of Great Zimbabwe* Joost Fontein fashions a learned narrative about contested heritage. Working in Masvingo District in southern Zimbabwe, where the Nemanwa, Charumbira, and Mugabe clans reside, he charts the alienation of African associations and expressions bound to contemporary Great Zimbabwe. Palpable disenchantment among African communities, each with their own contingent historical representations of the place, derives from interpretive violence to the site. By unmasking the dynamics of the “silence of unrepresented pasts” and the “silence of anger,” the author hopes that the voices of the countryside might once again be heard and appreciated, reestablishing the sacredness of Great Zimbabwe and its multiple significances.

Rosemary Joyce elsewhere laments that archaeologists often speak for communities, usurping local agency. Fontein escapes this critique by fulsomely engaging Zimbabweans and quoting passages from local (frequently oral) texts that empower and enrich his narrative. To capture competing historical perspectives and document as yet “unrepresented pasts,” in the first half of his text the author draws on the “performances” of local chiefs, village leaders, respected elders, and spirit mediums, among others. Each, he argues, articulates a past whose legitimacy is couched in the authenticity of their “performance of the past”: an ability to “perform their narratives and social roles” in line with local standards (p. 41). In this manner, Fontein demonstrates the crucial role of individuals and social groups in making pasts as well as the dynamic nature of interacting voices and negotiated histories at Great Zimbabwe. As a place alive with history, its pasts are regularly remade, as his presented historiography outlines. Fontein’s study exemplifies ethnographic archaeology: practice that employs ethnography to explore the social dimensions of archaeology’s own enterprise. To reflect on archaeologists’ roles in silencing pasts of local genesis, the author details how colonial antiquarians with prevailing racial attitudes, such as Carl Mauch, distanced Zimbabweans and their perspectives by claiming a foreign, non-African origin for Great Zimbabwe. Moreover, and certainly more novel, Fontein impugns professional archaeologists for appropriating knowledge of the past at the site and hindering multivocal accounts. The ‘objective’ renderings of archaeologists, asserts

Fontein, are rooted in claims of “professionalism” that do “symbolic violence” to other ways of knowing (p. 12). By locating the principal problematic of Great Zimbabwe in its origin rather than in the memories constitutive of the place’s shifting importance through time, but especially in the present, archaeologists dismiss as inapplicable local Zimbabwean experiences and expressions.

In the second half of the volume, the author contends that archaeology, rooted in Enlightenment notions of time as linear and progressive, plays a pivotal role in producing the “silence of anger” penetrating Great Zimbabwe. As residents attest, the absence of sacred voices and everyday sounds once perceived to emanate from the surrounding landscape marks the site as desecrated. The author demonstrates that linear narratives, in contrast to local memories, view the past as increasingly distant, robbing the site of its historicity. But, Zimbabweans not only constitute pasts “through a sense of place,” memories, traditions, and ancestors, but “[P]lace itself, and what should be done with it, is perceived, imagined and constructed through a sense of its past” (p. 78). Herein Fontein identifies a primary significance of local historical renderings that disturbs the historical treatments and heritage plans of archaeologists and historians alike. Shared discursive and spatial landscapes at Great Zimbabwe interact with other political and politicized discourses of scale. Using documentary and other materials, including those from Zimbabwean archives and UNESCO headquarters in Paris, the author interrogates the power struggles of competing stakeholders that spawned the “silence of anger.” Fontein finds that the post-independence Zimbabwean state, too, marginalized perspectives of local clans, most strikingly through its association with international institutions promoting world heritage. Drawing from Partha Chatterjee’s theories of the postcolonial state, he explains that the independence movement, by seeking to escape from colonial Rhodesian mythologies about Great Zimbabwe, placed faith in European modernization, the very state model that reinforced western notions of time and ‘objectivity’ that legitimated archaeology while undervaluing local “performances of the past” (e.g., pp. 132-133). Fontein casts this maneuver as the “anti-politics of world heritage” (p. 188). In effect, internationalism de-politicizes claims to the “universal value” of Great Zimbabwe which further entrenches the authority of the state and “professional” interpretations of the monument.

This thoughtful volume of ten chapters (with numerous black and white images) is theoretically informed and readable. Instructors and students of archaeology, heritage studies, African history, and postcolonial studies will find much worthwhile in its pages. By valuing and enlisting Zimbabwean perspectives, Fontein critically assesses the actions, memories, and words surrounding the contested landscape of Masvingo District. The author overcomes what anthropologist Sherry Ortner labels “ethnographic refusal” by tailoring a genuinely multi-vocal account in which the historical representations of groups and influences of stakeholders find meaning in relation to one another.

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