

African Studies Quarterly
Volume 8, Issue 1
Fall 2004

Book Reviews

Theory, Change, and Southern Africa's Future. Peter Vale, Larry A. Swatuk, and Bertil Oden, eds. New York: Palgrave, 2001. 300 pp.

An edited volume where the different authors openly criticize each other's contributions is something one does not often see. This makes *Theory, Change and Southern Africa's Future* an interesting and refreshing book. A thorough intellectual exercise, the book's eleven contributors each elaborate on a specific International Relations (IR)-related theoretical or conceptual stance and use this to describe and analyze the Southern African region and regionalization process. Although there is no single thread in the book, the editors do make two overall claims besides contributing to a dialogue on IR-theory related to the Southern Africa region. The first one stresses the importance of inter-paradigm debate with respect to the 'grand old IR theories' such as realism, pluralism and globalism. The second concerns a desire "to go beyond the discipline in the direction of a more self-conscious, and holistic social theory, one which extends both beyond and below the purview of mainstream IR" (p.14).

These claims make Hussein Solomon's task of defending realism all the more treacherous. Solomon's contribution has clearly been put in the beginning of the volume to serve as a red rag for the other contributors, although he does defend realism with vigor and conviction. The chapter serves its purpose: almost all subsequent chapters criticize elements of realism, often referring to Solomon's chapter, and in the end leave no doubt about the many weak spots of realism. Björn Hettne, writing on new regionalism, is the first to seriously challenge the explanatory value of realism with respect to Southern Africa. Taking security as the dominant regional issue, Hettne argues that an emphasis on formal regional organizations, including SADC and the states in Southern Africa, leads to a focus on the wrong actors in understanding the "actual patterns of the regionalization process" (p.107).

Bertil Odén, dealing with South African hegemony, tries to broaden the theoretical scope away from the classic inter-paradigm IR debate. Not so much using a specific theoretical perspective but based more on conceptual notions of hegemony, Odén identifies and discusses five objectives to a South African hegemonic regime in the region. His conclusion is that a benevolent South African hegemony does not have to be negative for the regionalization process going on in Southern Africa, but only if it is contained in a cooperative regionalization framework (p.190). Andre du Pisani follows in the same fashion, dealing with regime theory. After a rather short investigation into the meaning and premises of regime theory, he directly relates it to Southern Africa – unlike many others in the volume - and does so in quite a

structured and elaborate way. Du Pisani concludes that SADC could become one of the more robust regional regimes in Africa, but only if it makes clear political and governance choices for the future, acceptable to all different actors and stakeholders involved.

Theory and Southern Africa's reality are not always very well linked in the book. This is clearly shown in Lisa Thompson's chapter on feminism. In itself a good overview of feminist theory, Thompson does not seem to be able to give it a very relevant practical application when it comes to Southern Africa. Other than the point that SADC and its member states are characterized by standard gendered (i.e. male-dominated) patterns and the classic political and governance emphases on security and militarism that follow from this, she solely focuses on criticizing realism. The last chapter by Larry A. Swatuk deals with green political theory and ecology. Through these 'green lenses' and with an emphasis on environmental security, Swatuk comes to the same conclusion as earlier chapters: "State-centered thinking and approaches to resource management and environmental security cannot solve problems in a region where the state itself is a fundamental part of the problem" (p.287). He presents this as an overall conclusion for the whole volume, but this does not really suffice.

What remains lacking after this last chapter is some kind of concluding critical reflection of the theories used, leading to the so desired "more self-conscious, and holistic social theory." Each author seems to be a fervent proponent of the theory she or he uses and no concluding chapter is given in which different strains are tied together in order to address the second claim made in the introduction. Chapter 2 by Peter Vale on Southern Africa's search for theory, in some respect tries to fulfill this overarching aim. Although the chapter in itself is very useful in giving an introductory theoretical overview, it can not fulfill this claim since, due to its place in the volume, it is not written to be a retrospective theoretical summary making use of hindsight and acquired knowledge. The volume could have significantly gained in theoretical importance if this had been done. One would then feel there is, besides an obvious beginning, also a clear ending to the book.

A second point of criticism concerns the focus on Southern Africa. Because the different contributors are so concerned with defending 'their' theoretical framework, it sometimes tends to become a tight straightjacket, whereby it appears difficult to bring Southern Africa into the picture. Chapters 3, 6, 10 and 11 on realism, international political economy, critical theory and feminist theory are examples in this regard. Despite these two points of critique, this book is well worth reading for everyone interested in theories in International Relations in general and students of (Southern) Africa from different disciplines, but with an interest in international or regional issues, in particular. Potentially it could even be used as a course textbook for graduates in IR, political science, sociology or development and Africa studies. It provides plenty of food for thought and does give an overview of important theoretical and conceptual directions in IR, directed towards Southern Africa.

Bram Büscher

Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

The Great Lakes of Africa : Two Thousand Years of History . Jean-Pierre Chrétien (translated by Scott Straus). New York : Zone Books, 2003. 503 pp.

In reviewing a five hundred page book that claims to cover two thousand years of history, it is important to lay out some initial parameters. Most importantly, there should be no easy shots taken. For example, it would be unfair to harp on what Jean-Pierre Chrétien skims over. He simplifies a great deal of very complicated information. In one sentence, he will note the significance of sleeping sickness control within the colonial project (a subject that Kirk A. Hoppe explores in *Lords of the Fly* [Praeger, 2003]). Chrétien occasionally glosses over some historical debates-- he has to. He is trying to cover two thousands years of history in a region where people continue to violently contest the meanings and make-up of those narratives. This is difficult and contentious terrain to cover. Any knowledgeable reader will undoubtedly find sections of this historical survey frustrating because of its omissions and simplifications. But such criticisms are both too easy and simply unfair.

In his preface, Jean-Pierre Chrétien establishes the book's objective: "to offer a synthesis of research contributions from various sources (9)." Thus, Chrétien's fairly modest goal is to take stock of existing knowledge regarding the history of the interlacustrine region. It should be noted that Chrétien openly acknowledges that he is attempting to re-balance the regional focus by providing equal (and occasionally greater) attention to the northwest corner of contemporary Tanzania and the Kivu provinces of the Congo -- areas that have often received short shrift in other histories of the region. This more balanced regional focus is certainly one of the book's strengths. Another strength is Chrétien's impressive familiarity with a wide range of historical sources. In the end, Chrétien offers a history that manages to avoid the pitfalls of simplistic and propagandistic historical narratives of the region. Rather than providing a tale of the "natural" progression of the region, Chrétien offers a nuanced narrative of the ruptures and contradictions of political, economic, and social life in the region over the past two millennium.

Chrétien divides the book into five chapters. The first focuses on ancient human settlements in the region. Chrétien deftly explores and navigates the ideologically-laden narratives of "Bantu agriculturalists" and "Nilo-Hamitic pastoralists" and the supposed timeless socio-ethnic cleavages between the two. The second chapter examines the emergence of kingdoms in the region. Particularly interesting in this chapter is Chrétien's treatment of the foundational myths of various kingships. Chrétien also provides an exploration of the roles of ritual and religion in the foundation of the regional kingdoms. Chapter Three examines the formation of regional monarchical states, with an interesting discussion of the role of ecological control. The fourth chapter focuses on European intrusion and the establishment of colonial control in the region. Chrétien's discussion in this chapter is particularly nuanced, as he explores the fragmented, complex, and occasionally contradictory colonial practices enacted upon the region. His discussion of the reconstruction of tradition -- by both colonial agents and African elites -- is quite well done. This is also the longest of the chapters. I only mention that because I feel the final chapter suffers from being too brief (half as long as the previous chapter). This final chapter deals with independence and the post-colonial experience. Insightfully, Chrétien titles this chapter "Regained Independence and the Obsession with Genocide," as the shadow of genocide -- both real and imagined -- informs this chapter. Indeed, the bulk of the

chapter deals specifically with the events of the 1990s. After the more nuanced historical build-up, I felt Chrétien did not bring his same high level of nuance and insight to this final chapter. Moreover, the volume deserves far more than the ten-page concluding chapter Chrétien offers. This is really meant more as a compliment than a criticism. The work is an excellent historical study by most standards.

Returning to his own stated goal for the book, it should be stressed that Chrétien's work provides a wonderful synthesis of vast amounts of scholarship. It is written (and translated by Scott Straus) in a lively and accessible style. Let me conclude with a personal testimonial to underscore these points. As something of a litmus test, I assigned various sections of the book (alas, it is not in paperback yet) to my students in a senior seminar. They were unanimous in their praise and admiration of the work. Moreover, the students were able to have some of the most informed and historically grounded conversations of the semester when discussing Chrétien's work. As an admirable synthesis of vast and rich archival works, this is an impressive contribution to the field, and a well-written resource for students and scholars.

Kevin C. Dunn

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Between the Sea and the Lagoon: An Eco-Social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana c. 1850 to Recent Times. Emmanuel Kwaku Akyeampong. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001. 244 pp.

Between the Sea and the Lagoon is a richly detailed study of the Anlo people through a period of considerable environmental and social change that included the end of slavery, British colonial rule, and significant coastal erosion. The author spent his childhood years in Ghana and became fascinated with stories of the relentless onslaught of the sea and its impact on coastal people. Akyeampong draws on interviews, census reports, shipping statistics, colonial revenue returns, missionary reports, court records, fieldwork from 1996-1997, and library/archival work to construct the Anlo's social history and their interpretation of environmental processes. He uses 1850 as starting point for the book because it marks the onset of British influence and urbanization. The author notes that although British colonial rule produced considerable environmental legislation, this did not include marine environmental degradation or that which was unrelated to human agency.

In the introductory chapters, the author examines the Anlo transition from a non-maritime people to nearshore and open ocean fishers. People migrated to the coastal zone in response to political insecurity, oppressive over-rule, and drought. Initially, they fished the waters of the Keta lagoon as they experimented with improvements in canoe building and mastered swimming. Technological advances in fishing net and canoe construction facilitated the transition to a maritime life, as did a cognitive adjustment to the new environment supported by the Anlo adaptation of marine deities that protected fishers and promoted bountiful catches. Of greatest importance was the introduction between 1850 and 1860 of the beach-seine net, known locally as *yevudor* or European net. Use of the nets required additional labor, but no

fishing background, and opened up the fishery. New economic groups or “fishing companies” formed which worked for wealthier net owners, often non-fishers, who reaped one third or more of each catch.

Additional changes from the mid-nineteenth century until the turn of the twentieth century included increased social stratification and new status in clothing, literacy, Christianity, as well as European-inspired architectural styles including two story structures. Gender relations were changing such that men had more control over women, with irregular unions and concubines becoming more common. Fish processing and marketing became a female domain. Divorce and inheritance issues were increasingly coming before colonial courts and customary laws were codified or reworked. Theft and embezzlement were a growing problem due to people’s material wants outpacing their wages. Nonetheless, these societal changes were not of preeminent concern among the Anlo. Rather, what caused great fear and social upheaval were the ecological changes that began around 1900, most importantly the encroachment of the sea.

The Anlo viewed their world as intertwining realms of the social, ecological, and cosmological. A great environmental disaster thus was viewed not solely as ecological but as related to socio-religious practices such as the failure to make proper offerings to sea spirits. The advance of the sea into the Keta lagoon and onto shore began in earnest in 1907 and worsened through 1932. Homes, businesses, and places of worship were washed out to sea and rubble from the destroyed buildings disrupted seine fishing (the method requires a smooth sand bottom free of snags). The sea took the Evangelical Presbyterian and the AME Zion Churches, but left the neighboring Catholic Cathedral. Whether a particular structure was taken or spared was filled with meaning for the Anlo because they believed it was the ancestors in partnership with local deities that controlled the advance and retreat of the sea.

The Anlo tried without success to stem the seemingly supernatural advance of the sea. They constructed barriers, but to no avail. The colonial government was uninterested in investing in seawalls and unwilling to subsidize local people’s land reclamation projects. The solution proposed was to evacuate the area. Whereas shorter term migrations to relatively nearby shores had been commonplace among entrepreneurial Anlo, migrant fishing assumed great importance in the context of severe coastal erosion. In the present day, the Anlo can be found fishing from Cape Verde to Angola. Although not addressed in the book, it would be interesting to know how Anlo seine fishers have been received elsewhere given that seining is often considered environmentally destructive by small-scale fishers sharing waters with them. In Tanzania, for instance, Pemba seine fishers are not welcome in Kenyan waters or in Tanzanian waters outside of Pemba.

By the time of Ghana’s independence over half of Keta lay under the sea. Additional suffering came when Anlo had their port at Keta closed in 1962 because a second deep water harbor closer to Accra had been opened at Tema. The creation of new harbors west of the Volta River had been suspected as a cause for coastal erosion in Anlo region as early as 1927. In 1963 a canal project caused currents to change, leading to permanent diminution of Keta’s market. The construction of the Akosombo Dam on the Volta in the mid-1960s led to the spread of diseases such as schistosomiasis, additional coastal erosion, and a loss of local flora and fauna in the lower Volta region. The end of Nkrumah’s rule brought cautious hope to the Anlo that new regimes would take coastal erosion more seriously. In 1996, the government finally announced

it had secured funds for a Keta sea defense project, but by 1999 substantive work had not been undertaken.

Akyeampong's book is the sixth in the University of Ohio's series on Western African Studies. Faculty and graduate students interested in Ghanaian history, marine anthropology, or West Africa more generally should appreciate *Between the Sea and the Lagoon*. Akyeampong accomplishes his goal of bringing together information on migration history, agriculture, adjustment to the marine environment, moral economy, trade networks, modernization and socio-cultural change into a coherent narrative of life in Ghana's coastal zone east of the Volta River delta. The book's focus on coastal erosion is an important addition to the socio-environmental literature on Africa.

Heidi Glaesel Frontani
Elon University

The Underneath of Things: Violence, History, and the Everyday in Sierra Leone. Mariane Ferme. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. 287 pp.

The title of this work is attractive because it draws attention to a state where civil violence is generally perceived as endemic. Sierra Leone was introduced to the American public through coverage of the civil conflict that took place there in the early 1990s. The images of conflict stirred the imagination of not only the public but academics as well. In light of this, understanding of the root causes of civil-ethnic conflict became a very pertinent area of study. This work, judging by the title, appeared to be a relevant contribution to the understanding of civil-ethnic conflict. However, what the author presents is a ubiquitous theory that encompasses a variety of Mende cultural practices. Within this theory, the explication of civil-ethnic violence is a corollary explanation in line with the various other Mende practices captioned by the individual chapters. Indeed, the explanation of violence does not even receive a separate chapter. The reader must rely on an inferential and, hence, incomplete understanding of civil-ethnic violence in Sierra Leone.

The need to draw inferences almost certainly stems from the author's assumption about readers' knowledge of Sierra Leonean history. In this sense, readers must understand that the focus of the book is on the Mende ethnic group. Knowledgeable readers will be aware of the differences between rural and urban Sierra Leone and the historical development of this difference. Readers' understanding would benefit significantly through the inclusion of maps or a chapter that provides a historical background.

However, a careful reading of the work will allow the reader to grasp the underlying theoretical explanation of which violence is one corollary. The theory is that violence in this part of Sierra Leone stems from two sources. Source one is path-dependence or an accumulation of historical violence that leads to the development of what might be termed "a low trust" or "cautious" society. It is very important to clarify an assumption that often causes confusion here. The necessity of interdependence is assumed to preclude the utility of violent behavior.

The author refutes this assumption by noting that interdependence and civil conflict occur together in Mende society. One source of civil-conflict is found to lie in the Mende's animistic belief system. In the animistic belief system of the Mende, spirits of well-being and evil are acknowledged to play a role in the mundane happenings of life. One goal of the anthropologist is to illustrate the veracity of cultural practices as perceived through the subject culture. Thus, a sudden reversion to violence, even within the context of interdependence, is understandable in light of the animistic Mende belief system. However, the role of the animistic belief system is supplanted by a hermeneutic explanation involving Mende interpretation of modernity. In this sense, the Mende interpretation is not a belief system but a discourse in modernity. The author uses the example of diamonds in the Western context. Diamonds have no intrinsic value; instead, their value has been infused by promotion in the Western world.

The means of survival within the context of violence is ambiguity. Thus, in sharp contrast to Western ideals, ambiguity is considered the proper, if necessary, mode of discourse. "Great value is attached to verbal artistry that couches meanings in puns, riddles, and cautionary tales and to unusual powers of understanding that enable people to both produce and unmask highly ambiguous meanings" (p. 7). One point that is well illustrated by the author is the depth of ambiguity in the Mende culture. This depth allows ambiguity to take a variety of functions of which the limitation of political power through uncertainty figures prominently. The utility of ambiguity is important in understanding the potentiality of democratization in such societies. In the absence of widespread norms of trust and transparency, ambiguity becomes a necessary means of discourse.

However, the author excels in presenting a vivid description of Mende cultural practices despite the paucity of explanation on the role of violence. Indeed, it seems as noted earlier, that violence is only one corollary aspect within the larger theory of ambiguity. Each chapter in the work provides a vivid illustration of a particular facet of Mende life. The first chapter, "Immaterial Practices" is best tied to the explanation of civil conflict. For example, the author makes the implicit argument that the effects of the recent civil conflict are superficial; they are what we view at the surface. In the history of Sierra Leone, other shifts have occurred. For example, Migdal (1988) has argued that the colonial structure imposed by the British at the end of the 19th century is a principal determinant of the weakened Sierra Leonean state. The British actually strengthened the role of tribal chiefs in the countryside, which weakened the social control element of the modern Sierra Leonean state. The following chapters are steeped in ethnographic analysis and present a vivid picture of the Mende.

One important contribution that the author makes in the chapters covering the cultural practices of the Mende is transitive nature of gender. Again the author refutes assumptions about the permanence of certain relations. The author states, "Thus all meanings, including gendered ones, cannot be fixed but depend on the political and historical circumstances in which they are activated" (p. 18). The best example of this is the relationship of slavery to spousal role. The author argues that slavery has shaped the institution of marriage within the context of dependency. The implementation of structural adjustment programs, like slavery, also contributes to the continuation of dependency within marriage. The role of dependence is implied to be a ubiquitous element in Mende life. The author noted that in Mende ways,

everybody is considered dependent within a hierarchal scheme or that “everybody is under someone's patronage or ‘for somebody” (p. 84).

Chapter 4, “The House of Impermanence and the Politics of Mobility,” examines household patterns particular to the Mende such as the ‘Big House.’ Chapter 5 reveals again the connection to both dependence and uncertainty in the author's account of ‘big people’ (*kpako*). Interspersed between the chapters are rich ethnographic descriptions of Mende life involving the weaving of cloth and hair plaiting, kola nuts, and clay and palm oil. All of these aspects on the surface appear mundane but the author interprets the meanings that these practices hold for the Mende

Overall, this work is a contribution to the understanding of Mende cultural practices. However, the title is serendipitous in that it leads the reader into believing that this is a work about the origins of ethnic conflict in Sierra Leone. Instead, what readers find is a theory about the role of the ambiguity in a society characterized by a history of conflict. If one follows this, then one must rely on inference in order to connect the theory with other practices noted in the chapters that follow the introduction. What the author does well is to break ranks with male-oriented ethnographic analysis by providing a focus on the female gender. In this manner, the accounts of females become integral to the work and are interwoven throughout the various chapters. A future edition might benefit from the addition of an introductory chapter outlining Sierra Leonean history as well as maps. This is particularly important to those readers who may not have a substantive background in West Africa.

J. David Granger
Georgetown University

Legends, Sorcerers, and Enchanted Lizards: Door Locks of the Bamana of Mali. Pascal James Imperato. New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 2001. 123 pp.

This book is the fruit of 30 years of research into Bamana culture by Pascal James Imperato. Imperato first went to Mali to direct a program sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development and United States Public Health Service Medical Team charged with investigating and controlling a measles epidemic in the region. Imperato became intrigued with Bamana door locks while examining and treating a group of children. A casual glance to his left brought his gaze into contact with a Bamana door lock. The presence and power of that lock left an immediate and lasting impression on him and sets the tone for the book.

Imperato not only effectively details the physical beauty of the locks but also their intense cultural, mythological, and symbolic significance to the Bamana people. This is no small accomplishment given the tendency of Americans, according to Patrick McNaughton who wrote the introduction to the book, to “consider art as strictly entertainment, a spare time enterprise that emphasizes pleasure and the senses.” (p. xxiii) While this perspective may be valid for some art forms in some cultures, if applied universally, it results in the recreation of art into something “other than” or “less than” its original function.

The significance of this book is that Imperato does not recreate Bamana door locks into rigidly defined western “sculpture” or “arts and crafts” genres. Instead, he presents the totality of the locks as they appear in Bamana culture. The locks serve to regulate *nyama*, the vital energy that resides in all creation, which can be manipulated by *soubaya* (sorcery). But the locks, through their public display and embellishment with *tiw* graphic signs or pictographs, also reflect “a Bamana intent to use them to teach and remind people about the essential religious and philosophical beliefs and values of *Bamanaya*” (p. 22).

McNaughton states clearly the book is significant for the academic community for two reasons. First, it is the only extensive publication devoted to door locks. Secondly, Imperato's approach to Bamana art is holistic because he asks the reader to determine where does art stop and other cultural phenomena start (p. xxiii). It is this “space” that Imperato primarily occupies with this book by presenting the locks as “simultaneously religious icons, utilitarian objects and works of art. Their mechanical strength matters less than their magical powers and their social commentaries are communicated through symbols rather than words. Locks extol marriage, promote fertility, symbolize the gods, and direct social conduct. The lessons they teach speak of the creation of the universe, the value of balance, order and harmony, and the need for stability and equilibrium in the world.” (p. 48)

Although Imperato's approach contains a wealth of information in both word and picture, the organization of the book makes it easy for the reader to find the level of information needed. The book is divided into three sections: The Bamana World; Portals, Doors and Locks; and Catalogue.

Those desiring to admire the physical form of the locks need only flip to the catalogue section. Those wanting to know more about how the locks are made along with the symbols used can look in Portals, Doors, and Locks section. Lastly, those wanting a more comprehensive understanding of the locks as they relate to Bamama culture can start with the first section, The Bamana World. This section contains information on Bamana society as well as their creation myths and cosmology. This is where you find the “why” -- the cosmological and ontological basis for door locks. This section validates the existence and function of door locks in the Bamana mind. The second section is Portals, Doors, and Locks. This section presents detailed information on the locks themselves: the history of locks, where and how they are made, the parts of the locks, their placement, symbolism, meaning, and their attachment to doors. The last section is the catalogue of nearly seventy images. Each image is accompanied by a physical description that can vary in detail according to the lock. Some have more information than others but the basic information given for each lock includes the height, patina finish or color, description of symbols, and the number of locking pins. Each section is followed by a wealth of notes and references and there is a comprehensive bibliography with well over 100 entries at the end of the book.

The images in the book are black and white. While this allows the reader to appreciate the structure and form of the door locks, and lends the book a crisp silhouette and polished look, it would have been nice to see some of the photos showing Bamana life and culture in color. It is not clear whether this was a cost issue or a source issue since most of these images date from the late 1960s to early 1970s with two from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This brings up an interesting point about dates. The images in the first two sections of the book are at

least 30 years old, this sets the mind to wonder about the current place of the door lock among the Bamana, particularly with the continued presence of Islam and the impact of a cash economy on a previously patriarchal and agricultural culture.

This book reflects the meticulous approach of a trained scientist but with a keen sensitivity for the aesthetics of Bamana culture. It is reminiscent of the works of Charles Finch -- himself a medical doctor who has worked in Africa but also writes effectively on the mythological and aesthetic aspects of African culture. The book is recommended for those specifically interested in the art and/or culture of the peoples of Mali or those with a general interest in African art. Lastly, it is recommended for anyone who wishes to develop a deeper understanding of how Bamana art seamlessly integrates a most mundane task of daily life -- opening a door -- with their most sacred beliefs.

Denise Martin
University of Louisville

Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda. Nigel Eltringham. London: Pluto Press, 2004. 232 pp.

Nigel Eltringham forces readers to go beyond the simple chronicle of events leading to the Rwandan genocide by considering many voices to understand this massive act of violence. Eltringham goes beyond the standard accounts of what led to the genocide to incorporate alternative Rwandan voices on a range of key events.

Eltringham believes that understanding language is critical and this is central to his approach. He challenges how existing literature is used to discuss ethnicity and also confronts the use of language descriptors (such as the "moderate Hutu") that bear on how readers and observers understand history. Focusing on both language and interpretation, the author also problematizes the 'appeal to history' and encourages readers to reconceptualize how historians and others come to agree or disagree on a set of historical events. By incorporating a variety of voices from Rwandans he interviewed (in Rwanda and in the Rwandan diaspora in Europe), a number of explanations are suggested for understanding the violence, including: economic rationalism, power politics, and racial manipulation of Rwandans by Belgians.

Accounting for Horror is well-documented and draws on the work of Catherine and David Newberry, Rene Lemarchand, Gerard Prunier, Jean Paul Chretien, Liisa Malkki and other well-known scholars. Eltringham also does a fine job of documenting broader topics related to the genocide in general such as holocaust studies and the analysis of historical narratives. With these broader topics, Rwanda can be seen as both an example and a point of departure for wider theoretical debates.

Accounting for Horror attempts to carve a new approach in understanding what are now familiar events for those who have read previous works on the genocide. Eltringham sheds light on narratives about major events such as the change of power and violence in 1959, the existence and salience of ethnicity, and colonial responsibility. He asks pointed questions of his

interviewees (e.g. are the Belgians indeed to blame for the genocide?). These narratives provide nuanced interpretations from Rwandans and this gives the reader a more complex view of events. In this way, Eltringham's work gives a reader what might otherwise only be gathered from two or three books. This book is probably best suited for readers who have a basic understanding of Rwandan history, as the purpose of the book is to analyze and not outline history.

This work is dedicated to the victims of the Rwandan genocide and to understanding how such a horrific human tragedy could surface *again*. Further, this work acknowledges the growing complexity of Rwanda's political, social and economic landscape over time rather than using oversimplified concepts and events to interpret this human tragedy. Although this book and others on the genocide may be critiqued for their overlap with prior works, authors and witnesses to this genocide (as well as to other human tragedies) continue to write because recounting and excavating is cathartic. Regardless of how many times the story of events in Rwanda is written and rewritten, each author provides his or her own perspective and feelings. In that spirit, this volume focuses on interpretation as an epistemology or a way of knowing that will bring readers to a higher level of understanding about the events in Rwanda. *Accounting for Horror* makes a notable contribution to Rwanda's complex fabric and paves the way to understanding other large-scale human tragedies.

Kelli Moore
University of Florida

Historical Dictionary of South Africa, Second Edition. Christopher Saunders, Nicholas Southey, and Mary-Lynn Suttie. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000. 375 pp.

A professor once asked his students, "If we had to put dictionaries in a part of the library other than the reference section, where would we put them? How should they be categorized? In the literature section? With books on mass communication?"

His answer—that dictionaries should be placed among historical texts, and that they reveal a people's history through the words employed—underscored the fluidity of language, its use, and its history. With this in mind, the phrase "Historical Dictionary" is somewhat redundant. All dictionaries are historical documents. While Christopher Saunders, Nicholas Southey, and Mary-Lynn Suttie's monograph, *Historical Dictionary of South Africa, Second Edition*, approaches history from the other end (i.e., compacting a nation's history into a collection of persons, organizations, movements, and so on, rather than extracting history out of the words themselves), the same result is achieved. By reading the second edition of Saunders, et al's *Dictionary*, and by comparing it to the first edition, one can trace South African historical and historiographical developments over the past twenty years.

This should come as no surprise to those readers familiar with Saunders' research interests in South African history and historiography. The author of many articles and monographs, including *South Africa: A Modern History* (Fifth Edition, 2000, with Rodney Davenport) and *The*

Making of the South African Past: Major Historians on Race and Class (1988), among others, Saunders wrote the first edition of the *Dictionary* in 1983 and later collaborated with Southey and Suttie for the second edition (2000). The end result is an indispensable tool for students of South African history.

Within 375 pages, the authors present a chronology of major events from 1488 to 1998; maps; a compendium of encyclopedic entries detailing historical figures, languages, ethnicities, political movements, geographic regions, organizations, religions, art, economics, and events; and a bibliography of supplementary reading that spans more than eighty pages. It is a succinct, efficient, expensive, and information-packed work.

When one compares the second edition with the first, one difference presents itself immediately: the *Dictionary* has been expanded in most every way. The chronology of major events grew from 14 to 21 pages, the bibliography from 37 to 82, and the entire text from 241 to 375.

Secondly, criticisms of the first edition have been addressed and changes implemented, improving the work as a whole. In a generally positive review of the 1983 edition, one reviewer noted: "Too often, entries have to be scanned to find...information rather than, as should be the case, revealing it in the first sentence"; "Some of the entries, such as 'economic change' and 'business cycles', are so broad that they defy definition and could well have been excluded"; that historians are overrepresented in entries; and that some entries can only be seen as "oddities."¹

The authors addressed each of these criticisms. To use but one alteration in the text as an example, compare the two versions' first line from the entry on Cecil Rhodes: "He followed his brother Herbert from England to Natal in 1870, where he grew cotton, and then to the [diamond] fields, where he began working his brother's claims in November 1871" (First Edition, p. 148); and "Imperialist, mining magnate and politician..." (Second Edition, p. 219). Succinct introductory clauses follow suit and accompany most entries in the second edition.

The most significant—at least the more historically interesting—changes made between the first and second editions reflect the turbulent national developments between their publishing. Indeed, the two editions can be seen as bookends to the most dramatic transformations in South African society, serving as written records of the nation's shifting historiographical trends.

As examples, in the first edition, neither HIV/AIDS nor Frederik Willem de Klerk have entries, naturally.² Shaka is discussed together with Zulu, and Winnie Mandela is only briefly referenced as "a woman of great force of character" within the entry on Nelson Mandela. Interestingly enough, in the first edition there is no entry for Jan van Riebeeck (although it should be noted that Saunders intentionally "curtail[ed] biographical entries drastically" as a result of the recent publishing of the *Dictionary of South African Biography*).³ The second edition, then, does account for both HIV/AIDS and De Klerk. Shaka merits his own entry apart from "Zulu Kingdom." Winnie Madikizela-Mandela has her own space apart from her ex-husband's. Other biographical segments -- such as Jan van Riebeeck's -- have been added, too, giving the *Dictionary* better balance than before. These are but a few examples, and one could fill pages -- about 375 of them -- with more.

The one major flaw of Scarecrow Press' second edition of the *Historical Dictionary* is that the encyclopedic entries and the bibliography -- each superb offerings -- are completely separated

and not cross-referenced. Leaving these out seriously handicapped the authors' expertise: to offer suggested readings for further information on each entry. Readers who are looking for such information should consult the South African first edition published by David Philip in 1998. In that edition, Saunders and Southey were given more freedom to enhance their entries with recommended citations, something that was impossible in the Scarecrow Press editions due to the editorial conformity of the entire Historical Dictionary series.

Still, the latest edition stands on its own and is an extremely valuable addition to any collection of South African historical texts, be they on student desks or library shelves. The *Dictionary* serves its purpose of informing quickly and thoroughly on historical themes, participants, and trends in South African history. Saunders, Southey, and Suttie have provided an indispensable resource to supplement the study of South African history, and furthermore, scholars of South African historiography might wish to compare the first and second editions -- a valuable exercise -- should both be available.

Andrew Offenburger
Scottsdale, Arizona

1. Rob Turrell. "Review of *Historical Dictionary of South Africa*, First Edition." *Journal of African History* 27, no. 2 (1986), 408-09.
2. "Naturally" is used to signify that the omissions of entries on HIV/AIDS and Willem de Klerk are highlighted only to demonstrate the chronological and historical lapse between the first and second editions, and are not shortcomings of the text by any means.
3. Christopher Saunders, *Historical Dictionary of South Africa*, First Edition (Metuchen, NJ, and London: Scarecrow Press, 1983), ix.

The Decolonization Reader. James D. Le Sueur, ed. New York: Routledge, 2003. 462 pp.

In his portrait of decolonization, Jan Vansina states that:

Legitimacy is gone, citizens are alienated, the intelligentsia dream of revolution or reform, some others expect

liberation or a millennium, most have sunk into a gloomy resignation. Naked power and bribes erode the law.

In turn, the strongly centralized state has lost much of its effective grip, because its legal directives are ignored, except under duress or when they seem to be opportune. (p. 425)

This is one of the perspectives found in decolonization studies that arose out of an effort to incorporate both nationalist and metropolitan approaches, unlike the traditional study of decolonization. James Le Sueur's book, *The Decolonization Reader*, draws upon this new

approach, as he brings together original and important perspectives on the history of colonialism and decolonization in Africa and Asia. His book is divided into eight parts with twenty-two articles from twenty-three contributors and an extensive bibliography that offer comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives of decolonization studies. Consistent with its objective, the narrowly focused articles do provide an introduction to the history of decolonization in Africa and Asia to a general audience.

Part one examines the definition of decolonization by focusing on imperialist history and post-colonial theory. In doing so, the authors emphasize problems of undifferentiated, ahistorical analysis and the need to shift decolonization scholarship from a Western perspective to a more even-handed perspective without Western biases. Accordingly, decolonization cannot be understood by merely focusing on national politics and anticolonial politics, but it should include the challenges presented by history and postcolonial theorists.

Part two discusses the role of metropolitan and international politics, and examines how European governments deal with the issues of decolonization based on their own imperial interests. "The Imperialism of Decolonization," spells out how British and Americans sought to consistently manipulate the political climate in the colonies to serve their own interests and even challenge one another. "Decolonizing French Universalism" articulates the paradox that French intellectuals faced as a result of the decolonization of French Algeria -- defending the universalism of their values while siding with Algerians "that denied this universalism" (p. 115).

In part three, the focus shifts to issues of economy and labor. "Decolonization and European Integration" explains how the Second World War helped to facilitate Britain's decolonization and integration into Europe, reasoning that British imperial interests and European interests were one in the same. "Our Strike" examines the railway strike in French West Africa, where railway workers united for five and a half months, shutting down rail traffic to gain higher wages and benefits "within certain legal and institutional structures" (p. 156, 180).

Part Four analyzes nationalism and anticolonialism in three articles that discuss the role that nationalism and anticolonialism -- with their ties to religion, social customs, and ethnicity -- played in ending colonialism, even while they conflicted with one another (as Nkrumah's nationalism and Pan-African vision did with Asante nationalism).

Two of the most significant aspects of European colonialism, race and ethnicity, are covered in part five. "Decolonization, Demonization, and Difference" examines South Africa's transition from an apartheid country -- where South Africans identified themselves as Afrikaner nationalists or African nationalists -- to a post-apartheid inclusive country. "Mau Maus of the Mind" discusses the British attempt to prolong their reign by assimilating educated Kenyans.

In part six, the topic is gender and sexuality. "The Mau Mau Rebellion Women" argues that, contrary to popular beliefs, Kenyan women were the key factor in achieving the objectives of Mau Mau. The part seven articles "Alcohol and Politics in Northern Rhodesia," "Football and FIFA's African Constituency," and "Licensing Leisure" all examine how nationalists channeled beliefs and energies devoted to social activities into instruments of liberation. The final section discusses different views of decolonization and urges historians not reproduce Western views on stereotypes and teleologies in their analysis of colonial rule.

This book draws upon both metropolitan and nationalist approaches, allowing a more insightful view of colonialism and decolonization than traditionally has been the case. Students and scholars who want to explore the effects of colonialism and decolonization should read this book.

Aaron Peron Ogletree
University of Minnesota Law School

Rote Adler an Afrikas Küste: Die brandenburgisch-preußische Kolonie Großfriedrichsburg in Westafrika. Ulrich Van der Heyden. Berlin: Selignow, 2001 [1993]. 105 pp.

Van der Heyden outlines the history of the duchy of Brandenburg on the West African coast, her role in the transatlantic slave trade and the beginning of the African diaspora in Germany.

Friedrich Wilhelm I, elector of Brandenburg, aimed at participating in the flourishing overseas trade in order to cover the expenditures of his government. With the help of the Dutch ship owner Raule, he built a fleet -- ridiculously small compared to those of the competitors -- and in 1682 the Brandenburgisch-Africanische Compagnie (BAC) was instituted. There followed before long the foundation of the fortification of Großfriedrichsburg, headquarters of the company in Africa, as well as three smaller redoubts, Accada, Taccrama and Taccorary (on the coast of present Ghana), a point of call on the island of Arguin (presently Mauritania), and a trading post on St. Thomas in the Caribbean.

From the beginning, the elector of Brandenburg's colonial adventure, as the author terms it, suffered from lack of financial resources, military support, and administrative capacities. Besides, the BAC had to compete with stronger seafaring nations (Netherlands, England, Spain, France) who were already settled wherever the Brandenburgers arrived and who did not want to share their oversea resources.

The engagement in slave trade was the most effective means to overcome the perpetual financial problems of the government while other items, such as gold and ivory, rather involved losses. On St. Thomas, the BAC had its trading post as a prerequisite to succeed in slave trade. But they only acted under the authority of the Danes to whom they had to pay duties and who determined the prices for slaves. On the West African coast, they suffered from repeated aggressions by the Dutch. The losses of ships through the elements, pirates, and acts of war by European competitors enhanced the financial problems and the reluctance of investors to engage in the company.

When Friedrich Wilhelm I died, his son Friedrich III showed little interest to continue the overseas trade. However, he did not put a total end to it, but rather let it diminish. His grandson, Friedrich Wilhelm I, King of Prussia, considering the trade relations with Africa a phantasm, finally sold the property on the West African coast to the Dutch in 1717. Part of the contract was that the king, in whose army were already some twenty African musicians, should

be sent "12 young negro-boys, 6 of which should be decorated with golden chains." They constituted the first African immigrants to Prussia coming in a group.

When the Dutch wanted to take over Grossfriedrichsburg, Jan Cuny, a local chief and former agent for the Brandenburgers had seized the fortification. Even when presented with a bill of sale he refused to hand it over to anyone but the former proprietors. Because of this faithfulness to the former proprietors, Cuny was nicknamed "the black Prussian." While idealized by Westermann as a model of an unselfish and trustworthy collaborator of the Brandenburgers, van der Heyden regards him with more critical eyes as someone who also pursued his own interests.

Highlighting the moral failures of those involved in the slave trade and the military history of Prussia makes the book particularly interesting within the present discourse of coming to terms with the past of the German-African relationship. The first edition caused an impact on readers which is quite unusual for history books and it provoked a concern for the people living around the fortification of Großfriedrichsburg. School-partnerships were established and the number of German tourists to Princesstown in the neighbourhood of the fortification, where there the memory of the "Brandenburg family" (104) is still alive, also increased considerably.

However, the scholarly reader might have enjoyed a less moralizing attitude of the author, and at times a more careful use of terminology in order to avoid misunderstandings. Given the general agreement that German colonialism in Africa began only after 1890, the reader questions how easily Van der Heyden expands German colonial history 200 years backwards. It would also be helpful to make clear whether Großfriedrichsburg was a trade-colony (Handelskolonie) or simply a trading post. The idea of a 'settlers colony' (Siedlungskolonie) never came up in the Brandenburg era.

With regard to the Fanti population in the area, van der Heyden says that in colonial literature they were called "true negroes" ("echte Neger" - p.18), a term formerly used for the classification of African races and languages. Without providing further explanation and in the given context, this statement does not give any relevant information to the reader and it even contradicts the author's moral attitude exhibited elsewhere in the book.

Despite these truly minor weaknesses the book is a most welcome contribution to the history of Brandenburg-Prussia and of early contacts between Europe and Africa. Divided into eighteen short chapters and accompanied by many meaningful quotations and pictures, the book reads easily. The entire layout makes it attractive for the reader. It constitutes a wonderful example of a thorough historical study made accessible for a general readership.

Helma Pasch
University of Cologne

Westermann, Diedrich. "Jan Cuny," *Afrika: Studien zur Auslandskunde* 2:1-3 (1943).

The African Studies Companion: A Guide to Information Sources, 3rd edition. Hans M. Zell, ed. Lochcarron, Scotland: Hans Zell Publishing, 2003. 570 pp.

Keeping track of the growing and rapidly changing corpus of reference and other important information resources for any academic field has become increasingly difficult during the last decade. One could argue that doing so in an area studies discipline is even more challenging, with individuals and organizations in the relatively underdeveloped context of African publishing generally facing even greater vicissitudes. At the same time, corporate structures for western publishers change at an alarming pace, journal titles change, and formats may shift from paper to a variety of electronic access that themselves seem to remain in constant flux. Many libraries contract with a private service to track and update a list of several tens of thousands of electronic journal titles every other month. It's no secret that even library professionals can't keep up with all of the changes in journal index databases and other electronic sources outside our own areas of specialization.

Some Africanists may withdraw from these difficulties or simply rely on a few favorite, well-known resources (even when we realize that these may not be optimal for our specific needs). Some others may panic at the realization that a seemingly reliable strategy (e.g. a library catalog search, a few quick shots in one of the many general journal index databases, followed by a Google search or two) is in fact missing an important part of their target journal list. Yet assistance is available. A reference companion, such as this recently published guide, can help one discover new resources and broaden the resource foundation of one's academic work in a way that is flexible and manageable, and which can be modified as the situation inevitably changes over time.

Few writers are better positioned than Hans Zell to understand the complexities of the current information production, distribution, and consumption situation from both the supplier's and the information user's perspective. One of his innovative solutions to the problem of print resource obsolescence in the face of electronic resource impermanence has been to publish print guides that are supplemented and updated online, which later are then produced in updated, revised print editions as well. Nobody else has tackled the problem so directly and so well, or with such sustained commitment to the field. Some libraries hold a dozen or more of Zell's published reference works and compilations, many with several revisions and updates at reasonable intervals. Providing the online resource as an integral part of the printed guide allows multiple users to access its contents concurrently and from a place of their own choosing, while a library can maintain the printed copy for archival purposes.

Contents of this latest volume include more than 1,900 entries in twenty-three chapters arranged topically, with substantial annotations for most entries and providing selected sources and specialized guides in the many areas. A glossary of abbreviations and acronyms and an alphabetical index (including author, both personal and corporate, as well as title entries) complete the volume. Thorough cross-referencing and a detailed subject arrangement as outlined in the *Table of Contents* preclude the need for a separate subject index. The online version replaces the book's index with a keyword search function. Annotations are clear, evaluative and pointed, and with selectivity focused on highlighting the best and most useful sources.

The value of including the online version of this resource in the cost of the printed volume is an innovation that allows flexibility among users, and substantially offsets the initial expense. While perhaps not a title most would consider for individual purchase, it is certainly a resource that academics, business or NGO managers, librarians and others with an interest in Africa may wish to purchase for their office, departmental or institutional library.

Daniel A. Reboussin

University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries

Armed Conflict in Africa. Carolyn Pumphrey and Rye Schwartz-Barcott, eds. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2003. 313 pp.

Pumphrey and Schwartz-Barcott's *Armed Conflict in Africa* is one among a number of recently published books on the politics of war in Africa. The nine contributors to this volume examine the history of recent armed conflicts on the continent, each from different perspectives. Most address why Africa has been affected by what appears to be a rising tide of violence in recent times. Each offers prescriptions or at least provides a framework for considering what would have to change to bring about a diminishment of these conflicts. Especially those chapters by René Lemarchand on Rwanda and Bona Malwal on Sudan provide detailed information about specific cases. The editors have collected a valuable set of maps in one of the appendices. Especially for those conflicts that took place before the days of internet and the extensive and detailed reports of the United Nations NGO's such as the International Crisis Group, detailed maps of combat activities can be hard to find in one place.

Several of the chapters, when taken together, offer good examples of different explanations for causes of conflict in Africa. Julius Nyang'oro makes the basic observation that the absence of a viable middle class in many countries leaves them with polarized social structures and polarized politics to match. Readers familiar with critical scholarship from the 1960s and 1970s will recognize a structural argument that stressed the social dysfunctions and internal political fragmentation that arose out of economic dependence on more powerful countries. Now, however, powerful outside forces in the guise of multilateral financial institutions insist on further weakening of states through retrenchment in civil services and privatization of remaining state assets. There may be good macro-economic arguments for doing this in terms of enhancing economic efficiency. But the social consequence is that people in many African countries are exposed to the full force of global economic competition without the aid of regulatory institutions to buffer them from the destructive aspects of this process. That situation, Nyang'oro argues, is tailor-made for political entrepreneurs to take advantage of disorder and change to exploit people's anxieties and lack of legitimate alternatives to provide for themselves and their families.

René Lemarchand provides a different framework to explain the external roots of conflict in Rwanda. He observes how ideas inherited from colonial era scholars, both European and Rwandan, were incorporated into the political strategies of different political groups in that

country. These became justifications for classifying people into what took on the trappings of rigid group identities. Official ideology and administrative practice gave license to some political entrepreneurs to instrumentalize these “myths” to mobilize followers against specific targeted communities.

Like Nyang'oro, Ali Mazrui stresses how external influences have sharpened local conflicts, especially as cold war era powers recruited African proxies to extend their influence. Africans are agents of conflict in this explanation, not simply pawns of foreigners. The strength of Mazrui's chapter lies in his identification of this political agency as a key to ending conflicts. His remedies focus on the efforts of Africans, ranging from cooperation for internal institutional reform, which can be found in the multitudes of indigenous human rights groups, women's rights organizations and in regional associations which have come to play major roles in conflict resolution, especially in West Africa but also in Central and Eastern Africa. These successes of African conflict resolution often get shortchanged in academic analyses.

But the book has several weaknesses. From the outset, the editors provide no clear definition of conflict. Army coups and mutinies find their way into a lengthy chronology of conflicts in an appendix. If this and other events like it fall under the heading of conflict, why not consider all coups and uprisings as conflicts? Was the al-Qaeda inspired attack on an Israeli-owned tourist hotel that killed 15 people (page 280) an instance of African conflict in a comparative scope that includes the Congo war and the ongoing conflict in Sudan? On the other end of the chronology, one finds references to events in ancient Egypt stretching over several centuries. These events, often listed as instances of general turmoil over several centuries, do not fall under the consideration of any of the substantive chapters and it is not clear what they add to a book that really is about twentieth century wars. Points such as “Terrorism is the deliberate use of terror to achieve political goals” (page 5) add little. In the end, the editors produce no real parameters to point to what they consider to be a conflict, beyond contentious politics that results in fatalities, though most of the chapter contributors appear to settle on standard notions as those events that involve a thousand or more deaths.

Several of the chapters obscure rather than illuminate. One finds the statement in the introduction that “people caught up in the conflict often seem to have little idea of what the fighting is about” (page 2) and later, “wild, irrational lashing out” (page 47), notions that contribute little to social science understandings of conflict. These and other passages recall the “coming anarchy” thesis of Robert Kaplan that explains conflict in terms of ancient hatreds and atavistic hunger for conflict that do not find much purchase in contemporary scholarly analyses of root causes of conflict. And if Africans do not really know why they fight, how can they be involved in resolving these conflicts?

Numerous factual errors also creep in. Right at the outset on page 1, for example, the list of UN peacekeeping operations, cited from a source published in 2001, omits Sierra Leone -- the largest UN peacekeeping mission at the time. “Ibo” in place of Igbo is archaic. The book would have benefited from more careful copy editing too. On page 86, for example, perusal of the list of the final five footnotes for the preceding chapter reveals two misspellings of the names of well-known authors. In sum, specialist readers may appreciate the better chapters and maps at the end of the book. The general reader with more limited funds may wish to look elsewhere.

William Reno
Northwestern University

Partner to History: The U.S. Role in South Africa 's Transition to Democracy. Princeton N. Lyman. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2002. 344 pp.

Princeton Lyman has not followed the example of two British ambassadors in South Africa who produced slight and heavily anecdotal memoirs of their time in the country. Unlike David Scott's *Ambassador in Black and White* (1981) and Robin Renwick's *Unconventional Diplomacy in Southern Africa* (1997), *Partner to History* is a substantial and important book, one that deserves to be read alongside Chester Crocker's account of the United States ' role in southern Africa in the 1980s, *High Noon in Southern Africa* (1992). Lyman is holder of a Harvard Ph.D. in Political Science, and like Crocker and the present U.S. ambassador to South Africa , Cameron Hume, he has set an account of his experiences in southern Africa within a broad analytical frame. Only part memoir, his book is detailed and well documented. Prior to completion, the author conducted a number of interviews with key role players to check his interpretation of events and attitudes. Lyman was U.S. ambassador in South Africa from August 1992 to the end of 1995, key years in the country's transition to a democracy. As he makes clear, such an outcome was by no means inevitable. When he arrived, negotiations were at a standstill and the transition came under renewed threat particularly when Chris Hani was assassinated in April the following year.

It is often said that the South African transition from apartheid to democracy was a home-grown product, unlike the transition in Namibia next door, which was heavily shaped by the involvement of the international community. Lyman shows that this assessment of the South African transition is not entirely correct, for though there was no direct mediation as there had been in Namibia (U.S. offers to mediate were rejected), the U.S. used its influence, economic assistance and political support to support the peace process. Though in South Africa such 'facilitation,' Lyman argues, was important in helping to bring about the resolution of conflict. He claims that in the period he was ambassador, following the departure of the dynamic British ambassador Robin Renwick, there existed 'special opportunities' for U.S. influence (p. 54).

It is a pity the author did not find an expert on South African history to read through his background chapter, for it contains a number of small slips. Yet when he gets to the 1990s, he describes U.S. links with South Africa with a sure and deft touch. His book then becomes a blow by blow account of the remarkable events that took place during his ambassadorship. Within days of arriving, he was having regular meetings and conversations with Nelson Mandela, counselling the African National Congress not to continue with its planned marches into the Bantustans . He developed close relations with Joe Slovo and the U.S. began training protection officers for Mandela, after it was realised, very belatedly (those of us present in South Africa at the time had been concerned at this from the moment of his release in February 1990), that his protection was inadequate (pp. 86-87). At the same time, Lyman needed to indicate to the

National Party government that the U.S. had confidence in what de Klerk was doing to further the process leading to a transfer of power and in dealing with the difficult Buthelezi (chapter 7).

Lyman admits to some errors, a small one being to schedule a powerful speech by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown at a university not in session (not the University of Cape Town, as he says on p. 188, but at the University of the Western Cape, as is stated in the Appendix that reproduces the speech). He is particularly interesting on the issue of chemical and biological weapons in the context of the transfer of power (pp. 189-94) and on the strained relations with Mandela after the election, when Mandela denounced the proposed U.S. aid program as "peanuts" (p. 231). In his final chapter, Lyman tries to draw out some lessons for the U.S. from the South African case, including one not learned by George W. Bush: "never forget your friends" (chapter 12).

Lyman gives us much new detail on the U.S. role, and nobody reading his account could come away with the idea that this role was totally insignificant. Because he focuses on what he and other Americans did, however, his book may give the impression that the U.S. played a truly significant role. That would be wrong. Without the U.S. pressures on the parties to reach a solution, a negotiated solution would probably still have been reached. Future historians may not agree with Lyman on the extent of the U.S. role, but none will be able to ignore his seminal account.

Chris Saunders
University of Cape Town

Twilight on the Zambezi: Late Colonialism in Central Africa. Eugenia W. Herbert. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002. 196 pp.

Eugenia Herbert sets out to provide a Rashomon-like study of the late colonial world, centered in the colonial Boma and Native Administration headquarters of Barotseland (Northern Rhodesia) in 1959, but ramifying outward to include the mental and political universes of the Federation in Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia) and the Colonial Office in London. This is a short book. It is also a very experimental history. Its principal aim is *not* to explain a specific incident, to provide a comprehensive vision of a small, remote place, or even to use a small place to explain a big phenomenon like nationalism. Instead, Herbert's cinematographically-written study depicts a time -- 1959 -- precisely because it was at the end of a period when colonial actors could see colonialism as stretching indefinitely into the future, without major upheavals. Herbert chose a place that was apparently a sedate, relatively contented backwater, with an elite closely linked to the symbols of British royalty and titles. While discordant elements pull at the edges of her portrait -- with ecological crises, massive labor outmigration by men, a small outbreak of sorcery by "Kalikozi gunmen," a disaffected educated elite, ambitious white builders of the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland and increasingly doubtful intellectuals, politicians and bureaucrats in England -- this is a sketch of a world in balance, not one about to be catapulted into crisis and change.

In the book's four major sections, Herbert pays respectful attention to the complexities and contradictions of the perspectives that she explores. The section on the Boma (District Commissioner's Office), for example, draws on the formal annual reports and tour reports that administrators filed, and also on interviews, questionnaires, unpublished papers, and pictures from a variety of the officials and family members who lived in the region at the time. This permits a discussion of what happened and also thick descriptions of official life on tour and in the outpost, down to the sports essential to local sociability and the messengers who taught official cadets and did much of the actual work. This evocative thick description style emphasizes not the big forces of history -- the isms of colonialism, imperialism, racism, nationalism and ethnicity that most readers know as the big stories of the time -- but the individuality of the DC who wanted to play squash; Roy Welensky as a boxer who headed the Federation; and Marjorie Perham as the colonial administration expert who should have been a governor.

While the author's approach produced a book that is a joy to read for historians knowledgeable about the outlines of the end of the empire and eager for a sense of atmosphere, it does have weaknesses connected to its strengths. For students unable to recognize major historical figures (such as Marjorie Perham, Roy Welensky, Hastings Banda or Kenneth Kaunda) it may be an unexpectedly difficult work, full of names and individual circumstances, and low on forward narrative drive. This is particularly true by the end of the book, where the most vivid single event described is the intervention of Rhodesian Federation troops at Hola, in Nyasaland. This intervention involved the killing of activists and produced both bad press in England and a nationalist backlash within the Federation (142-6). As Nyasaland protrudes into this study, Herbert loses her focus on Barotseland, and to some extent calls the work's premise -- that one can understand a colonial moment through a locally focused lens -- into doubt. Also, since the work's poignancy rests on the reader's awareness of the coming years of nationalist struggle and postcolonial crisis, students unfamiliar with the region in the 1970s and 1980s may miss some of the work's power. Landeg White's *Magomero*, with its drama and emphasis on local changes over time, probably remains a more effective work for introducing students to local history in Africa. Herbert is instead doing something quite different -- subtle, complex, and moderately subversive of the larger colonial typologies of "The Administration," the "Native Government," the "Missionaries" etc. In Herbert's portrait, individuals act, get into muddles, work out their idiosyncrasies, and -- in the process -- set the stage for large scale change.

Herbert's work is most effective as a multifaceted book about different sorts of elites, especially white ones. She tries to incorporate Lozi elites as well, in an entire section on "The view from the *Kuta*," but that is the weakest section of the book, with limited sources on what elite officeholders did, let alone on the activities of their wives and clients. Educated African men, with the exception of major figures such as Kaunda and Banda, are mentioned but not discussed, and much of their motivation, action, and connections to other more ordinary farmers and taxpayers remain opaque. Herbert obliquely rejects recent efforts (eg. Frederick Cooper) to reclaim African nationalism as a popular initiative connected with labor.

Where this book is unobtrusively innovative, though, is its connection of Zambian and Central African nationalism to the politics and events of Federation and the Colonial Office.

Herbert offers a nuanced portrayal of divisions between Colonial Service and Colonial Office, the complexities of Labour versus Conservative Governments, and the complicated roles played by experts like Marjorie Perham or heads of commissions like Patrick Devlin. Herbert maintains a focus on colonialism as a political system, rather than a cultural hegemony or system of social welfare control, leaving aside any serious exploration of missionaries, press, schools and clinics, or agricultural development planning. The implication is that despite colonialists' occasional delusions of their transformative impact, their presence sat lightly in Barotseland, and eroded quickly.

Herbert's study is not a nostalgic souvenir of colonialism, tied up with neat conclusions. Instead, it meanders through a historical moment, looking closely and sympathetically from a variety of perspectives, with detours into regions well beyond Barotseland's boundaries, before leaving threads dangling all over the landscape to intrigue future historians and trip them into more problems and work.

Carol Summers
University of Richmond