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# **African Studies Quarterly**

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Subsequent to the publication of this paper, "The Dynamics of Privatization and Commercialization Policy in Nigeria", in this journal (Volume 3, No 1), it has come to our attention that some major sections of the article were taken verbatim, and without due acknowledgement, from Peter M. Lewis, Ph.D. Princeton University Dissertation, 1992, namely "The Political Economy of Public Enterprise in Nigeria".

In accordance with acknowledged professional ethics, the editorial policy of this journal is based on the presumption that all manuscripts submitted represent the original work of the author(s), and that citations are properly provided for all sources. We intend to pursue that policy with even greater tenacity in future.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i1a1.pdf>



## Counterfoil Choices in the Kalabari Life Cycle.

NIMI WARIBOKO

### INTRODUCTION

Kalabari ethnic identity is under enormous pressure as a result of modernization and Western influences. One Kalabari response to their exposure to foreign values, styles, cultural artifacts and ways of life has been to select, incorporate, and transform borrowed values, styles, and artifacts to create a new combination or ensemble uniquely identified as Kalabari. This process of adaptation has been described as cultural authentication (Erekosima and Eicher 1981,1995; Eicher 1997). In their studies, Erekosima and Eicher have focused only on the use of a limited number of material artifacts (such as textiles) to create and maintain ethnic identity. Kalabari have created clothing that separates them from their neighbors, "for items assembled from their history and the range of their trading contacts resulted in distinctive appearance" (Eicher 1997:231).

Why the preference for distinctive appearance? Why are the Kalabari always tinkering with foreign artifacts in order to make themselves distinct from their Southern Nigerian neighbors? Why the deep preference for independence? The best answer Eicher and colleagues have found is: "Kalabari dress represented their independence of thought and action and their view of a tripartite cosmology of the water-people, community deities and ancestors" (Eicher1997:231; Erekosima 1989, Daly 1984). This explanation appears inadequate. By limiting their analyses to the easily observable somewhat static connection between dress and world view, they ignore the more intellectual, dynamic, and complex process involved in maintaining and passing to the next generation the core of Kalabari identity. Maintaining an ethnic identity is not a one-time affair, especially for an African traditional society that has to grapple with influences both from the West and from other nationalities within Nigeria. Dress and other aspects of the culture are often the visible representations of an invisible world view. One is, however, very far from the whole truth unless one explains how this link has been maintained from pre-colonial times until today in spite of all influences to the contrary.

This paper discusses the salient management tool or idea that Kalabari have used and are still using to ensure that their ethnic identity is maintained amidst the flux of changes from within and outside. This paper brings to the fore the philosophical principles which put into proper perspective the Kalabari struggle to maintain an identity and way of life, and to minimize European influences on their traditional and political beliefs (Dike 1956: 161). For lack of a better terminology, this identity management tool is termed counterfoil choice.

In most societies, there are two types of choices: ordinary and Hobson. In ordinary choice, the decision-maker chooses between A or B, which are alternatives to each other. Hobson's choice is between what is offered and nothing. Kalabari have a third variety wherein the

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freedom to choose is not limited as in Hobson's choice, but the result of the selection is similar to that of Hobson's choice. This is termed counterfoil choice. A is not an alternative to B; B is only a counterfoil to A. When A is offered, Kalabari offers its negative B to show the person where the decision should not go. The decision-maker is primed to choose A, the real "ticket" and shun the counterfoil. For instance, a father wanting to teach his child a lesson about success might give him two bowls. One contains garri (cassava derived flour), the other is empty. The child is asked to choose. The empty bowl is there to show that laziness comes with severe hunger and that life offers two bowls (prosperity/power or failure/disgrace). The child is advised to know the right bowl to choose. It is a counterfoil choice because no father wishes his son or daughter to choose the empty bowl. Kalabari have found this an effective way of teaching their youngsters.

The use of this management tool in Kalabari society parallels age-grade and political status. Thus, this essay shall proceed by examining the significance and role of counterfoil choice within Kalabari culture from the perspective of its relevance through the political life cycle. For the limited purposes here, the life cycle is divided into five stages: awome (birth to age 15), asawo (16 to 40), opuasawo (40 and above), alapu (chiefs) and duein (ancestors). Ancestor is considered a stage in the life cycle because a person's life is deemed incomplete if he or she does not become an ancestor after death. To be an ancestor a person must be in good standing before entering the next world.

This classification is not precise; the purpose is only to indicate phases. It is based mainly on the male life cycle. However, this paper will consider women in the category of iya (most lawful and expensive) wives when it is dealing with alapu because in traditional Kalabari society every chief must have one iya wife. Also, in terms of achievement women value iya marriage as much as men value chieftaincy titles. Third, the fact that this paper is focused mainly on age categories of men does not mean that counterfoil choice as relating to women is given short shrift. As a matter of fact, various examples of counterfoil choices are given which span the life cycle of women in the society. This paper limits its focus only to men's age categories because it is easier to handle five categories than handle 10 in short essay of this nature. Fourth, age is not the sole determinant of each category as personal wealth and achievement of an under-30 years can move a person to the rank of chiefs.

## SETTING

Kalabari, an Eastern Ijo group in Rivers State, Nigeria are spread over several islands in the delta of the Niger River. They number about one million. For over four centuries, from the fifteenth century to the early twentieth, they were one of the most important merchant groups in the transatlantic trade on the western African coast, participating in the exchange of slaves, or produce of the African forest, for European manufactured goods. Critical to their involvement in the internal and overseas trades was the canoe house system. The canoe house (wari) was the most characteristic political and social institution of the Eastern Niger Delta states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was not a lineage or descent group; rather it was, as Gwilym I. Jones (1963:55) puts it "a compact and well organized trading and fighting corporation, capable of manning and maintaining a war canoe." Similarly, in 1913 the canoe

house was defined by the British protectorate administration as "a number of persons grouped together for the purposes of trade and subject by native law and custom to the control, authority, and rule of a chief known as the head of the house"(Alagoa 1964:15).

The canoe house was made up of a man and his extended family members, trading assistants, slaves, and servants. Because of the need to maintain an adequate labor supply for their burgeoning trade and because the definition of wealth was the number of persons in a canoe house, leaders of the houses absorbed a great number of non-Kalabari into their houses. Every member who was not born Kalabari was carefully assimilated. On arrival each new member was given a Kalabari name, his head was shaved and a ritual bath taken to cleanse the person and signify absorption into the new family. The adoptee also was given a ritual meal and handed over to a woman in the house to serve as his mother. From this moment, the new member had all the rights and privileges as all other naturally-born members of the house.

If a male adoptee was enterprising and loyal to the new home, he could rise to leadership of the house at the death of the patriarch. Indeed, the basis of membership in Kalabari society was not confined to common descent and kinship but took into account residence and general acceptance of the political and cultural leadership of the house. The society was also very competitive and fluid. Robin Horton, the English social anthropologist, has this to say in comparing Kalabari culture with that of the Tallensi of Ghana: "Kalabari society, whether in its village or in its city-state variant, encourages aggressive individualism and personal achievement. If the emphasis in Taleland is on 'fitting in', in Kalabari it is on "getting up" (1983:54).

Partly because of their trading contacts, Kalabari have for centuries used foreign artifacts to express their cultural beliefs and to reconstruct their identities in a creative adaptation to pressures they faced as a competitive, open, commercial society which served as an intermediary between European and African cultures and absorbed an incredible number of foreigners into itself despite enormous pressure both on the boundaries and margin of its body politic and from within. Kalabari, therefore, imposed order by continually modifying, enriching, and bringing into the core only those pressures which promoted stability or harmony with its world view. In this way, the pressures were harnessed and changes were controlled to the effect that there was no revolutionary displacement of core values and artifacts by foreign elements.

There are two main epistemological categories in the Kalabari world view. There is oju (body) representing material objects and Teme (spirit), the immaterial. Teme cannot be seen, touched, or heard by an ordinary person. Spirits are defined as incapable of direct observation, but by reference to their effects. Spirits also differ from bodies in another crucial respect. They can be in two places at the same time; they are anywhere and everywhere. Bodies, on the other hand, are confined to a space-and time-quadrant at any one time. Finally, spirits are unobservable entities that underlie the visible and tangible everyday world.

There are three categories of religious objects, which are defined with different combination of the attributes of spirit and bodies. There are ancestors (duein), village heroes (oru, the head of them all is Owamekaso) and water-spirits (owu). Ancestors and village heroes exist in spirit, but water-people have both bodies and spirits and live at definite localities. Kalabari believe that ordinary folk can see, hear, and smell water-people if the person meets

them in the mangrove forest. These three forces have varying relations with the observable world. Particularly, the water-people are defined as the source of all creative and destructive forces in the human individual, they are "the forces underpinning all that lies beyond the confines of the established social order" (Horton 1993:217).

Traditional marriage in Kalabari society occur in three forms: *iya*, *igwa*, and *waribiobesime*. *Iya* is the most lawful and highest form of Kalabari marriages. In an *iya* marriage, divorce is not permitted and the offspring belong to the man's house. In *igwa* (a lesser form of marriage than the *iya*), the children belong to the woman's house and divorce is permitted. While an *igwa* marriage can be converted into *iya*, the reverse is not permissible. *Waribiobesime* is the marriage between members of the same house who are not blood relations.

#### DEFINITION OF COUNTERFOIL CHOICE

Choice is the act of selecting an alternative from a set of possible alternatives or avoiding the action entirely. The definition implies that the person making the choice has the freedom to decide voluntarily to choose between several alternatives. This freedom is severely limited in a Hobson's choice, where the choice is between what is offered and nothing. In counterfoil choice, the freedom to choose is not limited, but the result of the selection is similar to that of Hobson's choice. Although a person has the freedom to make the choice, s/he invariably ends up with the "this" of the "this or nothing" Hobson alternatives. In ordinary, plain choice, A and B are alternatives to each other. In counterfoil choice, A and B are not alternatives. B is only a counterfoil to A. When an option is offered, Kalabari put its negative to show the person where the decision or choice does not go. Whereas items A and B may be offered to the decision-maker, he or she is culturally primed to always choose A (the real "ticket") and shun B, which is a counterfoil of A, because A makes the most sense, is culturally deemed most rational. Note, item B is to alternative A what a counterfoil opera ticket is to the real ticket. Given the choice, a rational person desirous of seeing an opera performance will certainly pick the real ticket. For it is the ticket that is capable of achieving the desired goal.

Why offer two alternatives when only one of them can (should) be selected? In other words, why create a tension between elements of choice and elements of constraint? This and other questions are answered in the next session. The immediate task is to examine when and where counterfoil choices are offered in Kalabari society.

Often counterfoil choices are offered with dramatic effects, and are choreographed. Counterfoil choice dramas are enacted at the apex of ceremonies and rituals, at the point when the person undergoing the rite or ceremony is to be given a reward. The person is either told or persuaded by non-verbal communication to pick the "crown of glory" or its counterfoil.

In order to understand this phenomenon better, an illustration is presented of how Kalabari might dramatize the award of a degree to doctoral candidate. When the student has completed all the requirements there is just at the point when the examiners are to say "Congratulations, Dr. Smith, the candidate is offered a counterfoil choice: Choose the certificate or nullify the whole process and obliterate all your Ph.D. records. This is the drama: can s/he walk away from it all. The examiners want him or her to portray a certain Kalabari character,

"one that reflects an apparent demeanor of nonchalant leisureliness (*asa ti*) while remaining fully alert to one's responsibilities (*bu nimi*)" (Erekosima 1989: 376).

The point to note is that while the choice is presented to draw out from the student the subtlety of Kalabari character, there is the theoretical risk that the candidate may pick the counterfoil. The counterweight to that risk is that the candidate has been "schooled" and "advised" to choose the real ticket, the doctorate degree. Like a rational opera-goer, s/he would effortlessly pick the real ticket. The whole of his/her upbringing, his/her socialization and his/her commitment and perseverance have combined to bring him/her to the point where s/he is squarely on the path to making the right, expected choice.

It is germane at this juncture to use other illustrations to show more clearly when and where counterfoil choices are offered. The most dramatic and easily observable forms of counterfoil choices are offered in ceremonies (especially those of chieftaincy and wedding) and rituals marking major rites of passage. It also shows up in the commercial realm. One such appearance was the *aru-sein* ceremony at the height of the transatlantic legitimate commerce. During this time, when an apprentice-trader (apprentices were always young men) had completed his term, shown exceptional trading skills, impressive business etiquette, and demonstrated loyalty to his master, he would be launched by his boss as an independent trader. Some of the launching packages included trade goods, trade boats, financial capital, food, and other necessities. The launching of the prospective trader was society's economic accreditation and introduction of the young trader as an independent agent. The launching involved prayers and "commencement" speeches, at which time drinks were offered to ancestors and gods and the boss generously blessed the young man.

In most of the speeches the prospective independent entrepreneur was told that he now had the freedom to trade on his own, buy and sell with anyone he chose. He was also advised to personally negotiate his commercial transactions as he could not really rely on others to get him the best deals. Embedded in these counsels was a counterfoil choice test. On one hand, he was free to buy and sell with any suppliers in the hinterland who provided the produce of the African forest to coastal Kalabari merchants. On the other, he could not voluntarily trade with European merchants at the coast who exported African produce to Europe and also provided European manufactures to Kalabari merchants. He was permitted to only trade with the Europeans through his erstwhile master. Although he had been launched as an independent trader and told that he had the freedom to choose his business partners and to directly negotiate deals by himself, direct commercial contact with white traders was actually a counterfoil to the real choice of trading with Africans of the hinterland. If he were to deal directly with a white man without the approval of the chief of his house (likely his former boss) he could be severely punished, fined or even his business destroyed. He could only avoid such a repercussion if he had built up a sophisticated military machine to withstand that of the chief - a feat that was nearly impossible given that he was just beginning his career.

Also the advice given to him not to rely on others to negotiate deals for him contains an embedded counterfoil choice. With long-distance trade practices of the nineteenth century era determined by, among others, the lack of quick communications, it was impossible for any trader to personally negotiate all transactions when he had to rely on agents scattered over a large territory buying and selling to people of the hinterland. His personal involvement in all

business deals is a counterfoil to the real choice of building up reliable and trustworthy assistants and to replicating himself in order to expand his business.

On a more mundane level, counterfoil choices are also given in the daily course of life. Parents and elders use them as training devices to inculcate certain cultural values into their children and wards. An adult who is presented this type of choice at wedding or chieftaincy installation ceremonies recognizes it because of the training s/he has undergone as a child to recognize them and make proper decisions. No Kalabari person ever encounters for the first time counterfoil choices in aru-sein, chieftaincy, or marriage ceremonies. A question arises as to why this type of choice is offered? As the examples given below demonstrate, the choice is generally not given to test intelligence. It is not a Kalabari version of the famous intelligence quotient test. For lack of a better term, it can be described as a "culture wisdom quotient" test designed to test an individual's understanding of important cultural values and norms and their contextual applications. The Kalabari make daily choices in politics, economics and religion without resorting to the technique of counterfoil choices. They only resort to the device of counterfoil choices to transcend the limited capability of plain "either-or" choices when confronted with the need to probe for deep understanding of those values that they say define their national character and ethnic identity.

Counterfoil choices, although widespread and important as we will show below, are not as visible as other aspects of the culture like dressing. The researcher needs a solid understanding of the culture, the Kalabari national character, and patience in order to discern their occurrences in ceremonies, rituals and daily conversations. To make matters worse Kalabari do not have one word that fitly captures the phenomenon. These are four of the terminologies they use to describe the essence of the phenomenon. First, *krakrateye sele* - make the proper (right, wise, true) choice. Second, *mbi saki* - pick cannon ball. This term captures the counterfoil choice phenomenon of chieftaincy installation ceremonies. Another is *krakrateye miye* - do the right thing. Finally, *torugbeye miye* - do that which gains approval. These terms indicate, the "test taker" is being examined to discover if s/he is wise enough to make the right, culturally acceptable choices. Multiple alternatives (like bucket and basket or cannon ball and yam) are offered to create dramatic tension and to ensure that the selection of the proper object or response is not *fait accompli*<sup>2</sup>.

This section would not be complete unless we put in broad perspective the relation between counterfoil choices and other techniques Kalabari use to maintain, promote, and preserve their ethnic identity and national character. So far this author's investigations have shown that there is a quadrilateral system that is used to manage and to give meaning to Kalabari ethnic identity. Apart from counterfoil choices, which this paper is concerned with, the others are "aristocratic ideal," "concept of fairness" and "nyemoni." The Kalabari aristocratic ideal refers to a combination of stylishness, an admiration for nonchalant achievement, self-control, decorum, and dignity. Fairness in Kalabari is not a certain number to be reached nor is it nearness to a certain idealized benchmark. Fairness or equitable allocation is when each party to a distribution is happy. Fairness is not an equal distribution of resources, it is fair when each person likes his or her bundle of resources and would not be better off given the other person's share. It is fair when no one says (at least publicly) that his or her portion is worse than the other's. Each preferred his/her bundle. To fret and froth over resources is to show lack of self-

control, dignity, and decorum. What one receives in a distribution, like any other achievement, must be treated with same nonchalance. Nyemoni means 'covet your own.' It is considered unacceptable to envy, at least publicly, the bundle of another person. To the Kalabari, a person who does not envy what belongs to another person is one who is not greedy and does not worship or revere his/her possessions. Such a person is capable of treating his/her successes with nonchalant concern. The workings of the quadrilateral system are explained below.

#### LIFE CYCLE AND COUNTERFOIL CHOICE: AWOME (birth to age 15)

This group ranges from infancy to the fifteenth year. At this phase, the child is oriented to his/her immediate environment, taught the rudiments of the culture and encouraged to develop kinship ties within the house. By the time a boy is 15 years old, he may have at least five years of helping his father in the latter's productive ventures. The girl has matured into helping the mother clean the house, cook and earn supplementary income. During this phase, a child's social activities are mainly limited to immediate family or house circles.

Children at this phase learn the folklore and moral tales of the society in moonlit nights while at the same time having fun. The educational process is informal and largely self-instructional but it is a process that is overseen by every adult in the community, as the conduct of the child is monitored by all elders. "Acculturation in Kalabari is the responsibility of everyone in the society for the Kalabari believe that *Tubo iyibo iyi ama pirim* (parents bear a child for the community). Therefore, any disgrace a child brings reflects not only on its family but on the entire society" (Erekosima et al 1991:139).

A major goal of this phase of the child's development is the acquisition of a specific, preferred Kalabari character. Horton (1966:179-180) called this preferred character, "The Kalabari aristocratic ideal". This ideal has three parts to it. First there is *asa*, meaning stylishness and flamboyance, youthfulness, good living, grace and dash. According to Horton (1966), Kalabari has an almost ruthless respect for wealth and power but it is at the same time a highly conditional respect:

"a man who renounces the chasing and courtship of women, fine clothes, good food, dancing, conviviality, and other luxuries for the single-minded pursuit [for] money or power, a man who lives in dirty rags and drinks pure garri today so that he may be rich tomorrow; such a man is despised. Whatever he does a man should always live with a certain style and grace"(Horton 1966: 180).

The second component is:

"an admiration for nonchalant achievement, for a man brings off his successes without the appearance of concern. The final component is the quality referred to as *bu nimi* - knowing oneself. This implies self-control, balance, restraint, decorum and dignity"(Horton 1966).

Early in their lives, Kalabari children are given counterfoil choices in order to prepare them for the Kalabari aristocratic ideal. A child between eight and twelve seen publicly crying for food will be given palm oil by his/her mother after several attempts have been made to calm him/her down or to inform him/her that food is on the way. When the child is handed the palm oil s/he will be advised to rub it on his/her neck, walk round the house and swallow it, or keep quiet and wait for the food. It takes only a few moments for the child to realize that swallowing

the house is a counterfoil to the choice of keeping quiet and showing self-dignity in the face of adversity. The child learns that s/he has to resist his/her impulses and generally mortify the flesh so his/her Kalabariness can increase.

The child, if he is successful in life and latter comes to take a chieftaincy title (only men are installed as chiefs), will be asked questions about his ability to control his urges. Usually, at a chieftaincy ceremony the aspirant is asked if he is capable of resisting his libidinal impulses to promptly leave for community services when he hears a clarion call for action in the face of a new naked lover who is alone with him in the room. This question typically comes before the aspirant for the chieftaincy title is asked to make his choice between yam and cannon ball, another example of counterfoil choice described below.

A mother who suspects that her child is not behaving as a "wise Kalabari person" or behaving in a way she considers improper will present him/her with a bucket and a basket to fetch water from the well. The child has a choice between bucket and basket, but really s/he has only one choice since a basket, cannot hold liquid. The basket is the counterfoil to the bucket.

The Kalabari child is constantly given choices like this. When the male child is not with his mother, but spending time with his father and his father's peers, he may be tested in the area of drink. When Kalabari men sit down to talk and banter, they often share alcoholic beverages. The youngest in the group is usually given the responsibility of serving the drinks. The youngest is expected to serve himself last. Often by the time it comes to his turn what is left is only a small portion, just enough for him. He would be generously encouraged by the elders to drink it. Once again, the Kalabari child is not actually given a choice between taking the remainder or not. He will be severely rebuked if he drank the remainder. In Kalabari society, the last bits of drink in a bottle belong to the eldest in the group. When the male child is told to drink it, he is offered the counterfoil to determine his understanding of the culture. As much as he wanted to taste that drink, he has to offer it to the eldest who may then explicitly give him the permission to drink it. His restraint and good sense to ask for the permission, in the eyes of Kalabari, show his excellent upbringing. The child has brought off his achievements (sharing drinks with his father and his father's peers and also drinking the last bits of drinks in a bottle) with nonchalance, self-control and decorum. The child is also taught a similar lesson when he is invited to eat from the same plate as his father. His father may tell him that he can eat any of the fish and pieces of meat any time during the course of the meal, but the truth is that the choice is only available to the father. He can only wait for the father to pass some to him.

#### ASAWO OR YOUNG MEN (16 - 30 years)

At this phase, the child is considered fully matured and therefore exposed to the esoteric aspects of the culture. The child has grown up to take full responsibility for him/herself and to raise a family. S/he is particularly active in masquerade display clubs in order to learn how to dance and understand "drum language". It is important for the male child to be active in masquerade/dance club activities because for him to become a "complete Kalabari man" he has to understand drum language and dance very well. (Horton 1966). By the time the child reaches the upper limit of this age bracket, s/he has acquired the Kalabari national character and developed deep emotional ties to his community. The child is expected, therefore, not only to

defend the community in times of physical aggression against it, but also ensure that its ethnic identity is upheld.

Men in this category perform public duty and community service. The men in this category, as Erekosima (1989:125) puts it, "will generally operate as a loose corporate unit that undertakes burials for the community; extracts fines from those upon whom penalties have been imposed by the chiefs; and generally supervise tasks that need hard labor such as cutting the bush in the village agricultural plots. These are usually activities in the domain of community service". It is from this category that in precolonial times (pre Pax Britannica) soldiers were primarily recruited into the armies of the various canoe houses.

In 1879, Kalabari soldiers were faced with a counterfoil choice situation in a real war. In one of the battles during the Kalabari civil war of 1879 -1883, Chief Iyalla Yellow of the secessionist side gave his men a counterfoil choice. Iyalla, a lame general but deft at hand to hand battle, asked his men in the midst of a fierce battle to throw him at Chief Omekwe Horsfall, one of the foremost generals of the nationalist side. He said that if only he could get to Omekwe, he would kill Omekwe with his bare hands. Iyalla's men knew the difference between real choice and its counterfoil and, therefore, declined to catapult their commander as a human cannon ball.

Parents teach children the Kalabari aristocratic ideal, and often choose unexpected circumstances to teach their wards the high points of the ideal. There is a story of a father's attempt to find a job for his teenage son in Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State. As the story goes, on a beautiful day in the early 1980s, a Kalabari chief said to his unemployed son, "Follow me, I am taking you to Dr. Wigwe, the State commissioner [secretary] for education. Son, this morning I will introduce you to Wigwe and he will give you a job." The son walked a step or two behind the father. The old man, in his 70s, was tapping the ground with his cane in the fashion that says "I am a Kalabari chief and I am very important in this State." During the trip to Dr. Wigwe's office the father repeated several times, "Son, I am personally taking you to Dr. Wigwe who will give you a job in his ministry." Now inside the government secretariat, on their way to Wigwe's office, they met a female Kalabari receptionist who was a little surprised to see the chief, a long retired civil servant, in the government offices that morning. She politely asked him what had brought him and his son to the secretariat. The man proudly told her that he had come to see Wigwe for a job for his son with a high school diploma. Emphasizing, "today, Wigwe will give my son a job." The receptionist escorted them to Wigwe's lounge where all those waiting to see the commissioner rested. The old man filled the necessary forms and sat down to wait. He waited for hours, but his turn never came to see the "big man." When he thought he had waited long enough, he gracefully stood up and softly told his son, "Yewa so wari mu. Wigwe bem ori enete iyeribia bee, yariso ariete oreribia. Kalabarinabo amenebu ke sikiri kuroma kuromaa," meaning "Let us go home, if Wigwe says he cannot see me, I cannot see him either. A Kalabari person does not put himself/herself in an undignified (subordinate, inferior, demeaning) position." On this note, he tapped his walking stick on the rugged floor and left the lounge. On the way out of the secretariat he stopped at the office of the receptionist who asked him how his meeting with the commissioner went. He replied, "My daughter, I am going home. If Wigwe says he cannot see me I cannot see him either. A Kalabari person does not put himself in an undignified position." Kalabari say the lesson the father was impacting to



his son was that a Kalabari person should not renounce all dignity, style and grace in the pursuit of any goal. The guiding principle is *bu nimi* - "know yourself," know that you are a Kalabari person.

#### OPUSAWO ORIGINTEMENI (orìgentlemenì) AND ELDERS (40 and above)

Opu-asawo constitute the advisory group for the chiefs (heads of canoe houses) and king in any community. In community-wide meetings, they with their chiefs represent their canoe houses and they offer partisan support to their individual house heads. In house gatherings an opuasawo will represent his segment of the house. They assist the king and chiefs in settling disputes and serve as the diplomatic emissaries. Opuasawo acts as the reference group to the asawo and bear the task of explicating esoteric knowledge of the culture to categories of those coming after them. It is usually from this group that you will find people with extensive knowledge of local history and various legends concerning Kalabari ethnic identity and heroic acts.

Except in certain worship and sacrifice services where specific priests are required, any member of this group may act as temporary spiritual leader of a house or community during public religious engagements. In their individual families they also act as priests. It is assumed that by their age they are less likely to make mistakes in rituals. Since Kalabari is a society that accords respect to its elders because of their age and "proximity" to the ancestors, if a man or woman lives to be an elder, he or she enjoys tremendous respect and exercises enormous authority. Yet in a sense, these elders are always on their toes. Kalabari remind elders in authority that they must constantly look out for counterfoil choices so as not to lose the respect and authority they enjoy. There is this popular saying, *obogibo simeari wari obori kpogi bu iyiyia*, meaning "in a house with an elder, a goat does not suffer the pains of parturition tied to a rope." The man or woman in authority has the choice to make an offender serve out his term of punishment, but the offender must not suffer unduly.

The point is that the choice to use one's authority to lead and punish is severely curtailed by a greater principle not to punish beyond decency, not to allow "bad things to happen in one's domain of authority." Just as they say to their gods who are also in authority position, Kalabari will say to an elder who crosses the line, *agu nsi owi baka kuma, en k"o karare sin en dugo k"o piri ba* - "when a spirit becomes too furious, people will tell him or her the wood s/he was carved from." Even when dealing with their gods, spirits and deities (who even enjoy greater authority compared to elders), Kalabari present a perpetual offer of counterfoil choice to the spirit beings. Kalabari say it is worship and reverence that increase the powers of a god, and this they say is in the nature of all spiritual contacts between them and their gods. So Kalabari gods who have been neglected can demand more attention by being more furious. Generally, every god has the choice to be furious and dangerous in order to get more attention or to elect to just abide with whatever reverence and attention it is fortunate enough to receive. If a god ever exercises the first option of being more dangerous and uncontrollable, Kalabari will say to it, *agu nsi owi baka kuma, en k"o karare sin en dugo k"o piri ba* - "when a spirit becomes too furious, people will tell him or her the wood s/he was carved from." If a Kalabari god becomes too demanding or more dangerous than useful, people can unanimously annul its power by

refusing to reverence it.

#### ALAPU AND IYA-WOMEN (chiefs and their most prized wives)

Chiefs are the leaders of the various canoe houses, which are the administrative units of the community. A man becomes a chief in one of three ways. He may inherit the post from father, uncle or brother. Members of the house may elect him to the post after the death of the ruling head, or he may be permitted by the ruling chief to create a new stool for himself in recognition of his wealth and support for the house. Usually a Kalabari chief is a man of wealth, able to provide military defense for his house and community. He is also a man of many wives, many of whom would be married according to iya (most lawful and expensive marriage in Kalabari) rites. The primary functions of a chief are to administer the house, grow the corporate wealth of the house and protect and promote the well-being of its members. If he does his duties well he enjoys the confidence of the house members and the high honor, authority, and privilege that usually pertain to the office. If he were to perform at sub-par level, he would not only lose respect, members of the house might remove him from office.

The application of counterfoil choices is no where more pronounced and dramatic than at the installation ceremony of a man taking a chieftaincy title. The ceremony involves the aspirant picking any one of two items placed before him: a yam and a cannon ball. Yam symbolizes a man's ability and commitment to feed his house members - all evidence of self-centered well being as against risk taking on the state's behalf. The yam is actually a counterfoil to establishing that the aspirant is willing to serve the community and the community can rely on him to defend it. It is not an item of choice, but rather represents the wrong side of choice. A cannon ball represents his capability and financial means to defend his community in wars, his commitment to the greater public good as distinct from his personal domain of authority, and his reliability. Usually, the cannon ball is selected - no one can become a state (se or ama) recognized chief without choosing the cannon ball. As soon as a man selects the cannon ball his house supporters will shout to high heavens his praises and those of his ancestors.

Much as men regard the chieftaincy title as the crowning glory of a Kalabari man's achievement, their female counterparts consider the iya marriage the apex of a woman's success - more so if she is an iya-marriage wife of a chief. Apart from child bearing and rearing, iya women are practically idle and carry themselves with a great deal of pride, behaving like the aristocratic ladies of Victorian England. They exercise a lot of influence in their husbands' houses, controlling servants, adopted children, and lesser wives of their husbands. They occupy an acknowledged superior position in the society, conferred on them by their husbands' wealth and their conspicuous idleness. In a society where everybody has to work much distinction is gained by conspicuous idleness, which is evidence of leisure.

An iya marriage is not complete until the bibife ceremony (literally "buying of mouth") is undertaken. Bibife signifies three things. First, it signifies a stage in a lawful or full marriage which gives the bride the right to eat in the husband's house. In the traditional Kalabari towns, a wife for whom the bibife has not been done can cook for her husband, but will have to take her meals and snacks to her parents' house or a house other than her husband's or his relatives' to eat. Second, bibife signifies the man's responsibility towards the wife and his capability and

willingness to feed her for the rest of her life. Finally, it signifies and crowns the new communion between the two families.

The bibife ceremony involves serving the bride with innumerable courses of food. At the appointed time, usually in the evening, the bride is taken to the bridegroom's home and presented with different varieties of food. She is given the choice to taste and even eat them, after a member of her family has examined the foods and certified that they have all been well prepared and contain all the right ingredients. To dramatize the fact that she has a choice to eat from all bowls of food placed before her, she will be given water to wash her mouth, next she is given water, soap and a hand towel to wash and clean her hands. Then a woman from her family takes items from each bowl and enticingly presents them to her to eat. The bride turns her face away from the direction of the enticing food. This offer and refusal ritual is repeated several times. On each occasion, the bride refuses the offer because she knows that the whole set of food belongs to her and the man who ordered their preparation is her husband. She equally knows that the choice to taste and eat is a counterfoil choice. She has the man, his wealth, and his promise to feed her for life, and she must bring off this success without any appearance of concern. She must carry herself with grace and style, self-control, restraint and dignity. Part of the aristocratic ideal is nonchalance in the face of a test and "knowing oneself" (*bu nimi*). The aroma of the foods and the incessant prodding to eat must be distracting to the bride, but all through the ceremony she maintains her sense of balance, dignity and self-control in order not to fall for the food, not to grab what is already hers.

As much as bibife is "distracting," it does not compare with the "distraction and drama" of parading the bride to the bridegroom's home. It is quite a spectacle to watch a Kalabari bride being escorted to the bridegroom's place. In the early hours of the evening, she is gorgeously dressed and taken to her groom's house with a gas lamp and many praise songs. Women supporters escorting her make jokes and do every thing to make her laugh. Single men who are watching from the sides as she is being paraded hurl insults and scoff at her. Some of them say they had slept with her and she is no good. They do not mean all that they say, the insults are all part of the fun of the evening designed to make her laugh or loose her temper. All through the evening, jeering, singing and praises, she keeps a tight upper lip. Although, she has the option to laugh or frown, it is not exercisable. Laughing, frowning, and verbal responses are only the counterfoil to the real choice of keeping a tight upper lip. Self-control, dignity, decorum and nonchalance are what is expected of a Kalabari woman in this counterfoil choice situation.

Before this fateful evening, during the period of courtship, the woman would also have been faced with several instances of counterfoil choice. When a Kalabari woman visits her prospective parents-in-law, she will be offered food and advised to eat. The proper thing for her to do is to reject the food and ask for water to drink. When the bibife ceremony has not been done, it is considered a serious breach of etiquette for a bride to eat in her prospective parents-in-law's house.

The lesson of the chieftaincy, bibife and the evening parade is also encoded in a Kalabari proverb about the chick and kite. Kalabari say the crying chick that is in the clutches of a flying kite is not saying that whatever is holding it should release it, the chick is only crying so that its owners would know the cause of its death. The poor chick, which in this case portrays a Kalabari character type, is not crying for choice between becoming the dinner for a hungry kite

and regaining his freedom. Freedom is not an alternative to the clutches of the kite. The chick knows that whatever is holding it is not going to voluntarily release it. Besides, if it were let go by the kite, it would crash to the ground and die. Given all this, freedom is not a choice it can make; such choice is only a counterfoil choice. Thus, it has to show self-control, balance and decorum in the face of crisis. Nonchalance in the face of crisis passes a message to his owners.

## ANCESTORS

Ancestors are presented as part of the Kalabari life cycle because life is deemed not to end with physical death, but continues in another form in the next world. "The idea of survival after death is essential to the theoretical model which Kalabari use to cope with the vicissitudes of every day life. The ancestors underpin the strength of the lineages, and punish those who contravene lineage norms. They and their actions account for many of the fortunes and misfortunes both of the lineage and of their individual members" (Horton 1970: 68). Death, especially for an elder, is therefore a horse he rides from mortality to immortality. Death is a means of emerging as a new ancestor to join the tripartite spiritual scheme of the community.

Thus every traditional Kalabari person looks forward to being "canonized" as an ancestor after physical death to enjoy the privilege of being offered food and drinks as a spirit in return for services for his or her relatives still alive, but not every person can become an ancestor just as not every man can become a chief. Conditions that qualify a person to become an ancestor include dying after age 50, burial in the hometown, not passing away in abnormal circumstances such as suicide, child birth, drowning, or death accompanied by sores or infectious diseases, general swelling of the body and elephantiasis. The person should not be known as a wizard or witch, be of integrity, honesty and supportive of house and community. These rules are not mere conditions that qualify a person for his or her place in the world beyond the grave, they go beyond that. If a person does not meet them before death, the person's corpse will suffer for it and the person will have brought disgrace to the living relatives. Horton wrote that "people who die in any of these ways [abnormal circumstances] are considered to have brought abomination to the community. They are wrapped in mats, and are buried as quickly as possible, without any coffin, in a special tract of mangrove reserved for the "bad dead." After burial, special priests purify the village. People who have died in this way are not normally called upon when lineage members invoke their ancestors. Indeed, the funeral rite performed for them has the effect of severing all ties between themselves and the living (Horton 1970:63).

Before riding the "horse of death" to the world of the ancestors, the dying person considers two final alternatives. He may choose to die lying supine or face-down. Kalabari say "ibo so fi, peni so fi," meaning face-down is death, face-up is death. Technically, a person may decide to face death in either of two ways. But like all other counterfoil choices, the freedom is deceptive. For if one were to die face-down, one would be declared a wizard or witch which automatically forecloses the chance of ever becoming an ancestor. A person who at death cannot look skywards to the creatrix (tamuno, the supreme being) to declare his or her innocence, but rather hides his or her face does not deserve to be an ancestor. Kalabari believe that only the taking of

human life by witchcraft and sorcery will precipitate the turning away of a dying person's face from tamuno.

The death of an iya woman provides another opportunity to choreograph counterfoil choice drama. When such a woman (assuming she qualifies to become an ancestor) dies, her husband and her father's houses will stage a mock battle for the corpse. Both sides have the choice of winning the battle and claiming the body for burial, but for the husband's side, winning is actually the wrong choice. The real choice is to succumb to the father's house. The customary practice is for the woman to be buried by her father's house. For Kalabari say, *meni febo igba fea*, "he who bought the body did not buy the bones."

## PIVOTAL ROLE OF COUNTERFOIL CHOICES

There are three principal elements or principles that define and give meaning to Kalabari ethnic identity. They are (i) the aristocratic ideal; (ii) the concept of fairness; and (iii) the philosophy of *nyemoni* ("covet your own"). Counterfoil choice is the linking mechanism between these elements. First the task of deciphering the link by examining the connection between the counterfoil choice and aristocratic ideal will be discussed.

Counterfoil choices are offered in rites and the daily course of life to teach and reinforce the three components of the aristocratic ideal. Counterfoil choices signify the Kalabari "carefree nonchalance in the face of serious threats to life" not only for the decision-maker, but also for the community or the administrator of the choices. Kalabari hold the view that a person in all circumstances must show balance and self control, nonchalantly breezing and bluffing his or her way through every serious test of his or her social standing, yet passing it faultlessly all the same (Horton, 1966: 181). The drama of counterfoil choices captures the essence of this view.

The series of counterfoil choices we have examined illustrate the essence of the aristocratic ideal: a Kalabari person does not fret over what is already his/her own. Concern or fret, mixed with a tinge of detachment, is only entertained while one is in the process of achieving or actualizing one's goals. Once a person obtains a goal, s/he needs not be aggressive, possessive or celebratory. Hence, Kalabari emphasize the need to show balance and judgment in matters like this and generally in the affairs of life. Kalabari say it is their learned ability to work the fine line between decency and dignity on one hand and recklessness and crudity on the other that distinguishes them from their neighbors. All this is summed up in the proverb, *kalatubo numua ebem o ebiriari. Ogbogibo ebiri kuma ebem o numute*, meaning, "when a child is mad they say he is recklessly exuberant but when a man is recklessly exuberant they say he is mad." A man who for the first time buys a Rolls Royce should comport himself as an aristocrat who has had such luxury for the whole of his life. The *nouveau riche* that suddenly buys the expensive car should show the graces and carriage of someone born into aristocratic families. The point is that what has been achieved should be treated with nonchalance while remaining alert to the responsibilities one has obtained.

Kalabari will say a person who fails to *asa ti*, show style and grace, under such a situation lacks the beloved Kalabari aristocratic ideal. Second, the inability to remain composed, to appear detached to a highly valuable material acquisition, to treat a big achievement as if it were an everyday occurrence, indicates that the person worships material possession. Those

who worship material things are regarded as greedy and do not covet what they own. The thinking is that a contented person is without greed and covets only those things that are personally owned.

The question that comes up at this point is that 'why will a culture that is competitive and fluid, with an almost ruthless respect for wealth and power, expect its members to covet what is only theirs?' The answer comes from the connection between the philosophy of nyemoni, the aristocratic ideal and the Kalabari concept of fairness. As shown below, it is the concept of fairness, that strengthens counterfoil choices, the aristocratic ideal, and the philosophy of nyemoni. Fairness in Kalabari is not a certain arithmetic number to be reached nor is it nearness to a certain idealized benchmark. Fairness or equitable allocation is when each party to a distribution is happy. Fairness is not equal distribution of resources, it is fair when each person likes his or her bundle of resources and would not be better off given the other person's share. It is fair when no one says (at least publicly) that his or her basket of consumption or endowment is worse than the other's. Each preferred his or her bundle. To fret and froth over resources is to show one's lack of self-control, dignity and decorum. What one receives in a distribution, like any other achievement, must be treated with same nonchalant leisureliness. Now this concept of fairness works because it is rooted in and adheres within the ambiance of the philosophy of nyemoni. It is considered unacceptable to envy, at least publicly, the consumption bundle of another person. In Kalabari thinking, a person who does not envy what belongs to another is person who is not greedy and does not worship or reverence possessions. Such a person is capable of treating successes with nonchalant concern. For example, the Kalabari would say Midas was a bad person, because he was so greedy that he jealously guarded his gold and ruined his life by turning everything he touched into gold. He broke the cardinal rule of nyemoni and lacked the finesse of nonchalant concern to achievements.

Perhaps, it is germane to ask how the system of counterfoil choices and the three elements (aristocratic ideal, the concept of fairness and nyemoni) relate to the trading culture of the Kalabari. Is this quadrilateral system a response to the needs and strategy of their trading environment? The issue is to what extent are the management tools Kalabari use to preserve their ethnic identity explainable by their mercantilist culture? I do not pretend to have the definitive answer to this question. Fuller answers must await another (comparative) study, however, a tentative answer might be the following.

While the connection between the four concepts of counterfoil choice, aristocratic ideal, fairness and nyemoni have been explored, the juxtaposition of the four elements and the fundamental driving force of Kalabari society, namely wealth accumulation and ruthless respect for wealth and power needs discussion. The connection will yield insight into how Kalabari managed income inequalities that arose during their four hundred years of involvement in the transatlantic trade. The concept of fairness as worked out in Kalabari society has another pillar of support. It is based on the recognition that certain individuals may enjoy one good more than another may and might have a relatively low utility if all are required to consume at the point of equality. The usefulness of this pillar is in the recognition that it allows the actual distribution of goods or resources to deviate from "perfect equality. This deviation, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when Kalabari was involved in the transatlantic trade, held the possibility that income could be accumulated for productive use

and profits therefrom would trickle down to the less fortunate members of society. This conceptualization of equity or fairness was supportive of business. The definition of equity obviated the need for any desirable benchmark of equality and thus deflected any attack on the rich out of envy (Wariboko 1997: 78-80). Second, in keeping with the aristocratic ideal, the rich did not need to treat wealth as it were it was the be-all and end-all of life, yet were alert to the responsibilities of conserving and growing it.

The connection between the quadrilateral system and trade needs to be further stressed. This system, especially the fairness component, made it possible for the populace who do not benefit as much from the transatlantic trading boom as the elite chiefs to accept their fate in equanimity. The acceptance of one's fate was anchored on the cultural practice that those who were well to do provided for those who were less fortunate. All four components constituted a kind of ethics system that created support for the trading culture, legitimated the accumulation of wealth, and minimized, if not eliminated, direct confrontation between economic classes. This is not to say that there was a causal law linking these four phenomena to success in trading, but only to identify congruencies and relations between trading and wealth inequality on one hand and the values of society. The four components of the quadrilateral system played some kind of legitimizing functions in the arena of class relations. This argument implies that the Kalabari society (a trading culture) selected and promoted ideas which better corresponded to its needs, without saying that their origins are to be found in economic and social relations of the society.

Another aspect of the connection between the four elements and trading practice is rooted in the "mystery" Kalabari needed to maintain as group in terms of access to its European customers or suppliers. In precolonial times, the white man was still regarded with awe in Eastern Nigeria; Kalabari, and those who worked and traded with Europeans, shared part of that awe and mystique. There was business reason in maintaining a sense of superiority over their hinterland suppliers and buyers who they had occasionally suppressed with guns and cannons supplied by Europeans, and in differentiating their identity from those of their neighbors. There was the need to maintain a monopoly access to European merchants and to differentiate themselves from such groups as Bonny and Nembe-Brass (precolonial city-states in the Eastern Niger Delta) which had similar access. Eastern Niger Delta business people during the precolonial and colonial periods liked to carry themselves with a mysterious air of supremacy and devised elaborate schemes to maintain this as a psychological advantage. This is not to say Kalabari developed their aristocratic ideal in response to trade with Europeans. They were keen businessmen in their own right before the transatlantic trade. Talbot (1932:9) remarked early on that "they are people of great interest and intelligence, hard-headed, keen-witted, and born traders. Indeed one of the principal agents here, a man of worldwide experience stated that, in his opinion, the Kalabari could compete on at least equal terms with the Jew or Chinaman".

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the nature and role of counterfoil choice in Kalabari culture. The characteristic feature of counterfoil choice is that whenever A is offered, Kalabari put its

negative, B to show the person where the decision should not go. Actually, the two items are not alternatives, for "A," is the target item and B is only its counterfoil. The major results of this exploration are: counterfoil choices principally occur at major rites of passage where status changes are made, and are given in situations where it is necessary to force people to rethink their actions or behavior. When Kalabari offer counterfoil choices in their dramatic rites or in the ordinary course of life, they are not necessarily testing the intelligence of the participants or their attentiveness to the sequence of the rite or the immediate environment. The participants are being tested for a particular character trait the Kalabari community holds very dear - the Kalabari aristocratic ideal. People imbued with the Kalabari aristocratic ideal accept their important achievements with extreme nonchalance, picking their way through their prized choices in life as though they were merely incidental to their counterfoils. Counterfoil choices are offered to teach those qualities that Kalabari say define their national identity. Counterfoil choice is a dynamic tool developed to manage adaptation to change by an African culture facing enormous external influences. It was also geared towards maintaining a real or imagined sense of superiority in dealing with business clients. The Kalabari story is a story of a struggle to preserve and reconfigure ethnic identity in the face of modernization and the exigencies of a precolonial trading environment. Management of ethnic identity using counterfoil choices appears then to be a strategy for corporate action, in the sense of a group of people using their ethnic identity to ensure their survival as a distinct group and to differentiate them in a competitive marketplace. The Kalabari needed to set themselves apart from fellow groups of traders like the Bonny and Nembe-Brass in the Eastern Niger Delta. Whether in the time of gunboat diplomacy as in precolonial Nigeria or in today's computer age as in New York, the pursuit of profits have driven business people to carry themselves with some mysterious air of supremacy and devise elaborate schemes to maintain this for psychological advantage.

Together with three other related techniques (aristocratic ideal, Kalabari concept of fairness and nyemoni), Kalabari exploited every opportunity to set themselves apart from competitors, and suppliers (whom they then dominated militarily) and to create an internally cohesive society which could withstand the pressures of the enormous cultural contact created by the transatlantic trade. Kalabari have responded to their exposure to foreign values, ideas, ways of life and cultural artifacts by selecting, incorporating and transforming borrowed, values, ideas and artifacts to create a new combination (ensemble) uniquely identified as Kalabari. Previous studies of this process of adaptation concentrated on the use of a limited number of materials (such as dress) to create and maintain ethnic identity, arguing that the adaptation process is anchored to the society's world view. By focusing on the easily observable, static connection between artifacts (like dress) and world view, they ignored the more intellectual, dynamic and complex processes involved in sustaining and transferring the core of Kalabari identity from one generation to another. This paper has described and explained the salient management tools or ideas that Kalabari have used from the nineteenth century to the present to preserve their ethnic identity.



## Notes

1. The idea of this paper came to me during discussions with Justice A. G. Karibi-Whyte and Dr. Tonye Victor Erekosima in February 1998. The author had separately engaged them in discussions about the real meaning of the yam and cannon ball symbolism in Kalabari chieftaincy installation ceremony. From the talks, I was able to distill the idea of counterfoil choices in Kalabari culture. All errors in interpretation are mine, neither knew that a paper on counterfoil choices would come. I thank the anonymous reviewers and editors of this journal whose comments were very helpful in clarifying many areas of the essay.
2. The Kalabari practice of giving potential decision-makers a choice and 'inducing' them to choose the alternative that makes the 'most sense' is similar to the choice Moses placed before Israelites as recorded in Deuteronomy 30:19. "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life..." Moses did not really make 'death' an option for the Israelites, it was only a counterfoil of the 'life ticket' and he thus carefully instructed them to choose life.

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AT ISSUE

## Africa Versus the West in the Court of Reparations

'MUYIWA FALAIYE

### INTRODUCTION

When Alex Haley's *Roots* was first serialized on Nigerian television in the 1970's, I was too young to appreciate it beyond seeing it as the story of slave trade. On the one side were the whitemen on a savage mission of capturing as many slaves as possible to work their ever expanding plantations. On the other side were the "innocent, peaceful and primitive" Africans unaware of other civilizations. The whitemen came and changed this scenario. They were "rapacious, brutal and callous". Africa lost many generations of young people, perhaps its most important resource. The result has been a retardation, in some cases a total stagnation, of the hitherto advancing African civilizations.

For these reasons, Africans of our time are demanding reparations for atrocities committed hundreds of years ago. The timing of the return of *Roots* to the Nigerian Television screen in 1992 was anything but a coincidence<sup>1</sup>. It clearly shows how far television can be used to whip up national sentiments in support of the crusade for reparations for the 'injustices' done Africa and Africans during over four hundred years of slavery and slave trade. *Roots* is a powerful recounting of those terrible days. No one in their right mind can refuse to condemn the obnoxious trade in human beings, whatever the reasons for it.

In this forum, I intend to raise some fundamental questions which I expect will crop up in the course of these demands for reparations. Such questions are already, albeit in another direction, being debated in the SORAC discussion<sup>2</sup>. When the modified version of this paper was first published in *The Guardian* (Nigeria), the controversy it generated lasted for more than a year. I admire the courage of the late Chief M. K. O. Abiola for almost single-handedly standing up against the intimidation and manipulation that resulted from demanding reparations for what he and his allies perceive as 'injustice and rape of Africa's resources, human and material. However, I must begin by concurring that reparation is good and dear, at least in these trying times, but the truth, I dare say, is better and dearer.

Using the facts of history, the polemics of philosophy and evidence in law, I simulate a court room situation<sup>3</sup> in order to examine how the demand for reparation will stand in the face of cross-examination. The petitioner is hereafter referred to as "Chief Africa". The defendant will simply be referred to as "Defence Counsel". My hypothetical judge is definitely not of Arab extraction, but a neutral observer.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i1a3.pdf>

## LITIGATION

Chief Africa: Your lordship, I pray this court to grant the sum of 800 billion U.S. dollars as reparation for the over four hundred years of slavery and slave trading. This is based on a conservative calculation of the lives lost, families separated, civilizations destroyed and other innumerable distortions that affected the lives of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora.

Defence Counsel: Chief, can you be more specific? Can you give us the exact number of lives lost, civilizations destroyed, families separated? Can you also tell us how many whitemen came to Africa to carry away millions of Africans?

Chief Africa: I cannot give you the exact number but certainly many lives were lost. Many whitemen came, but not as many as the slaves they carried away.

Defence Counsel: Does this mean only a few whitemen carried away millions of Africans as slaves? Could this have been done without the active connivance of Africans, influential ones for that matter?

Chief Africa: Certainly, there were African collaborators. Those were bad Africans.

Defence Counsel: Can you identify the Africans who collaborated with the whitemen?

Chief Africa: No, my lord, but history documents the names of key whitemen who were slave traders.

Defence Counsel: Don't you think the whitemen who 'carried' the slaves were bad whitemen?

Chief Africa: There are bad people in every society, my lord.

Defence Counsel: Since you know the slave traders, why don't you ask them or their descendants for reparation?

Chief Africa: We do not because we hold their entire race culpable in this crime. All whitemen are directly or vicariously liable because they all benefited from the slave trade.

Defence Counsel: If that is the case, should we not hold the entire black race equally culpable for the participation of a few "bad Africans"? You have also alleged that the whitemen disrupted a thriving civilization, comparable to those of the West. If indeed Africa had thriving civilizations, it would have been impossible for a handful of Europeans to subjugate millions of Africans as slaves<sup>4</sup>. As a matter of fact, we did Africa a favour by carrying some of you away as slaves and beginning to civilize you.

Chief Africa: My lord, I must object. This is a pejorative statement. Africans were certainly deceived and brain washed.

Judge: I'd like to agree with you, but you earlier said Africans were very wise. How was it they were deceived so easily?

Chief Africa: My lord, rum, umbrellas, mirrors and gun powder did the trick.

Judge: Objection overruled.

Defence Counsel: Have you also thought of asking the present generation of Africans whose forefathers supported and connived with the slave traders for reparation?

Chief Africa: My lord, that is an unfair thing to do. I have explained that the Africans who connived were deceived.

Defence Counsel: Chief Africa, have you asked the Arabs for reparation for the slaves they also carried away from East Africa? Or are you saying the Arabs were more humane in their slave trading activities and that Arab slave trade is more tolerable than western slave trade?

Chief Africa: My lord, we intend this to be the first step. Soon we shall turn to the Arabs.

Defence Counsel: Is it not true, Chief Africa, that your attempt to get reparations is not the result of any slave trade, but simply a way to escape the present economic situation Africans have put themselves in?

Chief Africa: This is not true, my lord. I agree, however, that the current economic situation has reminded us of the need for reparations.

Defence Counsel: May I ask what Africans have achieved in the almost one hundred and fifty years since slave trade officially ended?

Chief Africa: This is a misleading question. You people have not really left us alone. You have colonized us directly and indirectly.

Defence Counsel: Perhaps, but many African states have been ruling themselves for upward of thirty years.

Chief Africa: Yes, but you people stimulate crises and wars in order to divide and rule the continent indirectly. In any case, the West never wanted to leave the continent; we forced you to against your wish. You are still bitter about that. Are you not?

Defence Counsel: Your economies are in shambles, plagued by political instability. Your leaders are rapacious, despotic and greedy. Anarchy, deprivation, tribalism, corruption all thrive on the continent. Do you expect us to pay reparation for all these internal issues? What about the millions of dollars spent helping feed millions in Angola, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia? What about the thousands taken in as refugees in Europe and America?

Chief Africa: This is only paying back what was stolen from us.

Defence Counsel: I put it to you, Chief Africa, that your demand for reparations lacks merit.

Chief Africa: Your lordship, the defence counsel is unfair and biased.

Judge: I have listened to both the petitioner and the respondent. I shall adjourn to consider my judgment.

## JUDGMENT

I have considered with great attention to details the submissions of both Chief Africa and the defence counsel, trying to fathom the basis of the demand of Chief Africa for reparations. Is the demand for reparations really a legal issue?

My conclusion is that, indeed, it must be both legal and moral, with emphasis on the moral aspect. I acknowledge the fact that it is hairsplitting to draw a clear cut line of distinction between law and morality, nevertheless, both aim at the same goal -- justice and social harmony<sup>5</sup>. For the sake of social justice, I shall take the question of reparation as both a legal and moral issue. First, some legal points must be raised.

Chief Africa has failed to show how and why the West is culpable for the offence of slavery and slave trade. Societies have not always seen slavery as bad. Aristotle, one of the greatest philosophers that ever lived considered slavery as normal. Plato, his predecessor, did not think any differently. The goodness or badness of slavery is a function of the time or period in question. There were no anti-slavery laws at that time. If there are such laws now, they cannot be applied retroactively. It would therefore be absurd to assess the events of that period with contemporary values, mores and laws.

Secondly, the arguments for reparations cannot compel us to visit the sins of the father on the son. The law does not permit the son to stand for the offence committed by the father. It would amount to a miscarriage of justice for reparation to be paid by a generation which has not directly participated in the slave trade. I also fail to see how the generation which actually suffered during the unfortunate era of slave trade will benefit from reparations. How can we treat the issue of reparations like an inheritance to be passed from father to son?

Thirdly, I find it very difficult to decide on the locus standi of those demanding reparations in this court. The plaintiffs failed to show how they have, as individuals or as a group, suffered 'injuries' or have had their lives threatened by a trade which officially ended before our great-grand-parents were born. A citizen seeking to enforce public right must prove that he has been personally injured by the wrongful act or that a case in controversy exists between him and the defendant.<sup>6</sup> I do not think Chief Africa would suffer any injury if the demand for reparations is denied. In fact, Chief Africa would only be a 'busy body and a meddling interloper' in any demand for reparations.

I find the argument of Chief Africa on the culpability of the entire race amusing, yet compelling. I am aware that for years after the slave trade was officially abolished, many Africans refused to end it. Ingenious routes were opened by those Africans who made a fortune

out of the trade. It seems both races are culpable. Are we legally justified to ask a whole race to pay for the sins of a few? Methinks the entire episode represent the sins of a few against many. Legally, only the few are culpable. They must be found and punished. They have not been named as defendants in this case.

I must also comment on the relative ease at which millions of Africans were carried away by a few whitemen. I am surprised that such mundane things as rum, umbrella and gun powder could have led a people astray. Gun powder for what? Perhaps to help Africans destroy each other, as their history is replete with inter-tribal wars even before the slave trade. Some of these wars were waged with the singular aim of plundering. Furthermore, I would have thought those Africans whose grandparents connived with the slave traders would have been arraigned before a court of law and punished if found guilty. If this suggestion sounds naive, then the demand for reparations appears equally misplaced. Should charity not begin at home?

From the arguments of Chief Africa, it appears to me that the demand for reparations relies more on morality than on legality. Chief Africa appeals more to the conscience of the whiteman than any legal system. Morality is purely an internal thing<sup>7</sup> There are only moral obligations, not moral duties. Reparations must not be seen as a moral duty, but as an obligation Africans must first earn. I sympathize with Chief Africa, especially regarding the apparent poverty and political ineptitude of African leaders. If I had the power, I would ask the West to forgive all the debts owed by African nations, not as reparations, but in the spirit of social justice and global harmony. On the other hand, will debt forgiveness not violate legal and moral norms? Ought one to escape paying a debt?

My advice is that Africans should first tackle the problem of bad and light-fingered leadership. I remember Chief Africa's complaint about being deceived and brain-washed. I wonder if African leaders today can also hide behind this façade? I am almost certain that if reparation is paid today, such money will either find its way back to American and European banks or encourage more African leaders to consider extended terms in office. I only hope we shall not one day be arguing in a court of law for reparations from Europe for the money African leaders have kept in their banks or for encouraging African leaders and military heads to sit tight.

I suggest that what Africa needs today is not reparation but effective and purposeful leadership. Europe has not left Africa alone because African leaders have not left Europe alone. Moral values are at their lowest ebb, much lower than what they were when the whitemen first came. Without the people realizing it, many African leaders have sold their nations into another form of slavery, the slavery of debt.

Sadly, my hands are tied. I have a moral obligation to condemn the slave trade. I also have a duty to look at law from a purely legal point of view. Case dismissed.

## Notes

1. Alex Haley's *Roots* was first aired on Nigerian television in the 1970's. It suddenly reappeared on screen in 1992 at a time when late Chief M. K. O. Abiola was championing reparations. A coincidence?
2. I refer to the Ayittey Vs Mengara et al on SORAC discussion forum.



3. Dr. F. N. Ndubuisi refers to my hypothetical courtroom situation as kangaroo. Although hypothetical, the litigation is neither spurious nor bereft of logic and equity as he claims. See F. N. Ndubuisi 'Ethical issues in Reparation' *The Guardian* 18 October, 1992.
4. This argument was earlier developed by Professor Peter Bodunrin See P. O. Bodunrin 'The Question of African Philosophy' in H. O. Oruka (ed.), *Sage Philosophy* (London: E. J. Brill. 1991).
5. See R. M. Dias, *Jurisprudence* (London: Butterworths 1976) pp. 130-135.
6. See the case of Adesanya V The President of Nigeria (1981) 2NCLR p. 358. Also see Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya v. Professor Ishaya Audu (1981) 3 NCLR p. 529.
7. See J. I. Omoregbe, *Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Study*. (Lagos: Joja Educational Research Publishers Ltd., 1991), p. 33.
8. I owe the use of this term to Professor Ayittey.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Z.S. Strother. *Inventing Masks: Agency and History in the Art of the Central Pende*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1998.**

*Inventing Masks* is a nuanced art history of masquerades among the Central Pende of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire). Strother has divided the book into two interrelated parts. In the first half of the study, she concentrates on an analysis of the form and style of the masquerade's dance, costume, music, and masks. The emphasis in these sections is on the processes of invention, circulation, and interpretation of expressive forms in the contemporary setting. She devotes the second half of the book to a reconstruction of the art history of Pende masking in the precolonial and colonial eras.

Strother defines Pende masquerade as a performance, process and a set of cultural practices that are open to invention and negotiation over time and space. Her attention to agency, practice, and process situates her work within a growing body of studies of African expressive forms which have appeared over the last several decades. These studies have taken a similar performance approach. Few of these works are cited in the text, although they do appear in the bibliography. More surprisingly is the absence of the seminal theoretical works on agency, practice, and performance in her text and bibliography, although they have clearly influenced her approach and her analysis of Pende masquerades.

In the first three chapters Strother examines the Pende definition of masking where dance is seen as the critical expressive form. According to the Pende, dance sets the masquerade characterization. Strother first analyzes the basic structure and movements of masquerade dances, and then examines the ways in which music, song and masquerade costume build upon and illuminate dance characterizations. Throughout these sections she gives specific examples for the movement of expressive forms --individually or in tandem-- in time and space, underscoring the processes of invention and change. While this is neither an ethnography of dance nor of music, her insights on these expressive forms and their interrelationships in performance are compelling and suggest further avenues for research.

While attention to the masquerade performance is woven throughout the book, the focus of the core of her study remains an analysis and interpretation of the wooden masks that are created for these events. In chapter four, which is dedicated to sculptors' ateliers, she explores the dynamics of production and examines the innovations and inventions in mask forms and styles attributable to known individuals within the recent past. This section also addresses the mobility of sculptors and their entrepreneurial capacities in promoting their styles. Drawing upon specific cases studies of ateliers and artists' biographies, Strother briefly examines artistic apprenticeship and relates it to Pende notions of pedagogy.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i1reviews.pdf>

In the following chapter, Strother's discussion of Pende theories of physiognomy is an original contribution to African art studies. She first examines how Pende define maleness and femaleness in terms of physiognomic features. These definitions are closely linked to beliefs and values that constitute a Pende moral universe. She then discusses how individual artists abstract the same to create distinctively male and female masked representations. Strother argues that the awareness of the Pende visual vocabulary is critical for understanding how artists and audience read the physical characteristics of male and female in the wooden masks.

The subsequent chapter on "Learning to Read Faces" presents an excellent analysis of different readings of the Mbangú mask. This mask is identifiable by its half black and half white face. Strother analyzes two local Pende interpretations of the mask which are different, but stand as complementary dimensions of Pende beliefs about illness and sorcery. These two interpretations demonstrate the possibilities for variations in the reading of masks within the local setting. She then examines several misreadings of these masks by Western scholars. Her analysis of masks in Chapter Six reinforces her argument that while Pende theories of physiognomy constitute a coda which organizes the reading of faces, this coda does not constitute a fixed iconography in any art historical sense, but rather a set of formal attributes that allows for individual artistic expression within and across genres of masks.

The second part of the book is an original and important contribution to the field of African art history. Few Africanist art historians have yet attempted to write an art history of an African masquerade in the precolonial period. Strother clearly articulates her methodology and addresses the limitations of any precolonial reconstruction. Although many of her conclusions must remain tentative, she does develop a persuasive narrative by comparing sets of related masquerades over time and space and by drawing upon common principles which Pende themselves use to discuss the age of their masquerade.

The colonial era reconstruction is supported by published ethnographies, detailed field testimonies, and other documentary evidence. Strother discusses several of the major political and economic events of the colonial era in terms of what changes they wrought in Pende society. She then discusses how these changes affected the masquerades, themselves. In the last section of the book she moves beyond the colonial era to address the role of the audience in the processes of invention and reinvention of masquerade today. As part of this discussion, she locates the dialogue between sculptors, performers, and audience within the larger field of Congolese popular culture. While this section is not fully developed, it does suggest areas for further investigation.

This is an ambitious work. It is innovative in its approach and in its narrative style which includes extended testimonies from Pende, themselves. It is also rich in ethnographic detail and the sections on a precolonial and colonial art history of masquerades are valuable and should provoke more discussions of the nature of evidence, memory and of art historical methodology. While the book clearly holds a special interest for art historians, many of her insights will appeal to a broader interdisciplinary audience interested in the study of material and expressive culture.

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***Participatory Development: The Case of Zimbabwe.* John Mw. Makumbe. University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1996. Pp. 142, Paperback: \$18.**

*Participatory Development* examines the concept of participation in development as applied to Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. Makumbe begins by setting the conceptual framework through a review of selected literature on the subject as well as providing a summary of costs and benefits of participatory development. Although Makumbe admits the literature review is not exhaustive, Chapter One offers a good presentation of the various views and definitions of participatory development. For example, Makumbe notes that participatory development can be represented as a continuum of participation levels from passive participation, where donor or government initiated ideas are promoted, to active participation where the recipients are involved in all stages of a development project, including the evaluation.

Chapters Two and Three focus on institutions in Zimbabwe and their role in participatory development. In particular, Makumbe reviews local government structures, political parties, co-operatives, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Makumbe concludes that local government structures "fail dismally to facilitate meaningful beneficiary participation in development" (p. 61). Similarly, he sees cooperatives as failures due to mismanagement and corruption. NGOs, on the other hand, are viewed quite positively as a means of promoting participatory development, despite their limitations.

Chapter Four offers five case studies of participatory development in Zimbabwe. For each case, the problem and solution are presented, followed by Makumbe's evaluation of the project, both financially and in terms of participatory development. Overall, the analysis is limited since every case study involved some level of free resources that were not included in determining the viability of the project. For example, in the Buhera North Cattle Fattening Scheme, Z\$100,000 was donated to the group for the purchase of materials and construction of fences. Makumbe concludes that the group would need to get a price for the cattle that would equal the cost of the cattle and their feed, ignoring the start-up costs of the project. Although the financial and economic analyses of the case studies are weak, Makumbe addresses the sociological issues very well. In each case, for example, he considers the impact of the project on intra-household labor allocation and the effect of the new activity on other household responsibilities. He also considers the acceptance of some projects based on cultural values.

Makumbe concludes in Chapter Five that "the success or failure of beneficiary participation in development is highly dependent on the nature and context of a given programme or project" (p.107). He goes on to offer over thirty suggestions on how to ensure the success of participatory development projects. Although the suggestions are too numerous to mention here, one theme is the call for protectionism and preferential treatment of participatory development projects. For example, Makumbe states "it would be unfair to the poor for government to expect them to compete against vested interests and succeed in obtaining some developmental benefits" (p.109). He also states "there is an urgent need for selectively protective laws which will ensure that co-operatives receive preferential treatment in areas of marketing, access to credit and foreign exchange, and the availability of inputs" (p. 115). He

further suggests that co-operatives should receive goods and services at preferential rates or free of charge. In the same section, Makumbe says that co-operatives have no chance of survival without this preferential treatment. Given earlier statements that co-operatives are mismanaged and corrupt, it is not clear why he favors preferential treatment for them. While a case could possibly be made for initial preferential treatment to help a project get started, the fact that Makumbe states that a co-operative would have no chance of survival without continuing support suggests that they are simply not viable. Even without considering the economic arguments against protectionism, this theme is also contradictory with Makumbe's statements about the need to reduce reliance on outside assistance. For example, Makumbe concludes from the case studies that projects are likely to fail if the participants are not required to supply their own inputs.

Overall, the book is very well written, extremely well organized, and easy to read. Makumbe clearly meets his original purpose, which was to provide teaching material for the political science department at the University of Zimbabwe. Over one-third of the text focuses on local government structures and other institutions in Zimbabwe. The conclusions also heavily emphasize suggestions that are specific to Zimbabwe. Despite the focus on Zimbabwe, anyone interested in participatory development should find the book useful as an introduction to participatory development based on the material in chapter one and the generalizations that can be drawn from the case studies.

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**AFRICA: DILEMMAS OF DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE. Peter Lewis, ed. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998. pp. 456. Cloth: \$79.00; Paper: \$30.00.**

The relatively limited demand for Africanist scholarship in the United States provides fertile ground for edited volumes which appeal to larger audiences by bringing together the contributions of several scholars. Most of these books, however, are usually focused on one specific theme and occasionally display some variance in the quality of their different chapters. What was missing until now was a compendium of the best contributions to the political economy and comparative politics of African development in general. Peter Lewis has provided such a reader and, no doubt, it will henceforth be a staple of graduate-level or advanced undergraduate survey classes on African development.

Lewis reproduces some of the landmark journal articles on the political economy of Africa since the 1970s, adding introductory essays and a chapter of his own which stands up more than honorably among the milestone contributions surrounding it. Not surprisingly given Lewis' own work on the subject, the book opens with chapters on the different dimensions of neo-patrimonialism in Africa. Jackson and Rosberg's statement on personal rule, originally published in 1984 is only slightly less compelling than their classical piece on the persistence of weak states in Africa. Joseph's theory of prebendal politics, which explains the resource-like

nature of the state (1987) and Sandbrook's remarkably early discussion of the prevalence of patrons, clients, and factions in African politics (1972) round out the discussion.

In the second part, Ekeh's (1975) enduringly admirable discussion of Africa's two publics---primordial and civic, moral and amoral---sets the stage, better than any other piece could, for a discussion of societal attitudes toward the state. Azaria and Chazan (1987) provide the 1980s' perspective by looking at patterns of escape and "disengagement" in Ghana and Guinea. Lewis (1992), on the other hand, brings in the relative optimism of the early 1990s with a critical discussion of the potential of "civil society" to harness the state back into a more democratic mould. These three pieces flow remarkably well together and take the reader on a inspired shortcut through almost twenty years of African studies.

Next come discussions of the competing analytical categories of class and ethnicity. Sklar's (1979) landmark analysis of classes in Africa takes the reader back to a time when social scientists were puzzled by the lack of class conflict in Africa. His identification of the importance of other dimensions of class action, including class formation and class collaboration, did much to solve this apparent puzzle and to maintain class analysis as a relevant approach to the study of African development. The juxtaposition of Boone's (1990) now equally essential work on the making of a rentier class in Senegal brilliantly highlights both the continued relevance of the concept of class formation and the enduring failure of an indigenous bourgeoisie to accumulate and become an engine of capitalist development. The beauty of Boone's work comes from her capacity to derive the non-accumulative propensity of Senegal's bourgeoisie from the power strategies of state elites, sketching thereby a theory of African under-development from the concept of the fusion of political elites.

Less emphasis is brought upon ethnicity, despite its continued salience in many African contexts. The existence of numerous other volumes on this question may justify Lewis' choice. Since many of these volumes were actually written or edited by Rothchild, the latter's contribution to this book---apparently written for the occasion but based on his own prolific work---is as good a summary of the main issues as any. Furthermore, Rothchild's emphasis on policy solutions sheds a contemporary light on these questions and highlight the relevance of ongoing experiments in state-ethnic relations on the ground. Tripp's (1994) study of women's associations in Uganda and Tanzania seems slightly out of place, however. A crucial contribution to the critical literature on civil society, it may have fit better in the previous section; it appears here a bit as the token gender study along class and ethnicity.

The fourth part brings out some of the very best work on the hesitant democratic transitions of the 1990s. Bratton and van de Walle's (1994) piece in *World Politics* heralded their 1997 book which became an instant classic on the topic. Their focus on the nature of existing regimes as shaping the structures and contingencies of democratization experiences is not only a contribution to African studies but also one which has successfully challenged the broader literature on democratic transitions in comparative politics. Robinson (1994) also challenges the relevance of the democratization literature (largely derived from the study of Latin America) by stressing instead the specificities of African political culture. These two pieces are cleverly framed by two contributions whose contrasting tones belie the fact that they were published only three years apart. Diamond's (1993) paper more or less takes African democratization for granted, whereas Young (1996), whose prose remains unrivaled among Africanist scholars, already concedes the unevenness of progress across the continent.

Finally, the book ends on a more economic note. Killick's (1980) discussion of the relevance of development economics to Africa provides a balanced treatment of neo-classical economics, highlighting both the importance of price mechanisms for Africa as elsewhere, and the tendency of neo-classical economists to neglect deeper-seated constraints to African development. This chapter nicely sets the stage for Callaghy (1987) and Ravenhill's (1988) work on relations between African governments and the Bretton-Woods organizations on the one hand, and the fragile consensus on the content of structural adjustment policies on the other. Finally, Herbst (1990) reminds us that, if Africa's economic crisis has political roots, the medicine of structural adjustment in turn has political consequences too which have frequently sabotaged its implementation and needs to be taken into account in policy recommendations.

In a nutshell then, this is an indispensable and excellently edited collection of landmark contributions on the political economy of Africa, spanning some twenty five years of scholarship. It will bring numerous and powerful theoretical insights to the new student of Africa and provide the more seasoned scholar with a convenient shortcut to some of the best work in the field.

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**AFRICA: DILEMMAS OF DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE. Peter Lewis, ed. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998. pp. 456. Cloth: \$79.00; Paper: \$30.00.**

Peter Lewis' edited volume surveys what he calls some 'enduring themes' and current challenges of development in sub-Saharan Africa. His compilation includes some long standing standards in the study of Africa's political systems and processes. Although, I suspect that it presents no new material to scholars of the subject, it would be a good read for students. A very helpful aspect of this compilation, in addition to the selection of the articles, is Lewis' brief historical overview and an introduction to each section. These fast read sections by Lewis will be appreciated by students and non-political scientists like myself.

In an edited book, one key factor is the selection of the articles and the story that the collection tells. A few clarifications about the book are needed. Here, the catch-all term "development" is confined mainly to political systems and strategies except for Part V which deals with development economics and is a welcome inclusion. The collection of articles presents a very heavy US perspective with a small sprinkle of non-US views. The collection would have benefitted from a greater presence of an internal perspective. All the contributors were on the outside looking in. Given that the likely audience of this book will be students and non-political scientists, it might have been helpful to clarify old notions that reappear. One such notion is that African governments got onto the central planning band wagon by copying the Soviet Union. This idea leaves out the fact that Westerners contributed more than their fair share to this model.

Nonetheless, for a non-political scientist, the book was an interesting volume to read. Its different articles and their respective introductions give the reader an appreciation of the challenges to Africa's development and a time-line of landmarks in the evolution of the different theories and stages from decolonization to democratization. The complexity of the problems outlined here gives the reader a good feel for why the analysis of the subject matter is so difficult. At first I came away thinking the book focuses too much on the past, as have several recent books on the topic. But perhaps it is always timely to reflect on where we are on the subject of development as long as we also reflect forward now and then. Change is all around us and traditional categories, and even the lexicon of development, have to change. The anomalies are many and the evolving dynamics demand more comprehensiveness. Development studies, as one writer long ago pointed out, evolve in a series of revisionist surges. The collection in this volume is a good illustration of this. Someone in the profession gets an idea, it is developed, then followed by many others, until another is developed to modify the former. Unfortunately, the herd-effect, a result of the combination of our scientific, human, institutional systems, appears to be unavoidable. We can only hope that it will lead us to some synthesis of the different and mostly partial analysis given to us by the theories of modernization, dependency, state-centric, disengagement, etcetera. *Dilemmas of Development and Change* eludes to this, with a section on state-society relations, but handles it only marginally.

An important point captured by the book, a point that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have still to learn, is that such theories have to be geographically bounded. It is difficult to conceive of "a theory" on African development. To even attempt such, as some in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, do is pure arrogance or extreme naivete. The history and resources (in the broadest sense of that term) are just too different in spite of seeming similarities. Another observation that I made from reading this book is that its authors, and perhaps even the profession as a whole, seem to expect some unstated natural law of sequential and even rapid progression. But, as we all know, development is a very relative concept and cyclical. In the ways in which we (westerners) generally define it, the positive side of development occurs over the very long haul and can show not only very prominent ups and downs, but rapid reversals.

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**REFERENCE GUIDE TO AFRICA: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RESOURCES.** Alfred Kagan and Yvette Scheven. Lanham MD and London: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1999. pp. 272. Hardcover \$49.50.

The compilers of this reference book are two of the leading Africana librarians in North America. Both are among the established leaders of the Africana Librarians Council of the African Studies Association, and both have published important bibliographies. Kagan and



Scheven are careful to spell out in the front matter what their book does and does not include, and by whom they intend it to be used: "This guide lists and annotates the most important resources for the study of Africa. It is intended for students, teachers, librarians, casual inquirers, and serious researchers who are delving into unknown territory. It covers works dealing with the entire African continent." They thus grapple with a major problem of much scholarly writing: how to balance the differing needs of the specialist, the generalist, the expert, the novice, the scholar and the citizen.

The book raises a second problem: how can one volume cover a large topic both deeply and broadly? Or, is it enough to raise the reader's consciousness about what can and should be expected of reference tools in African Studies? A real strength of the book lies in the introductions to each chapter, which provide exactly that sort of direction and overview. Scheven also refers readers to David Henige's very important 1990 article in *History in Africa*: "Are Bibliographers Like Shortstops? Gresham's Law and Africana Bibliography" for a discussion of the quality of printed bibliographies (p.4).

The chapter on internet resources, necessarily, is a good effort at describing a rapidly changing subject in a way that will remain useful. Scheven and Kagan also note in their preface that the disparity between Africa and North America and Europe in terms of access to electronic resources means they intend to publish subsequent editions in paper as well.

The book contains 25 chapters, split between "general sources" and "subject sources." The former comprise: Bibliographies and Indexes; Guides, Handbooks, Directories, and Encyclopedias; Internet Sources; Current Events; etcetera. Subjects treated are: Agriculture and Food; Communications; Cultural Anthropology; etcetera.

There are Author/Title and Subject indexes. Kagan succeeded Scheven as African Studies bibliographer at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana; both have worked in a university with a major USDOE Title-VI African Studies program and perhaps the most important graduate school of library science. This last point influences the nature of this book. Scheven began, and Kagan continues to teach, one of the very few graduate courses on the Bibliography of Africa, from which the book springs. For example, the chapter on Libraries and Librarianship contains 80 entries, with another 38 listed under Publishing and Book Trade. This contrasts with 40 for anthropology, 46 for history, 47 under literature, and government's 50. The proportions are affected by the original core users being students of bibliography. It's customary to note the number of entries in a bibliography; this one contains 944. That figure is misleading, however, as there are not that many separate entries. Resources useful for more than one topic are entered as often as appropriate. Indeed, the same item may be entered twice in one chapter when it bridges categories; an example is NIGERIAN ARTISTS: A WHO'S WHO AND BIBLIOGRAPHY. This appears twice in the art chapter, fifteen entries apart, with distinct annotations discussing it as biographic and bibliographic tools.

Each chapter is meant to be a self-contained source, justifying the multiple, but topic-specific, entries. This is not always achieved, however; one will want to check all related chapters, along with the most general ones, to be sure of seeing everything of possible interest. The chapters on current events, government publications, statistics, and politics each contain important references not found in the others.

Fundamentally, this entire book is not a self-contained resource. A significant, if explicit limitation is the paradoxical result of the compilers' great expertise. Scheven is the compiler of

BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOR AFRICAN STUDIES, 1970-1986 That 615 page work (compared to this volume's 263 pages) was honored with the 1990 Conover-Porter Award of the (US) African Studies Association, as the outstanding reference book on Africa published in the previous two years. Its existence, along with a 176 page supplement for 1987-1993, and other major tools like John McIlwaine's *AFRICA: A GUIDE TO REFERENCE MATERIAL* (1993) mean that Kagan and Scheven can distill a core list while frequently reminding readers that these far more inclusive works support more focused research.

This is sometimes explicit: "country-specific and most region-specific titles were generally excluded due to their tremendous volume. The researcher can find such titles by consulting the databases, indexes, and bibliographies described" (p. vi). Thus Kagan, in the chapter on guides and handbooks, properly noting that for the *African Historical Dictionary* series, "depth, breadth, and quality vary greatly," refers readers for evaluations of specific titles to the Africa section, which he co-authored, in the American Library Association's *Guide to Reference Books*. It is less clear when the compilers have excluded works due to age. They are careful to note the cut-off for new material (November 1997). They also note that the topical arrangement of the book was determined by topics "which have stood the test of time" in their course. They do not indicate, however, whether they have tried to include only recent, or the most recent, solid works on a subject. Were excluded works deemed superseded, outdated, or sufficiently specialized to relegate to the higher tier of more inclusive guides? Was Hans Panofsky's still-valuable *A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AFRICANA, 1975*, for example, simply thought too dated?

Since this work aims at such a wide audience, and may serve as a guide for building as well as using reference collections, it might have been a good feature to have listed the Conover-Porter Award winners and runners-up, or to have noted the awardees in entries. Since the award began in 1980, fifteen books have won or shared the Conover-Porter Award, and since 1986 an additional 19 have received honorable mention. Nine award-winners are included, while 6 are not; of the runners-up, nine each are included and excluded, with one more folded into a subsequent winning book. Most of the excluded works likely fell into the country-specific category. Of two books not in English, one, in French, is included here; the other, in Portuguese, is not. One honorable-mention encyclopedia was published just weeks after the compilers' cut-off date.

But some award winning books look like they fell out for lack of a proper setting. One of two works to share the 1994 award was Thomas George Barton's *SEXUALITY AND HEALTH IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA*, a massive, 673 page annotated bibliography on AIDS in Africa. While formally published in Nairobi, and hence possibly considered out of the mainstream by the compilers, despite sponsorship by several US universities and institutes, it may simply be the lack of a chapter on health or medicine that excluded this highly important work on a frequently-sought topic. There are subject index entries for HIV and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, but only one book is so indexed, Tarver's *URBANIZATION IN AFRICA, A HANDBOOK*, an entry in the Geography and Maps chapter.

The stature of the compilers does reassure one that works included are good, and those excluded are either too specialized or have been superseded by others, and should inspire confidence in the usefulness of this work. The limitation to mostly works continental in scope, however, means that users will almost always use this work in conjunction with others. Its best value (and one the compilers certainly intend) is to raise awareness of what kinds of reference

tools, illustrated with exceptionally useful examples, to seek and expect regarding Africa. It is as much a textbook as a reference book (or more?). The combination of references to key resources within intelligent discussion of what comprises value, and at a reasonable price, recommend the book highly.

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**TERRIFIC MAJESTY: THE POWERS OF SHAKA ZULU AND THE LIMITS OF HISTORICAL INVENTION.** Carolyn Hamilton. Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1998. pp. 278, Cloth: \$39.95, Paper: \$18.95

Both scholars and readers of popular historiography in South Africa have long been fascinated with Shaka Zulu. Carolyn Hamilton revisited a range of oral and archival sources, and by deftly using anthropological theory, came up with a new and exciting interpretation of the early history of the Zulu Kingdom. Her M.A. thesis at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1986 established her reputation. In her 1993 Ph.D. thesis, "Authoring Shaka," Hamilton reconsidered, added to, and annotated the sources for her M.A., and wound up writing a full study of the transmission and reproduction of historical knowledge in South Africa. *Terrific Majesty* is a revision of that Ph.D. thesis.

The book is both a thoughtful disquisition on the irreducible ambiguity of knowing the past (reflecting the published and unpublished writing of her mentor, David William Cohen), and a work of rigorous deductive empiricism, in which the reliability of particular historical voices is interrogated (reflecting in part the scholarship of Jan Vansina)<sup>1</sup>. Hamilton shows the way elements of precolonial African authority were tendentiously apprehended by colonial officials, and contested by Africans, as a "Shaka" tradition. She rejects the idea that historical meaning is produced moment by moment; instead, she shows how all reinterpretations of the Zulu kingdom have been constrained by popular traditions rooted in genuine historical experience.

Hamilton begins by considering the political scene of the late 1980s and early 1990s, in order to elucidate the protagonists and observers of the discourse of Zuluness in South Africa, including the leadership of the Inkatha Freedom Party in South Africa (on whom aspersions are cast, p. 128). In the beginning, she shows that Shaka, the great founder-king of the Zulu polity in the 1810s, was seen as a "benign patron." Of the European traders who routinely wrecked their ships in Port Natal, only James King had reason to stir up opposition to Shaka, and he was discredited. Still, there were already "frightful stories" circulating throughout the Cape about Shaka in the late 1820s. Hamilton then sets out a brief but vital account of Shaka, drawing on the same sources she will critique, as a baseline for her discussions of the history of how Shaka was subsequently represented. In Hamilton's judicious summary, Shaka "carefully managed" a display of despotism as a strategy of statecraft.

Hamilton then turns her analytical eye to accounts in the James Stuart Archive <sup>2</sup>, a collection of scores of interviews from the 1900s and 1910s with people who had memories of Shakan times. She patiently validates the essential messages of three main informants by weighing their probable intentions, examining their genealogies, and cross-checking divergent accounts to show that Shaka was an autocrat and did wreak violence in many places. Next, Hamilton looks at Theophilus Shepstone, the central figure in the 19th century administration of Natal, who deftly used pageantry and politics to transform himself into a new "Shaka," but was resisted by the Usuthu faction of King Cetshwayo. Shepstone's deeply contradictory views closely anticipated Frederick Lugard's in Northern Nigeria; both men were constrained in the very terms of their understandings of the possible mechanisms of "indirect rule" by indigenous practices. The analysis here adds a good deal to recent explorations of the origins of indirect rule and apartheid, although Hamilton does not fully take the issue up <sup>3</sup>. Shepstone's views then influenced H. Rider Haggard--while Haggard drew on the same sources that informed Shepstone--producing the popular association between tyranny, "effectiveness," and racial origin (the Zulu were "intrinsically noble"), especially in Haggard's post Anglo-Zulu war (1879-81) fiction.

Hamilton then returns to James Stuart, who she carefully shows viewed Zulu rule as a "system" and who anticipated the relativistic standards of modern ethnography. Stuart published some material in Zulu, overlapped with Haggard, and influenced men such as R.R.R. Dhlomo and C.L.S. Nyembezi, who then wrote for an educated Zulu-speaking audience. Hamilton concludes her arguments by considering Shaka in the discourse of the 1980s, including especially Bill Faure's 1986 mini-series, "Shaka Zulu", and its cousin, the "Shakaland" theme park. While she occasionally lapses into correcting the film via "the historical record" (p.175), the section is ultimately quite worthwhile, because it recovers the main ideas of the book in popular culture today.

As with any really engaging piece of work, one can quarrel in places with *Terrific Majesty*. At times the segues between chapters are rough; at times the evidence is pressed a bit hard. For instance, it may be that Haggard drew on oral traditions in depicting Umslopogagas in King Solomon's Mines, but the prophecy of the child destined for greatness, who wanders far from home, is surely central to myths all over the world, from Moses to Sudiata. Nor is there much material on Masizi Kunene's Shaka the Great or Thomas Mofolo's Chaka, and indeed, little enough on Africans' writings about the Zulu generally, which is somewhat surprising. And why is the persistence of rumors about Shaka's sexuality accorded only a line or two of discussion? Finally, while I certainly felt convinced that ideas about Shaka and the Zulu could be traced through the storms of competing interests, I was not fully persuaded by her explanation of why this had to be the case. After all, Shakespeare had no trouble reinforcing Richard III's reputation as the most venal of kings, yet we now all know that he was a decent fellow!

As a piece of scholarship, *Terrific Majesty* will be indispensable reading for students of the sources for Zulu history. More than this, and almost alone in recent Africanist scholarship, it is an effortless read. While perhaps it is also a bit too specialized for American lecture courses on South Africa, *Terrific Majesty* is highly recommended for seminars, at either the graduate or undergraduate level, that are concerned with Zulu history, South African popular culture, or

simply the persistence of historical knowledge. I know I plan to continue using this book in my teaching for some time to come.

### Notes

1. The informed reader in this regard will recognize the text on pp. 207-8, coupled with its footnote, as a deliberate attempt at bridge-building.
2. Colin de B. Webb and John Wright, eds., *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighboring Peoples*, 4 vols. (Pietermaritzburg and Durban: University of Natal Press and KCAL, 1976-86).
3. Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). See also David Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation: Native Policy in Colonial Natal, 1845-1910*. (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1971).

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### **WOMEN, LAND AND AUTHORITY: PERSPECTIVES FROM SOUTH AFRICA. Shamim Meer, ed. Oxfam and David Philip, 1997. pp. 146. Paper: \$15.95.**

The articles assembled here by the National Land Committee's Gender Task Group examine rural South African women's access to land and other resources with the goal of informing current policy debates concerning land reform. Drawing attention to the needs of women at this time is particularly important because the South African government is laying the legal ground work for transforming the exploitative land tenure system inherited from the apartheid era. The government is specifically committed to land tenure reform which would involve establishing a unitary legal system of landholding, land restitution, returning to eligible previous owners land taken after 1913, and land redistribution, with government assistance to citizens seeking to purchase land. This volume's authors believe that in order for these policies to succeed, attention must be paid to the particular yet varied interests of women.

This volume begins with two introductory chapters, one of which, by the editor Shamim Meer, synthesizes the conclusions of the case study chapters that follow and one, by Catherine Cross and Michelle Friedman, which offers an overview of how the various existing land tenure systems in South Africa affect women. Both of these chapters are extremely useful. Meer's helps readers identify the common conclusions of the case study chapters; Cross and Friedman present a literature review within which to place the case studies' specific findings.

It is the richly detailed information provided in the eight case studies of rural South African communities that serve as this book's most significant contribution to the literature. The case communities range from the former Reserves, to white farmland, to freehold and informal settlements. Yet the studies are comparable as, in each case, researchers probed gender

dynamics concerning access to and decisions about using land, the different interest groups in each community, women's various interests concerning land, and the degree to which women participate in local decision-making structures.

The case studies are arranged into three sections. The first section examines traditional land tenure systems with attention paid to women's access to land and authority. Lisa Thorp's chapter presents data gathered in a qualitative survey of 53 respondents in six communities in the former Transkei and KwaZulu and two communities in the former Natal. Janet Small's chapter examines the similar land tenure system in three villages of the former Lebowa. Both authors conclude that while women are disadvantaged by these traditional systems, they are not all equally so. The second section presents studies of communities that are undergoing dramatic change "where gender relations are in greater flux than normal" (Meer p. 8). Cheryl Walker writes about a community in KwaZulu-Natal that has established a trust to oversee land allocation. Sue Middleton's chapter offers an examination of two communities in the Eastern Cape that have been established by land invasion. Fiona Archer and Shamim Meer's chapter studies the impact of a new law regarding land ownership in Namaqualand Coloured Rural Reserves. While women seemed to fair better in some of these situations than in others, the authors all conclude that women and men have different priorities concerning development and land use.

The final section examines gender relations among current and former farm workers. Lisa Waldman and Mampe Ntsedi have researched women on farms in the Benoni, Springs, and Delmas districts. Sandra Hill-Lanz and Kathy O'Grady's chapter discusses the status of women on farms in the Western Cape. Bronwyn James and Sibongile Ngcobo offer an examination of Coloured women recently evicted from farms. Together these chapters highlight the race and gender dynamics of power in these communities.

Three themes run through this volume. The first regards the authors' insistence on overcoming the simplistic view that communities are homogeneous. It is a mission of this book to help overcome the reality that women's experiences are too often hidden from policy-makers. Second, although many of the authors are at pains to emphasize that women themselves are a heterogeneous group whose varied interests derive in part from their marital and class status, the studies suggest that common problems do plague many women. Foremost, compared to men, they are disadvantaged with regard to access to land. In addition, women have particular problems obtaining the resources necessary to engage in production. Also, most women have little power in their families to make decisions over issues such as finances. Finally, men are largely resistant to women's demands for greater rights. The book's final theme is that land reform and development must be approached in a manner that (a) removes the traditional patriarchal social relationships in society and (b) facilitates the formation of social movements and non-governmental organizations among women. On this final point, the authors are most united. Various authors suggest that women need to participate fully in local decision-making bodies, such as trust and development committees, civic associations, and political parties. Fiona Archer and Shamim Meer, as part of their research, even facilitated the formation of the Namaqualand Women's Forum.

These essays' conclusions will not be surprising to those who are well-informed about gender dynamics and land policies in South Africa and the developing world. No dominant paradigm is being subverted here. This volume's contribution is in the specific information from

the various case studies. This rich detail informs to the general conclusions and assertions made in much of the women in development scholarship. Consequently, this book would be useful primarily to readers with a solid background in women in development literature who are interested in case studies of rural dynamics in South Africa. One critique is that only one of the chapters (James and Ngcobo) offers case studies of individual women, which are illuminating since they demonstrate how individuals experience the broad dynamics and challenges that face the rural women of South Africa. Another shortcoming of this book is that, although it was published in 1997, it contains no discussion of the land reform initiatives taken by the new South African government. It would be best to regard this book as describing the situation facing rural women when the apartheid era ended, since most of the data were collected prior to the 1994 election.

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**PROFIT NOT FOR PROFIT'S SAKE: HISTORY AND BUSINESS CULTURE OF AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS IN ZIMBABWE.** Baobab Books, Harare, 1997. Volker Wild. Distributed exclusively by the African Books Collective, Ltd., Oxford UK. pp. zzv + 324. Paperback: \$25.

This book is a thorough study of the development of private enterprise within the indigenous population in Zimbabwe. The author prefaces his book with the provocative statement that "in Zimbabwe, colonialism facilitated rather than prevented African enterprise" (p. xxii). Instead, he blames the "lack of culture of modern entrepreneurship in African society" (p. xxi) for the lack of success in African capitalism. The primary aim of the book is to show that the lack of economic success of African business people in Zimbabwe is due to the fact that their economic goals are not rooted in profit for profit's sake, which, he argues, is fundamental to capitalist enterprise. He maintains that in Africa, culture, social and familial obligations, and the desire for social status are prime motives for economic success. Once such objectives have been achieved, the push for increased profits wanes.

The author also points out how such limited and personalized mode of capitalism with target outcomes lacked both intergenerational as well as corporate horizons. He attempts to substantiate that in present-day Zimbabwe the cultural problem of capitalism is complicated by the process of the formation of post-colonial "protobourgeoisie" consisting of veteran nationalists and middle-class professionals who use the "politics of connections" (p. 278) to get ahead economically. In summary, the author makes the point that in Africa, the business elite is not equipped with capitalist entrepreneurial skills.

The book is filled with valuable reflections, survey results, and illustrative anecdotes on the development of business enterprise among Zimbabweans. The book's merits lie in its exposition of and insight into the process of transformation of a pre-capitalist society into a modern capitalist system, and the particularities of its history strongly influenced by its cultural moorings and exceedingly constrained by a discriminatory colonial regime.

There are some flaws in the book. The first is the author's apparent contradictory position on the role of the colonial regime in Zimbabwe. This flows from the author's untenable position that the colonial system in Zimbabwe helped rather than prevented African enterprise. This unnecessarily flavors his entire work even when he himself admits on a number of occasions how limiting the colonial system was to African enterprise. This includes settler commodification of agriculture and the prevention of Africans from prospering by selling marketable surpluses (Ch. 2), segregation policies preventing Africans from the benefits of education and the diffusion of ideas from the settler population (Ch. 3), preventing African capital formation by denying access to viable land assets and collateral, creation of surplus-labor conditions to exploit migrant labor on settler mines and farms (Ch. 4), and frustrating African business ventures, as in the construction sector where the settler community showed hostility to an African presence in such urban trades.

The second flaw is due perhaps to the seemingly ideographic approach which the author chose to use and the apparent stereotypes that flow from it. The "African" case is treated as a unique form of experience that stems from an African culture norm with implications of a fatalistic mode of enterprise. The African experience is not presented as a stage of development in which most countries, including Europeans, have passed through. One gets the impression that Europeans are born capitalists who make profit for profit's sake and that Africans are incapacitated by their culture to do the same (p. xxiii). There may be an inherent postmodernist bias which gives culture a more deterministic role than is warranted. In the case of Zimbabwe, it is even more difficult to tease out the assumed detrimental effect of "culture" from the pervasive hegemony of colonial management. The author himself states that "many Africans responded to the loss of identity by adopting white values, norms and standards" and that "the whites became the reference group for the urban middle class" (p. 159). Why should business acumen be an exception? Related to this are also some outlandish stereotypes like "the African view of the world was shaped by space rather than time" (p. 198). There is no scientific basis for this stereotype.

The book makes a valuable reading when taken in the context of an ideographic case study with no claims to offer theoretical patterns of transition from a traditional pre-capitalist society to a modern market-elastic society. The case study of Zimbabwe is very interesting and informative. But even here, the role of "culture" as conceptualized by the author, may not be easily isolated from its contextualized manifestations in a pervasive colonial regime. Among some of the most interesting observations by the author are those dealing with the post-colonial development in business. He gives an excellent overview of the manner in which the modern business sector is organized with the inherited European economy on the one hand and the more complex African enterprise on the other. He also highlights the manner in which the post-colonial political and professional elite engage in business, using the "politics of connections" to produce both "clientelistic and market elements" in the economic system. Policy makers, business people, and scholars interested in patterns of market development in Africa should find the book very interesting and useful.

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**AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICIES. Stephen Wright. Westview Press, Boulder CO, 1999. pp. 260, Paper: \$26, Cloth:\$ 65.00.**

Few universities offer African foreign policy courses, and few books adequately survey the breadth and complexity of the field. In this much-needed volume, fifteen scholars, about half of them African, have contributed thirteen original essays (including introductory and concluding chapters) on the foreign policies of eleven sub-Saharan African states and regionalism. The country studies, arranged alphabetically, provide historical and analytical surveys of Angola, Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. All have end notes, some include brief bibliographies, and most are current as of 1997-98.

Wright's introduction discusses the field in terms of traditional themes such as the impact of colonialism, resources, intergovernmental organizations, nonalignment, security and sovereignty, confronting apartheid South Africa, economic development, and centralized decisionmaking. He then underscores the significance of four developments revealed repeatedly in the case studies: the end of the Cold War, liberalization and democratization, the regionalization and globalization of economic relations, and debates over an "African agenda." Finally, Wright reframes the African foreign policy context to include changing capacities of the state and of African economies, new security perspectives and challenges, democratization and civil society, regionalism and regional powers, external influences, and continentalism. Wright did not prescribe any common outline or comparative framework for the contributors, whose case studies are conceived and presented largely in idiomorphic terms.

Assis Malaquias sees Angola as "a decaying state" whose miserable domestic, regional, and international constraints have precluded an effective foreign policy since independence. He urges "greater diplomatic and economic involvement at the regional level," especially learning "from the experience of other countries in the region -- such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and even Mozambique -- that are also attempting to overcome the legacy of many years of internal conflict" (p. 39).

For John R. Heilbrunn, Benin is "the flea on Nigeria's back", a derisive characterization that captures neither the essence of its foreign policy nor the scope of the chapter, which devotes only two pages to economic relations with Nigeria. Nevertheless, Heilbrunn accurately analyzes the radical fluctuations in Benin's foreign policy in terms of changing domestic coalitions, political factions within the state, and foreign actors, and hopes that the "critical maturity" and primacy of regional relations since the mid-1990s will lead to fuller West African integration (p. 61).

By contrast, Botswana's "exceptionality" for political stability, economic growth, and diplomatic leadership makes James Zaffiro's chapter an intriguing study of how weak states can exploit comparative advantages and opportunities to exert regional and continental leadership. For Botswana, "development policy is foreign policy" (p. 67, original italics), and foreign policy success will depend on long-term economic strategies to reduce vulnerabilities, foster greater regional integration, and diversify trade, aid, and technology sources.

The traumas of Ethiopia and Eritrea, the oldest and newest sub-Saharan states, are analyzed by Christopher Clapham in terms of political upheavals, superpower confrontation, Eritrea's unprecedented independence-by-secession, Ethiopia's true revolution followed by insurgent revolution, famine, warfare, and their involvement in regional conflicts. Their distinctive foreign policies are "related not so much to the problems of postcolonial statehood ... but to much older relationship patterns between highland and lowland, Christianity and Islam, and central autocracy and peripheral resistance. Foreign policy was ultimately no more than a part, albeit a very significant part, of ongoing conflicts whose nature was essentially domestic and regional" (p. 96). Jona Rono aims "to refute the negative image of Kenya widely held in Western capitals by exploring the perceptions of the Kenyan government" (p. 100), and applauding its pragmatic "good neighbor policy" that has stood the test of time. By contrast, the chapter on Nigeria by Wright and Julius Emeka Okolo argues that a combination of domestic and external forces, coupled with economic mismanagement and failure to stabilize and democratize politics, have negatively affected its foreign policy options and capacity to exercise regional leadership.

According to Peter J. Schraeder, Senegal's foreign policy is a product of many unique factors such as elite socialist ideology, Wolof traditional culture, economic stagnation, Islam, and a tradition of civilian government, rather than explanations linked to dependency, the Cold War, or personal rule. He also contends that global marginalization has promoted regional cooperation. South Africa's foreign policy, as depicted by Paul-Henri Bischoff and Roger Southall, exhibits both important continuities and marked transformations, reflecting its domestic revolution, regional realignments, and post-Cold War global changes. Maria Nzomo sees Tanzanian foreign policy as conditioned mainly by structural determinants, particularly the colonial legacy, idiosyncratic factors, and economic underdevelopment and dependence, with political liberalization and East African integration representing hopeful recent trends. Zimbabwe's foreign policy, according to Solomon M. Nkiwane, is "robust, active, and daring ... proving that some small states have the capacity to play a constructive role in world affairs" (p. 199). Indeed, it offers several lessons for other regional states! Regionalism and regional organizations, as analyzed by Olufemi A. Babarinde, reveal a mixed record with only limited successes, but somewhat better prospects for the future. Finally, Timothy M. Shaw's and Julius E. Nyang'oro's "conclusion" is packed full with nine "central syndromes," seven "contextual features," nine foreign policy issues derived from case studies, and three alternative futures! It has been many years since the publication of a book of comparable scope and approach.

All things considered, Wright's volume is an excellent survey of selected African states' foreign policies for advanced students and scholars. It is an obvious choice as a text for university courses in African politics or international relations. It could have been organized more coherently. Although there are loose threads of unity across the chapters, and regionalism is a pervasive theme, the alphabetical ordering of the chapters forfeited an opportunity to do more than assemble them from A(ngola) to Z(imbabwe). For example, the essays could have been arranged into three groups according to salient foreign policy determinants or themes, perhaps those emphasizing historical or structural constraints (e.g., Angola, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania), pragmatic accommodation to enduring "realities" (e.g., Kenya, South Africa), or creative activism, leadership, and even boldness (e.g., Botswana, Zimbabwe). Such suggestive classifications would have invited more explicit comparative speculation, enlarged the scope for

critical assessment, and contributed modestly to the development of comparative African foreign policy analysis. Lastly, not to carp, but readers will occasionally find the profusion of acronyms (four full pages!) a bit annoying.

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**THE MAKING OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICA: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN SOCIETY SINCE 1800. 2ND ED. Bill Freund. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., Boulder, 1998. Pp. 333, Paperback: \$ 19.95.**

Bill Freund's *The Making of Contemporary Africa* first appeared in 1984 and immediately distinguished itself among textbooks aimed at the undergraduate market for African history. Unlike the majority of textbook authors, who thought that in order to capture a larger marketshare their tomes should be a bland catchall of information, Freund was quite explicit with regard to his focus and his theme. His was an interpretative study stretching continent-wide rather than focusing on particular cases, self-consciously (in the language of the time) radical with its emphasis on the materialist base of history, yet stressing at the same time "social rather than national relationships" (1st ed., p. xiii) in order to demonstrate that forces within Africa as much as those outside the continent influenced profoundly the course of historical change. The chapters were incisive and invigorating, although the lack of much empirical information made the book a difficult read for all but the most advanced undergraduate students. Indeed, it worked best as one of those texts that instructors use themselves. The first edition also came with a very valuable annotated bibliography.

Encouraged, so the author notes, by "many teachers of African history who have found it helpful and stimulating as a text," Freund has now produced a new edition. He has added a two and a half page section on "The End of Apartheid" to the "Southern Africa in Crisis" chapter that concluded the first edition, as well as providing a new concluding chapter on "The Age of Structural Adjustment." Freund has also updated the annotated bibliography to include texts published through 1994.

Unfortunately, these revisions do not go far enough. Indeed, they leave the new edition less useful for teaching purposes than the original. To begin with, 90 percent of the text is a verbatim reprint of the original. That would be fine if this was a specialist monograph that had gone out of print, but for a textbook such a publishing decision immediately dates the information. This becomes particularly apparent in reading the bibliography and comparing the comments there with the discussion in the main text. Whereas in the first edition Freund noted that the "relations between men and women have only begun to receive the attention they deserve and rarely with much historical precision" (1st ed., p. 316), and reports in the second edition that the "literature specifically on African women and their modern history is now highly developed" (2nd ed., p. 293), the main body of the text remains exactly the same as it

appeared almost two decades ago. What, therefore, is a student to conclude as to the impact of this now "highly developed" body of literature on the interpretation of the role of women? And, for another example, what is a student expected to make of a sentence like the following that concludes the historiographical chapter of the second edition? "In the last twenty years ... a variety of currents from throughout the world, including the impact of Marxism, the revitalisation of Trotskyism and other directions of Marxist thought, have made a revival [of Marxist writing on Africa] possible." (2nd ed., p. xiv). Exactly the same sentence appeared in the first edition, but then it was referring to the literature of the 1960s and 1970s, not to that of the 1980s and 1990s. Then it made sense, now it does not.

Moreover, the added text hardly compensates for the cost of buying a new copy. It is hard to explain the fall of apartheid in two and a half pages, and even then it would be helpful if Freund would explain a little further what he means when he writes that "my assessment of the southern African region and the real and potential shifts in it has become very much soberer and more conservative over time" (2nd ed., p. x).

Conservative in what way? In the sense that the legacy of apartheid produces problems even greater than anyone had expected? In the sense, so common among South African academics, that change has not moved in the way that they thought it should have? Alternatively, some other meaning? In addition, the new concluding chapter is less new than it might seem since of the twenty one pages of text, six were published originally in the penultimate chapter of the first edition. *The Making of Contemporary Africa* was a stimulating book when it first appeared and the 1984 edition remains so. As a textbook, the version republished (or rather reprinted) is a period piece.

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