

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Namibia under South African Rule: Mobility and Containment 1915-1946.** Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Sylvester, Marion Wallace, and Wolfram Hartmann, with Ben Fuller, eds. Oxford: James Currey, Windhoek: Out of Africa, and Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998. Pp. 330. \$ 22.95 paper, \$ 44.95 cloth.

"The trees never meet (but people do)" is a popular Namibian proverb used by a group of historians as an appropriate metaphor for the first three decades of South African colonial rule in Namibia. The "Trees Never Meet Project" launched in the early 1990s, attempted a collaborative examination of this previously neglected period in Namibian history. The need to develop new paradigms for understanding the first 30 years of South African colonial rule produced a major conference in Windhoek in August 1994. Papers first presented at that conference have now been brought together and published in this very significant volume: *Namibia Under South African Rule: Mobility and Containment 1915-1946*.

Many of the contributors deal directly with the mobility of indigenous polities or communities during 1915 to 1946 and simultaneous colonial efforts at containment. As the introductory chapter notes: "At the beginning of the period covered by this book (1915-1946) the colonial state was ill-formed and weak; by the end of it, the state had consolidated itself to a considerable degree. The papers published here suggest that, in this transition from colonial weakness to consolidation, the geographic space of the country was demarcated, dominated and defined, and the contract labour system which linked north and south had begun to entrench itself." (p. 4) This process was paralleled, the editors continue, "by an increasing tendency on the part of the state to intervene in social and cultural matters" with the end result that "social and cultural spaces became the site of intensifying struggles...."

The book is divided into an introduction and three sections. Chapters in the first section, "Construction of People/Construction of the State", treat a variety of issues: how laws like the Vagrancy Proclamation played a major role in instilling the requisite attitude in the white population to facilitate long-term colonial success; the attempted use of medical examinations to control the movement and labor of African women and their rejection of those exams; the challenge to the colonial state provided by both black and white mobility in southern Namibia in the first two decades of colonial rule; and how women of eastern Ovamboland briefly entered the public space during the "famine of the dams" (1929-30), and then continued that outward movement in the decade to follow. The next section, "Reserves/Contesting Containment", contains chapters on the process of economic, political and social reconstruction among the Herero in the interwar period and the role of the *otjiserandu* in providing autonomy vis-à-vis the colonial state; attempts by Africans in the Native Reserve at Otjimbingwe during this period to

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i2reviews.pdf>

improve a rapidly deteriorating situation, only to see their circumstances worsen markedly in the long run; and the way in which external forces acted to "keep traditional" the Himba and Herero peoples of Kaokoland. The last section "Beyond the Police Zone/Ovamboland", treats the alternative social mobility offered to young Ovambo men by the opening up of "new spaces on the ideological landscape" provided by Christianity and skills such as literacy; the generational conflict that ensued as more and more young people embraced Christianity and labor migrancy in order to enjoy the social mobility that the resulting goods and ideas made possible; the ambiguities of Lipumbu's resistance to the imposition of indirect rule in Ovamboland; and the ultimate determination of Namibia's northern border during this time.

*Namibia Under South African Rule* represents a substantial contribution to Namibian historiography. The authors have aimed at, and succeeded in, challenging older (tired!) historical approaches, such as the nationalist paradigm which unproblematically finds the "roots and manifestations" of history "in the logic of colonialism and capitalism and in the experience of oppression and resistance" (p. 15). As a welcome relief, the editors have "... been critical of crude dichotomies between resistance and collaboration and preferred to frame incidents of overt resistance into more complex paradigms, rather than a series of set pieces in a staged historical battle between the forces of colonialism and proto-nationalism" (p. 16). In so doing, the book also avoids viewing the South African colonial state as "coherent, unified and homogeneous" (p. 15). Equally important for the Namibian case, the editors caution against the dangers of transplanting any "South African grand narratives" (eg. land dispossession) to Namibian soil (p. 18). The book also seeks to theorize the reasons for "empirical gaps" in Namibian history, for example, the noticeable absence of women in the legal definition of native (and in legislation in general) in colonial Namibia (p. 14).

The "Trees Never Meet Project" has spawned numerous other projects including a photographic exhibition (and now book) called *The Colonizing Camera* and the establishment of the Namibian History Trust. Clearly, the project has promoted an ongoing dialogue between scholars and those outside the academy. In my view, this points to perhaps the most significant gap in this book, that somehow the editors were not able to share those insights from non-academic participants. But in every other way, the project and resultant book should be applauded. *Namibia Under South African Rule* actually embodies its own metaphor of mobility and containment: this book contributes greatly to moving forward Namibian historiography which had remained rigid and stagnant for far too long.

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**The Colonizing Camera: Photographs in the Making of Namibian History. Wolfram Hartmann, Jeremy Silvester and Patricia Hayes. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 1998. Pp. 220. \$29.95, paper.**

In the late 19th century, the camera emerged as a particular technology which collapsed time and space in the circulation of images, thus playing a critical role in the colonial enterprise. *The Colonizing Camera* examines colonial photographs in Namibia from the period of colonial occupation to the era of independence and decolonization. During this period, a vast photographic collection of "native" subjects were exhibited. How are we to interpret this storehouse of colonial archival photographs? How do we read the body of knowledge and discursive practices of colonial photographs stored in these archival photographs?

In the study of colonialism in Africa social historians have generally ignored the active role of photographs in the construction of colonialism. Most colonial photographs are used simply as "illustration" to an accompanying text. The authors suggest these colonial photographs are often treated like a quotation which "of itself is often seen as self-evident and not conceived as a 'language' which seeks to persuade, or which constitutes a discourse with its own structures of meaning" (p. 2). In more recent times, scholars working in art, history, and visual anthropology have discovered new and exciting ways of understanding colonial photography and its forms of representations.

Part One of this book explores the discursive practice of colonial photography in the making of the "other" in Namibia and the broader Southern African region. Part Two is devoted to examining archival photographs drawn primarily from the Hans Collections, which constituted a substantial part of *The Colonizing Camera* traveling exhibition. Part Three provides critical commentaries from scholars in history, anthropology, and art history. They argue that photography is more than a system of representation and passive expression of the colonial situation. Rather, they assert that photography was indeed an active agent in the construction of colonialism in Namibia.

Most of the early photographs of Namibia come from photographers working for the colonial government since the "camera traveled the same route as mercantile and colonial interests" (p.10). During the early period of German colonial rule, photographers attempted to depict racial stereotypes. The works of Karl Dove are a particularly good example of this. Such photographs appeared in lavishly illustrated colonial publications produced to support German colonial rule. Some of the photographs, especially those of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft [German Colonial Society] were used as "visual instructions" to advance the "civilizing mission" of colonial rule.

Certainly, these were not the only domains of colonial photography. As the authors clearly indicate, colonial photographs "encompassed early ethnography, consumer capitalism, political advocacy, evangelical fund-raising as well as popular memorabilia" (p.13). Despite the demise of German colonial rule and South African occupation, the production and circulation of such images in calendars, coffee-table and post card photography continues in present-day Namibia (p.14). Colonial nostalgia and the instability of white settler identity appear to be behind this contemporary phenomenon in Namibia. These colonial photographs therefore remain contested sites in constructing a national identity for Namibia.

The second part of the book examines archival colonial photographs taken between 1915 and 1950. The British-South African occupation of Namibia in 1915 ushered in another phase of colonial photography. The publication of the *Blue Book* in 1918 was designed by imperial strategists in London to "demonstrate German cruelty and unfitness to retain colonial possessions and, in turn, legitimate the South African claim to award of the League of Nations mandate to govern Namibia" (p.14). Once the League of Nations awarded Namibia to South Africa in 1915, the new colonial authorities deployed a range of photographs to provide powerful images of Namibia as an uninhabited and boundless land upon which colonial desire could produce its own fantasies. Consequently, colonial photography became an instrument to encourage white settlement in Namibia.

The new images of Namibia in the aftermath of the South African occupation still sought to legitimize colonial occupation. In this regard the authors analyze two very important ethnographic works: *The Native Tribes of South West Africa* (1928) and *South West Africa in Early Times* (1934). The text and the accompanying photographs in both publications sought to demonstrate the "timelessness of native life" and contrast this with "the loss of culture, authority and health which accompanies urbanization" (p.17). The technique of freezing Namibian life through texts and photography established a field of knowledge which rendered "native life" visible to both the settler population and audiences overseas. These selected photographs are arranged in various categories ranging from images of "native locations", migrants and domestic work, schools as well as rituals, and colonial hunting expeditions.

The third part of the book is made up of twelve short commentaries addressing a range of issues related to the colonizing camera. These lively and informed commentaries explore the relationship between colonialism and photography. By unearthing these cultural components of colonialism and using them to study the construction of Namibian history, the commentaries provide a nuanced reflection on the colonizing camera. Drawing from a broad base of archival and literary sources, these commentaries make an important contribution to our understanding of German colonialism and South African occupation of Namibia.

As a whole, *The Colonizing Camera* provides a thorough interrogation of the relationship between colonialism and photography and thus constitutes an important contribution to our understanding of the role of colonial photography in the production and circulation of images in the making of colonial subjectivities regarding Namibia. The accompanying textual materials contextualize the photographic images and provide a useful guide for reading the archival photographs, which convey the coercive techniques of colonial photography, and wider visual and social order the photographers sought to create about Africans. The value of the book lies in the way the authors clearly demonstrate how colonial photography was central both in the making of Namibian history and in the colonial construction of "otherness."

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**Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen.** Pippa Skotnes, ed. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 1996. Pp. 383. \$ 49.95, paper.

*Miscast* is a unique production on a number of levels. It was published to accompany a 1996 exhibition of the same name at the South African National Gallery (SANG). Curator/editor Pippa Skotnes set out specifically to challenge the boundaries of visual representation as art and knowledge in both the exhibition as well as the book. Yet the book far exceeds the realm of an exhibition catalogue. Beautifully produced, with lavish photographic imagery, *Miscast* is designed to capture the attention of both scholars and the more affluent book buying public. The bulk of the book consists of twenty-eight essays by academics in the fields of Anthropology, Archaeology, Art, Religion, English, Ethnomusicology, History and Linguistics. Also included is a photo-essay by the documentary photographer Paul Weinberg, and a "parallel text" by Skotnes.

*Miscast* is introduced formally in three essays that frame the context of the exhibition and the book. Marilyn Martin, Director of the SANG, examines the controversy over the ownership of indigenous remains and body casts. She uses the case of Saartje Baartman, the infamous Hottentot Venus, who was displayed in the salons of Paris in the early nineteenth century. In the late twentieth century, the rights to Saartje Baartman's body are still contested by museums and people who claim to be her direct descendents, demanding the right to bury her in a dignified manner. Saartje Baartman has thus become a powerful symbol of racism, oppression and resistance in South African colonial history. It is these themes that *Miscast* explores in depth.

Patricia Davison's essay continues by discussing the role of galleries and museums in creating and disseminating knowledge. She argues that *Miscast* "sets out explicitly to challenge the stereotypes and evoke respect for the /Xam and other Southern African hunter-gatherers." Lastly, Skotnes own essay elaborates her aims in mounting the exhibition and producing the book as part of the encounter between different peoples. Skotnes describes her own difficulty in securing the cooperation and participation of Bushmen or San representatives in the project, revealing that these encounters are still fraught with difficulties. But on the issue of process and production, Skotnes falls short of analyzing the ambiguous position of *Miscast* itself in the contemporary identity politics of South Africa. There is an absence of discussion about the lack of participation by self-identifying aboriginal South Africans in the project. This silence is only amplified by the eloquent attempts of other authors in the book to retrieve these voices in the past.

The essays by Nigel Penn and Janette Deacon serve as lynchpins for the book, examining the theme of ethnic identity and interactions between Bushmen and Europeans. Penn's evocative historical narrative outlines the destructive interaction with settler colonialism, but challenges the notion that Bushmen/San were "fated to perish." Deacon explores the complex relationships between the Bleek-Lloyd extended family (the major ethnographers of the /Xam) and the extended family of the patriarch //Kabbo (their main informants). Martin Hall also examines the variety of encounters between European ethnographers and Bushmen while arguing that the //Kabbo clan and the Bleek-Llyod family had a mutual investment in recording /Xam history. Robert Ross uses one of the few autobiographies available to explore the historical

context of debates concerning Bushmen identity and self-representation. Peter Jolly's essay is a welcome discussion of the confusion and ambiguity of ethnic classifications associated with "Bushman", a theme that runs throughout the book.

The two essays by David Chidester and Stephen Greenblatt engage debates on the "language of the body" and how bodily mutilation can be misinterpreted by those unfamiliar with the symbolic meanings of the gesture. Alan Morris argues that bodily mutilation also occurs between cultures, citing frontier battles in which colonists beheaded San men for trophies and specimens. Here the link between science and war results in the collection of body parts for the purposes of analyzing racial characteristics. Carmel Schrire illustrates how this link resulted in perhaps the ultimate objectification of indigenous peoples: the collection of heads and the particular obsession with Khoikhoi women's genitalia (reminding us again of Saartje Baartman's fate). She argues that the "mixture of legitimate anthropology and covert pornography" is a "combination not as dissonant as it sounds" because the exercise of power lies at its core. Similarly, the essays focusing on photography examine the problematic origins of anthropology, an ambiguous complicity between science and colonial domination. As Godby points out, many of the ethnographic photographs and studies of Bushmen were of prisoners from the Breakwater Prison in Cape Town, yet the relationships between Bleek and Lloyd and their interviewees was one of mutual respect.

Several essays on rock art also frame debates within archaeology about the significance and interpretation of imagery; the conditions of production and authorship; the relationship between rock art and archaeology; and the challenges of creating a chronology of precolonial history in southern Africa. The use of rock art in contemporary advertising is also scrutinized.

Another theme in the book focuses on the role of Bushman culture and identity in present-day Southern Africa. In a fascinating analysis, Rob Gordon, Ciraj Rassool, and Leslie Witz compare the public display of Bushmen at the 1952 Van Riebeeck Festival with the participation of self-proclaimed Bushmen from Kagga Kamma game reserve in 1992 as part of multiculturalism in the New South Africa. The Kruiper clan from Kagga Kamma are also the subject of Barbara Buntman's essay on eco-tourism and Bushman stereotypes today. Mathias Guenther compares the historical relationship between Bushmen and frontier farmers with that of contemporary frontier farmers in Botswana. Frans Prins explores the traces of San cosmology in the training of Nguni diviners in the Eastern Cape. Deirdre Hansen's essay on Bushman music argues that although aspects of traditional dance still survive, musical instruments have largely become silent artifacts, with their oral polyphonic musical system remaining unknown. In one of the most interesting essays of the book, John Sharp and Stuart Douglas analyze the role of Bushmen soldiers in contemporary Southern African wars and their use of ethnic identities as a political tool.

This book is the most comprehensive body of work on the Bushmen yet produced and represents the "state of the art" of aboriginal studies in Southern Africa. By bringing together such a diverse group of scholars, Skotnes has brilliantly achieved her goal of an interdisciplinary challenge to the boundaries of those disciplines represented. Skotnes' own "parallel text" is designed explicitly to "irritate the boundaries of knowledge that those texts are capable of encrypting." Although left with a lingering silence on the part of Bushmen themselves, *Miscast* is a testament to the oppression, resistance and resilience of these

indigenous peoples. Anthony Traill's essay on the destruction of language contends the process of extinction has resulted from "the intense persecution leading to a wholesale destruction of the social conditions necessary for language maintenance." Deacon poignantly recalls that the last known trace of /Xam was spoken by an elderly Hendrik Goud just before his death in the mid-1980s. Echoing past centuries, Goud had been taught by his parents to say: "Here come the Boers, we must run away."

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**In the Shadow of Marriage: Gender and Justice in an African Community. Anne M.O. Griffiths. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. Pp. 310. \$18.95 paper, \$ 50.00 cloth.**

The "African community" of Griffiths' title is the Kwena, a Tswana group who live in Kweneng, literally the place or home of the Kwena, now a constituent district of Botswana. The study focuses on the relationship between law and gender with particular reference to marriage and a range of other relationships between women and men in Kweneng (p.1). This triad of law, marriage and gender actually consists of two inter-connected strings of relationships: one involving gender, male-female partnerships and "power"; the other linking customary and statutory law.

Women tend to be disadvantaged in their command over both material and symbolic resources. In turn, women's access to justice, whether through customary courts or through the formal courts, is necessarily mediated by this disadvantage. Yet women are a differentiated group, reflecting the wide inequality in Botswana's society. Hence, the study takes into account two major categories of differentiation: gender and class. The dispute cases, which form the main empirical basis of the book's analysis, are selected to display these sorts of differences. Although the resulting matrix appears complex, the study is presented and argued with a crystalline clarity. The detailed case materials are eloquently presented and the contextual information on socio-cultural organization well covered. Griffith's theoretical points are clearly argued and the whole study is written in an accessible style. For all these reasons, the book is a welcome addition for upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses in the anthropology of law, kinship, and gender as well as in those of other disciplines (eg. legal studies, family law, gender studies, African studies).

Research for the study was conducted between 1981 and 1989. The author, assisted by her "guide and mentor", Mr Masimega, attended disputes in the various Kwena customary courts and consulted a ten year set of records from the magistrate's (DC) court in Kweneng. They also attended a few cases in the high court. In addition, interviews with many of the participants in the disputes and some of the judges were carried out. Griffiths and Masimega also collected detailed life histories in Mosotho ward (kgotla), which effectively enhance and broaden the descriptions in the existing literature on gender and legal theory in Botswana. The first three

chapters examine the general interplay of gender, marriage, and legal practice; the "gendered dynamics of households in managing resources, procreation and marriage"; and the dynamics of social differentiation. The next four chapters comprise the bulk of the book and present detailed case studies. The final chapter offers a closing argument on "reconfiguring law". The reconfiguration proposed by Griffiths holds that law is necessarily embedded in particular social, cultural and political matrices. Throughout the study the author engages the "legal centralist" or "formalist" model of law. She instead proposes a "strong form of legal pluralism" that emphasizes the social grounding of legal practice.

In each of the central chapters, the author demonstrates how access to various legal arenas and the eventual outcomes depend on the participants' social situation. Different ideas about gender-appropriate behavior in various situations and relations between participants and judges can influence rulings. Legal norms, arguments and judgments cannot be understood without reference to the social matrix in which they occur. Again and again, the author argues that "the kinds of claims made by a legal centralist model of law with respect to autonomy ... from ordinary social processes cannot be sustained. Nor can such a model's view of legal pluralism, as endorsing separate and parallel spheres of law ... be upheld" (p. 133; cf. 157, 182, 183, 209). This "strong" form of legal pluralism, which insists on the "mutually constitutive nature" of law and society, contrasts greatly with the "weak" form that merely posits a co-existence of "parallel systems" of law (p. 35). Responding to criticism that this "strong" form of legal pluralism sees the law everywhere, Griffiths maintains a distinction between law and nonlaw with respect to particular sources and institutions. However, she insists that the distinction between them is not impermeable but socially constituted (p. 213).

Overall, the book has a powerful effect. The detailed presentation and analysis of dispute cases skilfully show how deeply gendered the processes of justice are. Griffiths uses the recorded court discussions, interviews with participants, and detailed life histories to engage the literature on legal studies, legal anthropology, and gender studies. However, the author claims too great a difference between her study and earlier approaches which also aimed to use disputes as "moments of a certain kind of public visibility embedded in the context of ongoing social relations" (p. 32). The main drawback of dispute-focused studies is the lack of actually observed social life. Everyday interactions between women and men in different partnerships, families, and social status groups influence the particular ways in which their disputes take shape. Some quarrels are resolved, others reemerge chronically, and yet others are transformed into disputes over the meanings of "marriage" or "neglect". This type of ethnographic study was not carried out and I am not really suggesting that the author should have. Griffiths' study is excellent on its own terms but the post hoc character of dispute cases makes one wish for an account that also described their genesis. Still, as a study that artfully displays the social embeddedness of customary and statutory court cases, this book is one of the best available.

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**A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labor in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1945.** Rubert, Steven C. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies. 1997. Pp. 255.

Steven Rubert has done us the favor of providing an updated labor-based history of Rhodesia's tobacco industry to 1945. Drawing on government documents, unpublished materials, and interviews in the 1990s with nearly fifty ex-tobacco farm workers and farmers, Rubert uniquely presents a tableau of life on tobacco farms. He manages to interweave industry-specific management, labor, government, gender, and moral economy. The focus on the Lomagundi and Mazoe districts reveals that tobacco deserves closer scrutiny because it required labor-intensive, year-around attention and dominated Southern Rhodesia's agricultural exports. In fact, Rubert calls tobacco "the linchpin of the colonial government's European settler policy" (p. xii).

Claiming a primary interest in workers rather than farm management, Rubert says his first two chapters on the history of Virginia-flue-cured tobacco farming are background preliminary to his main topics, which include descriptive analyses of the physical environment of the farms, labor processes, worker-management relations, gender relations, child workers, and worker compounds. Obviously, Rubert is concerned to trace work, what it entails and who characteristically does it, to more places on the farm than just the fields and stripping barns. Following Henrietta Moore's *Feminism and Anthropology*, he argues that work includes assigned and presumed tasks as well as the conditions of those tasks and the worth accorded them in the Southern Rhodesian context. This is a 1990s labor history in the sense that there are more people in the picture doing more things in more places.

Still, it does take Rubert awhile to get to the workers. His descriptions of the farms, their equipment, their product and its worth are detailed and robust --but they take up nearly half the book. The most interesting bits, for me, appear in chapters 5-8, where the author dips into his unique sources to offer snippets of worker conditions and relations. We get glimpses of farmers instilling "discipline" into the workers through the periodic "good clout" or worse (p. 96). We see wives and children "volunteering" (which still occurs on many commercial farms) to work, as a way of supplementing family food rations on some farms (p. 107). Within the worker compounds we see tobacco laborers endeavoring to squeeze the time from formal work schedules to grow family or individual crops. Their plots were ostensibly free but also became venues of rent-seeking: "I was an employee so I paid [for the plot] through working" (p. 132). There were burglaries in the compounds; fires, rapes, and brawls punctuated what Rubert describes as usually nonconflictual living spaces (pp.142-143). Women became casual farm workers of some importance from the 1930s onwards, albeit not without suffering and imposing mixed messages about women's "proper" roles. Children were employed as casual workers for the entire period under study (p. 162); often they were beaten by adult male workers or sexually abused (p. 164).

For those of us who do research on various aspects of work in Zimbabwe, Rubert's study is most useful and well documented. It also contains relatively few surprises in methods or substance. It is a straightforward account and perhaps we should not look for surprises in it. I

sense, however, that supplementary data about tobacco farm work might have surfaced had the author truly taken a bottom-up view of his topic. Instead, while claiming to focus on workers and their lives, his presentation is from the historian's God's-eye view. Rubert sets up his book as though the big issues to address have to do with where the tobacco industry fits with labor accounts of other sectors and with E.P. Thompson's contention that laborers have been casualties of history writing. This is a legitimate choice of focus but a lamentable one from the perspective of hearing the local voices Rubert himself sought out. A study starting with the words of workers, rather than with the historical record of the sector and words of farmers and government officials, might change the parameters of the history. Here, however, quotes from workers are short, and they are structured to illustrate points a historian is making rather than points workers may have been making quite apart from predetermined chapter structures. One wonders whether the interview narratives were allowed to influence the way Rubert planned to present his study.

A related area of some silence, which storms noisily in the teapot by the end of the book, is labor resistance. Rubert tells us that farmers described their African workers as "raw" (p. 168). How marvelously that word encapsulates a world of worker behavior that was deemed improper, unsuitable, rude, and inappropriate. But Rubert looks at "raw" from the perspective of those who pronounced it. He lets pass the opportunity to chronicle all the rude behaviors that might have comprised this three-letter denigration. He also does not tie farmer perceptions of worker "rawness" to the few everyday (and perhaps not so everyday) forms of resistance he describes in terms of the moral economy of the farms. The discussion of worker strategies is such a small and late-coming aspect of the book that readers may form a picture of the sector wherein life for the laborers was always unmitigable. The farmer always won; discipline was imposed. My interview research on women workers across four sectors of the Zimbabwean economy (including commercial farms), which is forthcoming, suggests that this is not quite the case.

Rubert is to be commended for the leg-work he has done and is also encouraged to let us see the tobacco sector more from perspectives which have been subordinated here to other scholarly goals. That is, next time around he might write more of the stories, lives, and histories of the sector revealed in worker narratives. I suspect he is sitting on golden words.

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**King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa. Adam, Hochschild. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998. Pp. 336. \$ 26.00, cloth.**

The story of Africa's exploration, partition and domination has been told repeatedly but each age reinterprets past events with new perspectives. *King Leopold's Ghost* tells the story of the Congo with fresh and critical insights, bringing new analysis to this topic. The author

reveals the trickster that Leopold was, the greed that fired his interest in the Congo, and how this resulted in crimes against humanity. Of particular interest in the book is the international scope of Hochschild's scholarship, drawn from such diverse sources as novels, archives, biographies, historical texts, and statistical data.

The first three chapters provide the background to the trickery and egoism that drove the colonization of the Congo. The story moves from Henry Stanley Morton's personally invented parentage to his exaggerated accounts of life in Africa. Behind the pretense of Morton's expeditions to Africa was a tendency toward brutality, described as "Stanley's sadistic streak" (p.196). The study follows Morton's African journeys to their intersection with Leopold's egoism and avarice. The two used the excuse of the Arab slave trade to establish the Congo Free State under Leopold. Leopold was well-suited to fulfill Stanley's wish for "some generous and opulent philanthropist" to permit him "to lead a force for the suppression of this stumbling block to commerce with central Africa." Stanley became the first governor of the Congo Free State which proceeded to rob the people of their heritage, humanity and wealth. Both Leopold and Stanley believed that "Africa was a chance to gain upward mobility towards wealth and glory" (p.63). The Congo Free State was named the property of Leopold on May 29, 1885.

After establishing control over the Congo, Leopold proceeded to institute a brutally repressive administration and to use slave traders to extract wealth from Congo. Initially, his target was ivory. Skillful traders, like Tippu Tip, came in handy. The irony is that in Europe Leopold had carved out an image as a philanthropist, a humanitarian crusader whose main interest in Congo was to save the natives from marauding Arab slavers.

The author then takes us to one of Leopold's first challengers, George Washington Williams. The author traces Williams' career and details how he denounced what he saw in Congo as outright robbery and trickery. He argued that Congo State was guilty of "crimes against humanity" (p.112) without understanding that his conceptualization of "Africans rights to African lands" did not mean much then. Further, the details Williams unearthed, prophetic as they have turned out to be, changed very little for the brutally harassed Africans in Congo. As Williams' biographer concluded, "his early death [on August 2, 1891] saved the Congo government from what might have been an embarrassingly formidable opponent" (p.113).

The brutality of Leopold's regime saw no bounds as it included forceful conscription of men, women and children, and untold physical force applied using the chicotte, "a whip of raw, sun-dried hippopotamus hide, cut into a long sharp-edged cork-screw strip" (p. 120). This made it possible to inflict wounds upon one lash and, in many cases, the Force Publique officer in charge added salt to the wounds. The Force Publique became the sign of brutality par excellence for it was led by people whose aspiration for power in Belgium would have remained a dream but for their arrival in Congo. It was the discovery of "the wood that weeps," as the rubber tree was euphemistically called (see chapter 10), that intensified human suffering in Congo. The author uses Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to illustrate the forms of abuse prevalent in Congo. With convincing details, Hochschild demonstrates the close relation between Conrad's fictitious characters and the real figures. The irony is that Conrad's work has been taught as fiction with no real place and time.

The role of rubber in the Congo receives extensive attention. To harvest enough rubber, Africans were conscripted into the rubber tapping business and given quotas to fulfill. Failure

to meet the quota meant the chicotte was applied. Many lost their arms, their noses, ears and/or legs (p.164-165) or saw their wives detained and children thrown into the forest. It was this scenario that precipitated bitter struggles against Leopold, first by the black American evangelist George Shppard, and later with Edward Dene Morel and Roger Casement.

Morel stands out as the best opponent of Leopold through the Congo Reform Association (CRA). With the aid of Casement, Morel published his campaigns against Leopold's brutality in the *West African Mail*. He fought through the CRA to influence public opinion on the realities in Congo. Details of his success in getting the Congo Protest Resolution passed in the British Parliament in May 1903 are clear, but the atrocities continued as more people were infected with deadly skin diseases and others died of accidental causes, like falling from tall trees. Eventually, Leopold's "secretive royal fief" was sold to the Belgian government and, when Leopold died on May 10th 1904, he left behind a bitter legacy. It is estimated that the population was reduced by one-half between 1880 and 1920 (p.233).

This book is a good guide to the work of individual protesters in alleviating the overt power of an egoistic monarch. It employs both empirical evidence and fiction to tell a forgotten story. The grasp of the story across regional, national and continental boundaries is an important strength of the book. The book is recommended beyond the confines of academia. In a world characterized by excess avarice, bad politics, and wars of genocidal proportions, this study is a provocative reminder of the judgements of history and ought to be read by all.

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**Bell Hooks' Engaged Pedagogy : A Transgressive Education for Critical Consciousness.**  
**Namulundah, Florence.** Westport, Conn: Bergin and Garvey, 1998. Pp. 246. \$22.95, paper. \$ 59.95, cloth.

According to its author, "This study is a critical analysis of bell hooks' engaged pedagogy, its basis, challenge, and promise for the teaching/learning process. This study also assesses the relevance of bell hooks' critique of prevailing society and constructive strategies entailed in engaged pedagogy to a Third World context" (xvi). Unfortunately, Namulundah's goals remain largely unachieved. The book leaves the reader with the impression of a work that is not much more than a summary of bell hooks writings and a subjective commentary on their possible applications to a "Third World" context. The author fails to provide either a central thesis or justification for the application of bell hooks' writings to the undefined "Kenyan economy" and/or the "Third World".

Critical analysis throughout the work is interpreted as a two step process of summary and reflection. It becomes clear by the end of part one that rather than apply hooks' framework to a specific enterprise or thesis, Namulundah simply summarizes hooks' views (in addition to a few supporting authors). Unmediated long quotes, summaries, and paraphrases predominate.

Those who have read hooks--and even those who have not -- desire to move past summary and into analysis. hooks is very accessible and those that want to clarify her views may access these works directly. But rather than engaging in analysis, Namulundah appears to supply her reading of hooks in order to provide fuel for later "reflection" chapters.

The reflection chapters occasionally do provide some synthesis of hooks' writings. So it is here that one expects to find a central thesis that directs the author's analysis. However, it is in these sections that Namulundah interjects her own unsupported views on hooks' writings. After referring to hooks' highly personal and direct approach in discussing issues of gender, race and class, Namulundah goes on to express a solidarity of views with hooks. It is here that the irony of Namulundah's adopted position becomes apparent. What makes hooks' works so rich is her use of the contextual and personal. If Namulundah had adopted hooks' more "anti-ivory tower" approach of sharing personal experience within a specific societal context, then her comments could be read as part of an ongoing discussion of hooks' works. Instead, Namulundah leaves the impression of an academic summarizing and "commending" hooks. Even a perfunctory reading of hooks would lead a reader to conclude that Namulundah writes hooks into the decontextualized, academic space that hooks objects to so strongly in the first place. This pattern remains consistent throughout the work, becoming especially relevant in part three.

Part two revisits the culture-curriculum debates of the 1980s and early 90s. As put forward by hooks and other scholars, engaged pedagogy and multiculturalism offer marginalized students the opportunity to have their individual voices incorporated into classroom discourse. Namulundah retraces the history of engaged pedagogy -- its development, teacher roles and limitations -- in chapters six through eight. The reader expects to find a critical analysis of hooks' pedagogy by the concluding chapter. Instead, the author merely echoes the preceding chapter with an unsupported position on human nature: "The theory presumes a willingness in individuals to critique their standpoints with the aim of transforming their consciousness and/or social institutions. This is probably neither true nor practical" (140). If the author is sincere in this statement, why bother to discuss critical pedagogy in the first place?

Part Three promises an application of hooks' writings to Kenya. The application of hooks' critical pedagogy to an African context should be of specific interest to academics and educators who recognize the numerous challenges unique to African educational systems. Namulundah claims to be "seeking the relevance of hooks' First World critique to a Third World context, Kenya," (147). However, nowhere is "Third World" defined by the author. Such generalized use of the term "Third World" draws upon stereotypical Western assumptions--usually meaning backward, primitive, or unlike the "First World." Directly related to this ambiguity is the failure to understand why the author focuses on Kenya in the first place. While she does discuss "relevance," no solid justification given for a focus on Kenya. It seems the author's non-specific criteria could fit any African country.

For those interested specifically in Kenya, expectations for a focused analysis are immediately lowered by the author's use of sources such as Huxley (1956), Stabler (1969), and Sheffield (1973). Although these sources are often used appropriately for historical purposes, Namulundah also employs them as key sources for the analysis of contemporary Kenya. Most striking in the use of sources for this section is the lack of Kenyan authors. Finally, this section provides no specific focus but rather attempts to generalize about Kenyan history, economy,

and society as a whole. In effect, Namulundah constructs a view of Kenyan history, society, and current day practices through the use of dated, secondary, and/or non-Kenyan sources.

In the epilogue, the author fleetingly enters the first person. It is here that a location for the author's subjectivity is suggested: "As a native of the country, this author would like to think that it is more for security reasons, than that we, as Kenyans, fail to be more critical of our 'own'. Or is it perhaps that dirty linen is best kept in closets, away from company. It could also be that historical detachment allows one a level of objectivity unequalled at closer, and in more immediate circumstances" (p. 226). The author appears to be providing a rationalization for why Kenyans are not more critical of their continuing participation in post-colonial influenced institutions. When suggesting that historical detachment leads to objectivity, the author may be referring to what she is attempting in this work. If that is the case, she clearly moves away from hooks' intentions and toward a "Western" academic ideal. "Closer" and "more immediate circumstances" are called for when applying an engaged pedagogy. In order for hooks' pedagogy to be engaged, individual voices must be heard "talking back." This work seems able only to report on what has already been said.

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**Africa's Population Challenge: Accelerating Progress in Reproductive Health. James E. Rosen and Shanti R. Conly. Washington, DC: Population Action International. 1998. Pp. 82. \$ 9.00 paper.**

Thomas Malthus and Paul Ehrlich would be delighted with this book which concludes that "Africa's ability to slow current high rates of population growth is key to achieving its full potential for development" (p. 77). Rosen and Conly fear the consequences of growing ranks of Africans: will starvation, famine, disease and deprivation grow along with the population?

The authors are pleased that certain African countries view family planning as a form of preventive health care and are moving from curing health problems to prevention. However, they express dismay that African governments spend less on health care than on their militaries and seem reluctant to recover the cost from poor rural families who possess little cash. Donor nations insist that African nations have exceeded the carrying capacity of their land and therefore suffer from overpopulation. Any economic gains will mean less because they must be shared by many people rather than a few. Thus, Western donors argue that to improve the living standards of their citizens, African governments should encourage birth control and family planning.

Anything less will condemn African economies to slow growth and force the populace to view governments as institutions incapable of delivering the standards of living promised at independence. The authors urge Africa to take the easy way out by reducing fertility rates and slowing population growth. Isn't this faster, cheaper and easier than keeping up with the needs

of a fast growing population? The authors argue that "a rapid decline in population growth rates would make it much easier for the continent to achieve food self-sufficiency" (p. 15). They feel that investing in people is key to progress, but African growth rates are overwhelming every public service, feeding the cycle of poverty, poor health, and low educational attainment.

Lester Brown has argued that only 32 countries have achieved population stability. With the exception of Japan, all are European (Brown, 1999). Brown argues that Ethiopia, Nigeria and 64 other nations will double or even triple their populations within the next 50 years. These countries will face "demographic fatigue" soon.

Yet, the authors are optimistic that their Malthusian views are gaining popularity in Africa. In 1986, only two African nations even had population policies. Today more than 25 nations have them and 35 nations think that their fertility rates are "too high" (p. 23). To varying degrees African health services are incorporating family planning into their national health systems. Private groups such as family planning associations and the IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation) provide technical experts, information and advice.

Rosen and Conly view family planning as only one aspect of total health care and encourage family planning clinics to cure sexually transmitted diseases, as well as prevent their spread by encouraging condom use for women and for men. Part of the new preventive health care initiative promoted by family planning clinics in Africa also advises women to abandon the practice of female circumcision. If incorrectly administered, it may cause scarring which makes birth difficult and can lead to urinary tract infection. Thus, Western supported family planning clinics have discouraged female circumcision. But in countries such as Sierra Leone, Senegal, or Sudan, where it remains a volatile political issue, the wisdom of linking eradication of FGM (female genital mutilation) with family planning seems questionable. Such policies could destroy family planning programs or set them back decades.

This book is recommended for anyone interested in learning more about family planning in Africa. It should be useful to health care professionals, political scientists, anthropologists, economists, sociologists, historians, public policy experts, aid workers, NGO's, and students of African affairs. Rosen and Conly provide a great overview of the current state of family planning, especially for those who feel that Africa can not attack other problems unless it first controls population growth.

However, readers should be warned that the assumption that population growth is always a negative has been challenged by economists such as Julian Simon. He believes that free market capitalism can solve any problem, even overpopulation. More people create more demand for food, which stimulates production. This generates larger markets, putting more wealth into the hands of many more people, and leading to higher national standards of living. Simon would argue that Malthus was wrong about nineteenth-century England. Likewise, Rosen and Conly are wrong about 20th century Africa.

Paul Kennedy's book *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* reminds us that Thomas Malthus worried because population had more than doubled in the England that he knew. But Kennedy argues that human understanding grew even faster. New technology and communications helped Europe solve its population crisis. Perhaps Kennedy is right, more people may simply mean bigger markets to consume what is produced in Africa, as well as the U.S. and Europe. Kennedy reminds us that during the nineteenth century, Britain's population

grew fourfold but its productive capacity grew fourteen fold (Kennedy, p. 8). Rapid population growth was neutralized by technology and the ultimate resource, "human ingenuity." The European population explosion posed one challenge which was answered by another force: technology in the service of capitalist expansion. Thus, Kennedy argues that rapid population growth does not necessarily lead to lower standards of living if productivity increases as fast or faster.

Is Africa's growing population a blessing or a scourge? While Rosen and Conly see rapid population growth as a scourge, Simon sees it as a blessing. Rosen and Conly urge Africa to avoid the needs of a rapidly growing population through reduction of birth rates. Simon urges Africans to attack poverty by creating jobs, marketable skills and products to trade on the international market that people on other continents want to buy. Through capitalism's unlimited productive potential, Africa could grow its way out of the population challenge, rather than trying to make the problem go away. Is this the ultimate challenge of population in Africa? Time will tell us who is right. When Europe's population exploded, technology solved its problems. Should we expect any less for Africa?

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**Microfinance and Poverty Reduction. Johnson, Susan and Ben Rogaly. UK/Ireland: Oxfam and Actionaid. 1997. Pp. 134.**

In the pages of *Microfinance and Poverty Reduction*, the reader encounters the interface between the eradication of poverty and finance in the Third World. Well-known empirical examples of such microfinance include Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, Indonesia's Bank Rakyat, and Bolivia's Banco Sol. The book is not the usual academic evaluation or critique. Rather, it is written as a 'how to' manual, filled with examples to illustrate pitfalls, warn of difficulties, identify niches, and indicate needs. The work is contemporary and set within a global economy which has moved from Keynesian state intervention to the neo-liberal present of market-based solutions. It does not attempt to address poverty by denoting the fundamental causes of such destitution. Instead, it assumes that these are given. The task at hand is for finance to come to the rescue of the poor. Johnson and Rogaly address the issue of how to best accomplish this.

Preparation of the book was a collegial effort which combined and integrated several background papers, as well as a series of case study investigations from various corners of the globe (Mexico, Pakistan, the Gambia, Ecuador, and even one from an inner city in the U.K). Moreover, the work is a pleasure to read because most of the sources - a combination of reports, evaluations, oral presentations, and obscure books or journals - are not usually found in university libraries.

The word "microfinance" in the title should not elicit fear and confusion. This is a manual for an Aid Provider and not for a Chartered Accountant. So the reader will not be confused by mathematical equations and jargon. Poverty eradication through microfinance is the thesis which binds the book neatly together. The work addresses financial intervention and social change; savings, credit, collateral, and sustainability overcome poverty. As the authors write, "... recent developments in the design of microfinance schemes have generated an understandably high degree of excitement. This is because innovative features in design have reduced the costs and risks of making loans to poor and isolated people, and make financial services available to people who were previously excluded" (pp. 6-7).

The excitement is expressed in their investigation of the issue. Rather than providing a set formula for monetary intervention, the authors recommend a variable overall approach. The concern is to enable people to overcome poverty. The investigation is based upon a thorough understanding of the workings of existing financial services. Intervention must not be blind, addressing areas of both strength and weakness. They suggest interventions should tread lightly (p. 14) and indicate a set of cautionary notes (pp. 25-6) for linkages with informal financial services.

Upon this foundation, the work considers issues of the of intervention design (size and forms of loan, target clusters, disbursement, gender, group-based lending, mobilization, the use of savings, repayment, and interest). It then considers performance and endurability (management, self-sustaining, monitoring, rotating funds, and eventual departure). This is followed by an assessment of the impact of such efforts, including both methodological and practical concerns. Each includes a brief summary and conclusions section, furnishing a neat overview. The study is then tied together by the five case study investigations which present

lessons regarding the pitfalls of microfinance intervention. These are especially vital in that they explicitly speak to the issues raised in the previous analysis.

This book is about helping to eradicate poverty. On its own terms, this book is a winner, underlined by its thoroughness and care. However, as a contribution to the study of Third World (or African) development, it is a curious voice from the past. It not only conflates Third World and First World poverty, but it assumes that the fundamental cause of such destitution resides in an internal barrier - the lack of monetary support. It is well known that financial constraints are a correlate of poverty and underdevelopment. However, it is not the cause! The implicit argument of this book is that microfinance, if properly applied, will overcome poverty and underdevelopment. The World Bank will be enamoured by this modernization approach. The implicit message is one of aiding/coping, but not one of overcoming poverty. Microfinance relieves symptoms and this manual is superb in outlining its operations. My disquiet is rather with the mindset which informs this investigation.

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