

BOOK REVIEWS

Amar S. Baadj. 2015. *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banu Ghaniya: The Contest for North Africa (12th and 13th Centuries)*. Boston: Brill. 250 pp.

Baadj's laudable study is a tale of centrifugal forces. Restoring the Arab world or the entire Muslim world to the age of glory under the Abbasids (750 – 1258 CE), during which the caliph in Baghdad at one point held sway from Central Asia to present-day Algeria has been the ambition of various Arab and Muslim leaders from the turn of the first millennium down to modern times. In the dynasty of the Almohads (1121-1269 CE), based in present-day Morocco, however, a Khomeini-like state emerged which claimed an authority superseding and opposing that of the distant Abbasids. Between the *Maghreb al-Aqsa*-based Almohads and the Abbasid caliphs with their Egypt-based champion Saladin (d. 1193 CE) was Ifriqiya (present-day Tunisia) and Tripolitania (roughly present-day Libya), the former loosely held by the Almohads, and the latter mostly administered by no one. Baadj knows that mention of Saladin will arouse interest not only in the scholarly community but even in the general public: this is one of the few medieval Muslim leaders (be it noted he was a Kurd, not an Arab) known outside of the Middle East. The 12th century head of state and general, who recovered Jerusalem from the Crusaders (1187 CE), stabilized Egypt, and consistently maintained allegiance to the senescent Abbasid Caliphate, while not successful in all domains and on every battlefield, has been praised and lionized by authors in both the east and west. These included (to name only a few) his contemporary, biographer Beha Ed-Din, the more critical A. Ehrenkreutz (*Saladin*, 1972), Tariq Ali in his 1998 novel, *The Book of Saladin*, and even Ridley Scott (director) in his 2005 film "Kingdom of Heaven." Baadj asks: when Saladin sent the officers Qaraqush and al-Qaraitkin (1168 or 1170 CE) into present-day Libya and Tunisia, was his aim merely to control the flow of gold from West African mines? Was it to carry the black banner of the Abbasids to the shores of the Atlantic and into Spain? Or were these expeditions merely a case of "spillover," in which a prosperous and powerful Ayyubid administration in Egypt simply wished to try its luck in the west? Baadj concludes that access to the flow of gold was surely significant, but spillover and simple opportunism were also factors.

Regarding the Almohads, Caliph al-Mansur's guiding policy was probably that stated on his deathbed (1199 CE): "We have no greater charge than the defense of al-Andalus." In other words, Muslim east and Muslim west had to defend themselves separately, each region for itself. Therefore Saladin should not have been greatly surprised when the Almohad ruler rebuffed his requests in 1189 and 1190 CE for loan of the Almohad fleet to be used against the Crusaders. The fact however that Saladin was willing to cut loose and disavow the actions of the remaining troops of Qaraqush in Ifriqiya confirms Baadj's argument that Saladin was

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v17/v17i2a5.pdf>

capable of bending to considerations of realpolitik, and that conquering the Maghreb was not his priority.

To complicate matters further Ali Bin Ghaniya and Yahya Bin Ghaniya were a pair of brothers based in Majorca who opposed the Almohads, swore allegiance to the Abbasid caliph, and tried to carve out their own domain in the Maghreb in the roughly fifty years between 1167 and 1233 CE, at various times fighting the Almohads, Qaraqush and his allies, and frequently both. If Majorca seems like an unlikely base for the launch of an empire, doubters might be cautioned by the example of the first Moghul emperor Babur (whom however Baadj does not mention), who appeared out of the Central Asia with few forces but over time built up an army capable of conquering northern India. Babur however had technological and tactical advantages, whereas the brothers had only charisma and the ability to spring back again from nearly any defeat. After the demise of Ali, Yahya lost Majorca to the Almohads in 1203 CE and never regained it, but amazingly, even without his island base he succeeded in waging a thirty-year guerrilla war with the Almohads until his death in 1233 CE. Yahya however was no founder of empires; after a defeat in 1205 CE when his pack train was captured his possessions were found to amount to thousands of pack-loads of loot; this was a marauder who called no place home.

Students of North African history will benefit from Baadj's use of heretofore ignored sources, in particular the *Midmar* of Ibn Taqi al-Din (d. 1220 CE). The domain of the Abbasids had fractured long before Saladin and the Almohads; it was not to be restored.

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Alice Bellagamba, Sandra E. Greene, and Martin A. Klein (eds.). 2016. *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade: Volume 2, Essays on Sources and Methods*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. x, 206 pp.

Scholarship on archival research has gone through extensive revision for several decades to show how the archives continue to evolve; particularly, how they thrive in some areas, but encounter various challenges as well. In *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade*, the contributors seek to show the significance of slave voices in discourses about slavery. The book explains the ways in which African voices have been silenced in oral testimonies, possession rituals, Arabic language sources, missionary and colonial records, and existing academic literature in general. The authors do not deny the significance of the archives, and the contributions by Europeans, particularly missionaries and colonial officials. However, they tackle and raise important historiographical, methodological, and epistemological questions about the reliability of sources preserved for centuries on the experiences of African slaves, who either remained on the continent or were forcefully transported across the Atlantic waters and elsewhere for economic exploitation. Part of the objective of *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade* is to challenge scholars and researchers to look beyond their past conclusions, based on archival sources, and "revisit their sources to retrieve African voices...with a renewed focus on methodology" (p. 4). The authors are convinced that such reflective methodological

assessment could draw African voices from the peripheral to the forefront of academic discourse.

Africanist and diaspora scholars interested in the history of slavery are often made to believe that any scholarship not grounded in European archival sources is incomplete. A major strength of *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade* is its ability to create an opposite paradigm that emphasizes the significance of slaves' testimonies and oral sources. Testimonies and oral sources, two pivotal areas of research, have been sidelined for various reasons, including misleading notion that they are unreliable. Archives sources are not flawless either. They have their shortcomings too, and "it is equally important to understand the way that documents have been influenced by particular values, mind-sets and objectives of the individual authors" (p. 114). Further, as the book emphasizes, "to understand the archive one needs to understand the institutions it served" (p. 116). The contradiction is that most of the people who preserved and perpetuated slavery including missionaries, Jesuit priests and colonial officials who created laws to protect their interest in slavery were among those who recorded and created most of the archives, with little or no regards for the voices of those they enslaved (pp. 70-73).

One recurring question in *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade* is, how can researchers filter and rely on European sources and Arabic scripts or documentations alone when they reflect only tiny portion of slaves' voice and experiences as recorded in the archives? Those interested in this central question are not alone. The authors provide balanced analysis to show that although some missionaries, colonial officials, and those who documented slavery in Arabic scripts were biased and prejudiced in their articulation of slave experiences, they left relevant body of work for understanding part of the testimonies by slaves and their owners. Nonetheless, researchers have to exercise caution when using biographies of missionaries and colonial officials because of "possibility of exaggerations and outright fabrications...to portray the success of their evangelical efforts" (p. 59). Another strength of the book is that it highlights linguistic inadequacies and their major impact on archival sources. The authors caution researchers to be aware of Europeans' lack of knowledge or their little understanding of local languages and cultures, and the ways in which such inadequacies and flaws tainted their interpretations (p. 64). How to unearth and highlight the role of memory is another focus of the book. Like testimonies and oral sources, memory embedded in cultural practices and rituals are also sidelined in most literature. To reverse this trend, the contributors remind us of iconography or the study of visual representations, including ritual and spirit possession, that are often ignored or not treated as reliable sources, although they suffer the same weaknesses as written European text in several archival holdings. The book states that "ritual spaces offer a terrain in which good and bad, past and present, suffering and salvation coexist...and are worth being considered, not to create an opposition between discursive and performative memory...but to pay due attention to the neglected and obscure forms of memory" (p. 172).

In general, *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade* makes significant contribution to historiography in the field. The book adds to ongoing dialogue about epistemology, methodology, theory and the complexity of using archival sources. It is an important work that challenges researchers to reflect deeply on the validity and reliability of sources, particularly the dangers of over-reliance on archives that were created by those in authority or those who held a

great deal of power in the past. The book brings fresh insight and make bold claims particularly about epistemological issues, and emphasizes clearly that the facts we gather at the archives are not necessarily the entire truth about the social, cultural, political, economic and historical issues they aspire to articulate. I recommend this book to everyone interested in the history of slavery. Graduate students and new researchers in the field of slavery in Africa and the diaspora will benefit enormously from the questions, issues, and guidelines covered in this book to unearth the voices of slaves and their communities (pp. 125-31).

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Catherine Besteman. 2016. *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees in Lewiston, Maine*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 336 pp.

Catherine Besteman, an anthropologist at Colby College, writes an engaging and timely account of the challenges that Somali Bantu refugees face in their incorporation into American society. Besteman's longstanding connection to the Somali Bantu community began when she conducted fieldwork in Banta, Somalia, for her PhD dissertation in 1987-1988. Almost twenty years later, and after being unable to reconnect with her old friends for years because of Somalia's civil war, she reunited with some of them who had relocated to Lewiston, only an hour away from her own home. This encounter led her to immerse herself in helping them in their new lives in the US and to write this rich ethnography, in which she examines the important question of: "How do people who have survived the ravages of war and displacement rebuild their lives in a new country when their world has totally changed?" (p. 4).

Making Refuge starts with an evocative description of farming life in Banta before the war and an explanation of how race and ancestry became crucial identity markers when the civil war came to the Jubba Valley. In the 19th century, thousands of slaves from Africa's east coast were brought to Somalia to work on plantations owned by Somalis. This created a categorization differentiating both groups in social and physical terms: the *jareer* ("hard hair") are those of slave ancestry, while the *jileec* ("soft hair") are the ethnic Somalis. This ethnic differentiation also proved to be key in the Somali Bantu resettlement in the US: during the civil war, and after losing their lands and many loved ones, thousands of Somali Bantus fled to Kenya and lived in the Dadaab refugee camp, where they again endured violence and racism from other Somalis. Here they began constructing their Somali Bantu identity in contrast to that of ethnic Somalis and then helped for their refugee resettlement when they were identified as extremely vulnerable inside the camp. Understanding this context helps the reader better grasp the challenges faced by Somali Bantus who start a new life in the US and the importance of their own identity once they settle in Lewiston.

The book is then divided in three parts in which Besteman focuses, first, on issues of humanitarianism and how these discourses constrain and burden those who receive aid and who wish to retain agency over their own lives. Secondly, she discusses the process of resettlement. Lewiston is, in fact, a secondary destination for Somalis and Somali Bantus who were initially resettled in other parts of the country and chose to relocate to Lewiston to establish a larger community of co-nationals. When large numbers of them relocated to

Lewiston, they found that the city was not fully prepared for their arrival, and clashes emerged. But escaping the temptation of blaming incorporation issues on discrimination and racism, Besteman describes four different “versions” of this process. The first concerns Lewiston’s city officials who highlight the financial burden of accommodating unexpected refugees; the second exposes the xenophobic reactions of members of the community who vocally express their rejection of an unwelcome intrusion into their city; the third highlights the crucial role of the social workers, teachers, and community activists who extend care and support to the newcomers. Finally, she focuses on how the members of the Somali Bantu community interpret their own integration process and how they work hard to make Lewiston their home.

Making Lewiston home is the last part of the book and, here, Besteman addresses the issue of immigrant integration by engaging with debates of assimilation. She highlights that integration is not a one-sided issue: refugees in Lewiston change some practices to adapt to their new lives, but Lewiston also changes to include them. While some citizens are more resistant to this change, others understand the need to transform institutions, schools and workplaces to accommodate the newcomers and work hard to make this happen. Thus, Besteman shows how newcomers and locals negotiate their lives together, illustrating that integration works both ways.

Making Refuge is particularly relevant in a time when refugee resettlement is widely discussed, as it points to the flaws and contradictions of a system that expects refugees to be docile and thankful recipients of charity to gain resettlement but at the same time requires for them to become self-sufficient shortly after arriving in the country. Besteman offers many useful lessons to policy makers and those who provide services to refugees as well as students of immigrant incorporation.

Cristina Ramos, *University of Florida*

Antoinette Burton. 2016. *Africa in the Indian Imagination: Race and the Politics of Postcolonial Citation*. Durham: Duke University Press. 200 pp.

Originally published in India in 2012 as *Brown over Black*, Antoinette Burton’s monograph was re-issued last year by Duke University Press under the title *Africa in the Indian Imagination*. This is a well-deserved recognition for a thought provoking, unsettling contribution to the field of Indian Ocean studies—and beyond – that presents the reader with an experimental historiographical method and an unconventional account of Afro-Asian interaction in the post-Bandung era.

Burton’s project of reframing the narratives of Afro-Asian solidarity begins as early as the epigraph: “Exploitation and domination of one nation over another can have no place in a world striving to put an end to all wars.” These words, written by M.K. Gandhi in April 1945 with reference to decolonization and India’s bid for independence, are implicitly re-contextualized by Burton and used as an incisive commentary to what she identifies as the racial logics and sexual politics that informed India’s relationship with Africa in the first decades after independence. According to Burton, India’s effort to create a national identity entailed a vision of Africa and of blackness that was intrinsically defined by the assumption of

their inferior status, in civilizational and racial terms. To substantiate her argument, she discusses in the introductory chapter (the most far-reaching in terms of theoretical vision and historical narrative) the “politics of citation” by which Africa and Africans were routinely called upon, re-signified and “consumed” across a number of texts, so as to become an imaginative pillar of Indian identity. The book elaborates on this citationary politics as a disavowing mechanism and a top-down approach to Africa that reveals “the culturally particularistic and highly gendered” (p. 18) imaginaries of postcolonial India and that calls into question the fraternal narratives of Bandung. Although Burton is careful to observe that this does not deny the close entanglement between India and Africa and their archive of cross-racial interaction, she invites her readers to consider Afro-Asian solidarity, and the modern and contemporary history of south-south connections, from the vantage point of frictions and fault lines. The rest of the book, which is conceived as a citationary apparatus, engages a variety of fictional and non-fictional narratives that are used as specific accounts of the ways in which Africa was imagined by Indians or by Africans of Indian descent.

The first chapter brings to the reader a commentary on the first novel written by a South African Indian and on the interpretive possibilities that arise from a method that is attuned to the citationary politics that plays out within—and beyond—the text. Written in 1960, Ansuayah R. Singh’s *Behold the Earth Mourns* is the story of a transnational Indian marriage set in Durban against the backdrop of the passive resistance campaign of 1946-1948, which was organized in response to the Smuts government’s introduction of the so-called Ghetto Act. In order to capture the full historicity of Singh’s book, Burton suggests that this be read not only as a diaspora novel that portrays the struggles of the Indian community in South Africa at the intersection of class, gender, and race, but as a work of fiction where African characters, and the possibilities of interracial encounters and collisions, are central to the plot. A novel that openly dramatizes the frustrations and inadequacies of India’s relationship with Africa is Chanakya Sen’s *The Morning After* (1973). Published in Bengali only five years after the Bandung Conference of 1955, Sen’s is a surprisingly early fictional rendering of the anxieties that generate when the fraternal rhetoric of Bandung translates into interracial interactions and intimacies within the boundaries of India and the household. As Burton maintains in chapter three, the novel offers “an intimate counter-history of Afro-Asian solidarity” (p. 115), exposing the hierarchical logic that inspired India’s development programs for Africa as well as the racial and sexual protocols of postcolonial India.

In chapters two and four Burton turns her critical gaze from literature to nonfiction and interrogates two texts that attest to the contrasting ways in which the hyphen that at once sanctions and hampers the idea of Afro-Asian solidarity has been interpreted and experienced. The second chapter focuses on *The Importance of Being Black* (1965), Goa-born journalist Frank Moraes’ account of his travels through Africa. By reading (perhaps too readily) the travelogue as a “critical ethnography of emergent African nation-states” (p. 57), Burton argues that this text and its author participate in the discursive violence of colonial tropes about Africa and Africans, reframed in the idiom of Indian modernity and reproduced in the context of south-south confraternity. A reversed narrative of Afro-Asian solidarities—and conflicts—emerges from Phyllis Naidoo’s writings, primarily *Footprints on Grey Street* (2002), taken up by Burton in the last chapter. Naidoo’s record of South African freedom fighters of Indian descent, working side

by side with other anti-apartheid activists, is presented as both an effort to desegregate the history of South Africa and a way to refigure Grey Street, the heart of Durban's Indian community, as a center of interracial politics.

Antoinette Burton's *Africa in the Indian Imagination* is a highly stimulating study of the (dis)continuities of colonial discourses of race and gender into the framework of transnational solidarity inspired by the Bandung spirit. The project would have benefited from a more rigorous discussion of the theoretical relevance and methodological implications of the "politics of citation," also considering that the progression of chapters and texts somewhat nibbles away at thematic consistency, particularly towards the end of the volume. Even so, Burton's book offers a major contribution to our understanding of how India imagined Africa (and, consequently, itself as an independent nation state) and raises the important challenge of re-thinking and complicating the postcolonial histories of Afro-Asian connections.

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Jeffrey James Byrne. 2016. *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order*. New York: Oxford University Press. 388 pp.

In a 1964 interview with the Argentine revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara (1969), Josie Fanon—the widow of Frantz Fanon—asked Guevara why he began his tour of Africa in Algeria. Guevara replied that in order "to go to Africa we have to come to Algeria first."¹ From here, Guevara turned his attention to the possibilities and potential pitfalls of revolution in Africa. Implied in Guevara's initial response to Fanon, though, was an understanding of both Algeria and, by extension, Africa funneled through the lens of the revolution and war of decolonization that marked the North African state's previous decade. As Jeffrey James Byrne's *Mecca of Revolution* wonderfully details, in the early 1960s, this was a connection that Guevara was not alone in making. Rather, over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, Algeria came to hold a unique place in the burgeoning anticolonial and Cold War imaginary, emerging for many in Africa, Asia, and beyond as one of the epicenters for a burgeoning Third World order.

The world Byrne thus attempts to reconstruct in *Mecca of Revolution* is one of wide-ranging conflict, confusion, hope, and ambition. Over the last decade, an increasing array of books have sought to transport readers into this world and the political and cultural imaginaries pursued by so many activists, politicians, and freedom fighters in the mid-twentieth century. In many ways, Byrne's book stands atop this growing literature. Not only does he provide a seemingly exhaustive narrative enriched by a wide-ranging archival record featuring material from Algeria, France, Serbia, the United States, and Great Britain, but he also reads these sources with a discerning eye intent on taking seriously the complicated worldviews driving this vibrant and chaotic moment in world history.

To this end, Byrne divides his text into five substantive chapters, each of which examines a particular facet of Algeria's decolonization experience, along with the varying ways in which this experience was read in sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East, among other locales. In doing so, Byrne dutifully unpacks the Algerian revolutionaries' and later government's often divergent relationships to the diverse groups of political actors that

comprised these varying political and geographic regions. In Africa, this entailed an analysis of the Algerian government's relationship to the governments of such states as Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, Sékou Touré's Guinea, and Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt. Other portions of the book detail the Algerian interactions with Cuba, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union. In nearly all of these instances, Byrne consistently reiterates to his readers the innovation and methodological bricolage implicit in the Algerians' attempts to project their revolution outward and in attempting to manage its and the burgeoning Third World's contradictions from the inside.

As a result, in *Mecca of Revolution*, Byrne not only forces his readers to recognize the complexity of the given historical moment in Algeria, but, more importantly, challenges them to embrace this complexity in their own studies of the decolonization era in Africa and beyond. In doing so, Byrne argues that, at varying moments, decolonizing and newly independent states like Algeria simultaneously embraced and struggled with the politics of Third World internationalism, Cold War polarity, and, in certain instances, even the remaining vestiges of colonial rule. For some looking in, the inconsistencies and contradictions embedded within Algerian policy led to disappointment, while others developed the blinded eyes necessary to overlook them. However, what Byrne ultimately does show through his analysis of this political moment is that the inconsistencies and contradictions of the decolonization era were necessarily par for the course in not only the transition from colonial to self-rule, but, just as importantly, the international definition of an envisioned anti-imperial Third World order for the coming decades.

In African Studies, Byrne's *Mecca of Revolution* thus joins a growing collection of books detailing both the continent's decolonization and the diversity of ways in which Africans related to and negotiated the various possibilities of decolonization. Among these recent works include Frederick Cooper's analysis of citizenship in French West Africa, Elizabeth Schmidt's work on Guinean nationalism, and Meredith Terretta's on Cameroonian internationalism, to name a few. What sets Byrne apart from these rich studies is the way in which he integrated so many often-divergent historical literatures—Algerian, Africanist, Middle Eastern, Cold War, and French—in unpacking his argument. For this reason alone, *Mecca of Revolution* should make a lasting impact in fields including the study of mid-century decolonization movements, Third World internationalism, and the global Cold War, among others.

Notes

- 1 Guevara, Ernesto. 1969. *Che: Selected Works of Ernesto Guevara*. Edited by Rolando E. Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdés (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press): 401.

Jeffrey S. Ahlman, *Smith College*

Ray Costello. 2015. *Black Tommies: British Soldiers of African Descent in the First World War*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 216 pp.

On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the British Army suffered some 60,000 casualties in a horrific slaughter, one that came to define, in part, the brutal absurdity of the First World War.

Although the Great War was fought in Africa, the Middle East, and Russia, it has been defined and remembered largely by the hecatombs on the Western Front, where France and Britain, joined later by the United States, battled Germany in a war of attrition: this was understood as a White Man's War. And yet, on 18 August 1916, Private Walter Colebourne, a British-born black man from Liverpool lost his life at the Somme.

Ray Costello addressed this death and the military experiences of other British-born and domiciled black soldiers and other African descended peoples in his *Black Tommies: British Soldiers of African Descent in the First World War*, a work that complicates our understanding of the war. Although the military contributions of Caribbean and African peoples to the British war effort has long been researched, the contributions of blacks in Britain has not—and it is no easy task. The British did not identify one's race on census records, nor, typically, on military records. Costello thus had scant information, often discovered haphazardly, to reclaim the lives of black servicemen. What Costello discovered is not without merit and gives one pause not just about British racism, which is well known, but more about the British military's commitment to a racial hierarchy, at the potential expense of successfully prosecuting the war.

British-born and domiciled blacks were a rather small, dispersed demographic in 1914. These black individuals who volunteered for service early in the war, like most fit Britons, readily found themselves assigned to the regular army, then sent to France to fight Germans; black men were thus given weapons, training, and encouragement to kill white men. Some recruiting officers, however, thought better of this, with one stating, "we must discourage coloured volunteers" (p. 16). But there was no rule prohibiting blacks from serving; rather, enlistment officers exercised their discretion and, reflecting the will of the War Office, simply found many blacks unfit for service, despite the demonstrable need for manpower.

Racism more directly affected the commissioning of black officers. The British *Manual of Military Law* of 1914 stated officers must be of "pure European descent" (p. 92). George Bemand, an educated, mixed-race Londoner, born in Jamaica, claimed pure European descent and earned his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery. Other blacks, however, stated they were not of pure European descent and they, too, were commissioned. Some medical officer candidates were commissioned, others rejected because of race. Costello concludes from this inconsistency that merit and wartime exigencies overcame racism—but not consistently, shadism and class were often mediating influences. Still, unlike in the United States military, British blacks did lead white soldiers.

Although Costello's stated purpose was to research British-born and domiciled blacks in the war, much of his work narrated the service of African descended peoples from the colonies. In British colonial Africa, African volunteers and conscripts fought German colonial African soldiers. In the Caribbean colonies, black men demanded the right to serve both to show loyalty and for expected political rewards. The War Office opposed their service, fearing it could lead to independence struggles. Pressured, the War Office relented, ultimately allowing Caribbean units to form and serve in Europe—but only as labor units. These colonial units profoundly impacted British-born and domiciled blacks; recruiting officers assigned some of these black citizens to colonial units, suggesting a deep-seated racist belief of who truly constituted the nation.

This work demonstrates that, in this centennial moment, new, fresh understandings of the Great War and its combatants can be found, especially by looking at the war through the lens of race. Unfortunately, Costello promised much more than he delivered. The data on British-born and domiciled blacks is so scant that the anecdotes provided only whet our appetite for more information and much more analysis, not to mention engagement with historiographic arguments about race and diaspora. Second, we almost never learn of the black soldiers' experiences, just that they served. Third, Costello framed his contribution with an excessive reliance on secondary sources, such as on the race riots of 1919 or the history of British West Indian Regiment; he only synthesizes, not analyzes this historiography. Finally, this work suggests that the time is ripe, now, for an international, comparative study of the role, contributions, and experiences of all African descended peoples in the Great War.

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Robert A. Dowd. 2015. *Christianity, Islam and Liberal Democracy: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press. 224 pp.

In sub-Saharan Africa in particular and the world in general, literary works that by their main theme crosscuts Christianity, Islam, and liberal democracy are one and the same as treading on inflammable political terrains. From the East Coast of sub-Saharan Africa through its central tropical basins to the West Coast, the historical development of emergent African nations has been laced with sumptuous and reoccurring attempts to adapt to the Western model of liberal democracy. In most of these cases the spirituality of the people often defined through the interfacing agencies of Christianity and Islam emerge as determining factors. Analytically presenting these situations in such a way as to present a vivid picture of the trending political events in sub-Saharan Africa is just what Robert Dowd did in *Christianity, Islam and Liberal Democracy: Lessons from sub-Saharan Africa*.

This work of comparative geo-political analysis of "Religion in Politics" is fully enriched with a capacious bibliography, elucidating reference notes, and index and an extravagant display of informative reference figures and tables. The seven chapters thematically offer as much in-depth details as possible, yet maintaining a resilient art of inter-chapter connectivity. In the introduction, which is chapter one, the author builds up his thematic framework with a strong index of existing theoretical models. His major proposition is that "Christianity and Islam are not unchanging, essences. They always have a locality in time and space and their locality affects the way in which the religions are interpreted and appropriated" (p. 6). He then goes further to elaborate on this thesis by giving instances that cut across Africa, Asia and Europe, offering arguments that subsequently rest on his findings and thematic focus.

The second chapter, "Time, Place, and the Application of Religion to Politics," displays the author's in-depth knowledge of the theology of politics. Beginning with the premise that "there has been a great deal of variation in how leaders of the same religious faith tradition, whether Christians or Muslims have applied their faith tradition to politics across time and across space at the same point in time," he proceed with a crucial question. "How do we explain these differences that exist even within the same religious tradition? We want to know why religious

leaders choose to apply their faith traditions in ways that promote or impede political participation, support for democracy and respect for freedom of religion, speech and association” (p. 22). The following sections of this chapter clearly present what could be defined as theoretical prologue to the above question thematically outlined with elucidating presentations.

Moving from the realm of theoretical backgrounds we are launched through the third chapter into the motion of practical politics with a short and incisive title, “The Role of Religious Leaders.” This chapter introduces the game of “real religious politics” in sub-Saharan Africa. As the author aptly puts it: “In this chapter, I present evidence from sub-Saharan Africa that reveals a correlation between two factors— religious diversity and educational attainment— and the extent to which Christian and Muslim religious leaders promoted pro-freedom political activism during the 1980s and 1990s”(p. 50). Citing degrees of variations in religious and ethnic diversities as supporting variables, the author concluded that “Christian and Muslim religious leaders tend to be more supportive of democracy in more highly educated and religiously diverse settings than religiously homogenous settings” (p. 79).

Chapter four goes further to explain “the impact of religious communities” in defining appropriate pattern of liberal democracy. Chapter five looks at the comparative settings of Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda, the three sub-Saharan African nations that arguably present the practical models of interfacing religious factor in liberal democracy. Chapter six is no doubt a curious follow-up of the fifth chapter in which the author passes the bulk of his theoretical argument on the Nigerian scenario. He sums up his argument with the question: “Does Nigeria’s religious diversity explain why religious observance had a more positive effect on civic engagement and religious tolerance there than in Senegal and Uganda, or are there other factors that distinguish Nigeria from the often two countries that explain why religious observance had a more positive effect (on) Civic engagement and religious tolerance in Nigeria” (p. 123)?

The concluding part of the work, chapter seven, is not only a compelling summary of this pain-staking copious treatise but raises a number of questions that make the work a compelling impetus for further research on the subject matter. With a striking intellectual humility uncommon with most intellectual traditions, the author wraps up what appears to be the inconclusiveness of his conclusion in these words:

While we know that Christianity and Muslims apply religious ideas to politics in various ways in Nigeria, in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole and in other religions of the world, we have more work to do before we can say that we understand and can explain this variation very well. As I try to make clear in this final chapter, more research is needed. However, my hope is that this book represents a step forward along the path that leads toward greater understanding and evidence informed policy prescriptions (p. 171).

The book thus in presenting copious wealth of knowledge in the interfacing roles of Christianity and Islam in promoting the culture of liberal democracy in sub-Saharan Africa in the same vein presents itself as a veritable springboard for further research.

Nwankwo T. Nwaezeigwe, *University of Nigeria*

Paul Gifford. 2016. *Christianity, Development, and Modernity in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press. 187 pp.

Gifford examines African Christianity and its significance in the development and modernity in Africa. The book has nine chapters excluding the preliminary notes. The author is one of the several European scholars who have researched Africa Christianity in the last three decades. However, the author perceives that his scholarship might not be entirely a true representation of African Christianity, a byproduct of misconception or broad generalizations, and as such he welcomes criticism. Gifford's admission inevitably sets the tone for a careful appraisal of his scholarship.

The author observed the significance for Africa of Christian denominations, the colonial emergence in Africa, and the predatory disposition in the division of Africa by the colonial powers. Gifford describes the growth of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa as "perhaps the most salient social force in sub-Saharan Africa" (p. 12). However, Gifford sets forth his views on observable theological and religious idiosyncrasies between African Christianity and the historic denominations. The author copiously describes the enchanted Christianity he associates with African Christianity and the disenchanting nature of historic denominations on human development. In sustaining his arguments on enchanted Christianity he opines: "enchanted imagination, along with the prosperity Gospel, and emphasis on the pastor's 'anointing,' are the principal characteristics of much African Pentecostalism" (front flap).

Interestingly, the author was very selective in his data analyses characterized by broad generalizations about a multifaceted African Christianity phenomenon. Nevertheless, Gifford observes that there is the urgent need for the appraisal of Christianity and other religions in the sustainable development of Africa. While acknowledging the contributions of religious organizations to development, the author inadvertently seems trapped in essentialism as he failed to appreciate the heterogeneous and the uniqueness of African Christianities. Gifford's disposition implies the denial of the lived realities within the African context to address their existential realities as African Christianities, particularly some Pentecostal ethos which resonates in the Traditional African worldview such as malevolent forces, curses, demons, witchcraft, and exorcism. Gifford's disposition might be a byproduct of the armchair research disposition of some scholars who make use of data collated from pronouncements, books, creeds, and pamphlets but are devoid of the understanding of religious praxis as well as the lack of engagement with religious practitioners.

Gifford interprets a denial of the spiritual realm to be necessary for progress and development in Africa, although seemingly claiming to have a firm understanding of the religious worldviews and the peculiarities of African Christianities. The clarion call from Gifford that African Christianity should abandon its "enchanted dimension" (p. 105), which is a major distinctiveness of the movement which is contextual and addresses the lived experiences of Africans. However, to condemn the Catholic Church, with its somewhat secularized development cynosure, of its indifference for and powerlessness to provide another remedy to the enchanted religious needs of African Catholics is surprising.

Gifford's argument about the enchanted imaginations is not peculiar to African Christianities alone but also a feature of even the Charismatic Catholics although overly

exaggerated. The repudiation of any compatibility between the enchanted worldview as well as rationality depicts the “locked in western syndrome” mindset of Gifford. The overly western mindset and supremacist notions are evident in the boisterous assertion, “claiming that no other organization can match this involvement in development” on the contributions of Catholic Church in Africa to development. The author’s claim might be correct during the colonial era in Africa. However, a cursory overview of African Pentecostalism to development was grossly understated and denied by Gifford. The contributions of the Pentecostal tradition pervade various sectors of the economy including education, financial sector, healthcare delivery, farming, hospitality, and so forth.

The clarion call by Gifford for disengagement from the enchanted to disenchanting imaginations by African Christianities to move to the level of modernity is wishful thinking devoid of contextual knowledge and lived realities of Africans. Therefore, Gifford’s prior acknowledgment of the possibility of over generalizations in this work was not a matter of perception, but a reality and the overtly simplified complex religious realities in Africa is to deny its heterogeneous and homogenous nature.

Babatunde Adedibu, *Redeemed Christian Bible College, Nigeria*

Kjell Havnevik, Terje Oestigaard, and Eva Tobisson (eds.). 2015. *Framing African Development: Challenging Concepts*. Leiden, Boston: Brill. 203 pp.

Development is undoubtedly a prevailing buzzword although it is accentuated by different discourses across time and space. Despite the discursive shifts that have occurred throughout the periods of modernization to a stage envisioned by some theorists as “post-development,” there are several dominant concepts that have framed our understanding of the socio-economic, cultural, and political conditions of the world. This book under review attempts to critically engage with some of these concepts, revealing their often universalizing and uncontested (sometimes contested) genealogies as well as their stereotypical representations of the state of poverty and development in Africa. The objective of the stimulating eight-chapter edited book is to engage with popularized ‘Western-oriented’ concepts around Africa’s “development.”

Using the analogy of photographic cameras to explain how their lenses are not designed to reproduce images of black and white subjects with equal sharpness, Kjell Havnevik presents this caution in the first chapter: “we should avoid universalizing our technical, scientific and cultural development as if they could be applied to other cultures without critical reflection” (p. 3). This is an appeal against the “naturalization” of Western values and perspectives. The book reveals four themes under which the West frames Africa’s development. The first theme is used to reinforce the asymmetrical power relations between the West and Africa. Cemented by racist perceptions and stereotypes, the representation of the “other” did facilitate the spread of colonialism with the goal of bringing civilization to people who were culturally, economically, and socially backward. Even though “this ‘afro-pessimism’ has partly turned to ‘afro-optimism’” in recent years, still “it is only occasionally that optimistic and positive stories about Africa and elsewhere hit the headlines” (p. 27).

The second theme is based on the concepts of poverty, empowerment, and livelihoods. Despite efforts to address poverty on the continent since the 1970s, 41 percent of the population according to 2015 estimates live below the World Bank's poverty threshold of \$1.25 per day. While this statistic might be useful, there are limits to mainly using an income-based monetary approach to understand poverty in Africa because poverty is "context bound and displays many particularities in its multidimensionality" (p. 36). To further showcase this multidimensionality, empowerment has become a popular term used to frame Africa's development discourses, with the expectation that the marginalized and the disenfranchised in society could grasp some relative power and agency to act. Nonetheless, there remain real challenges with the term including practices of tokenism where stakeholders are brought to the table to only endorse programs and policies that have been agreed upon in private circles.

The book's third theme is focused on the concepts of displacement and primitive accumulation. What both concepts have in common is a reflection on ongoing changes that hinder people's livelihoods and access to land and other resources. Understanding the historical processes that underlie these intertwined concepts helps to appreciate why they are often sidelined in development discussions although they are both crucial elements of the West's framing of development in Africa. The last theme relates to agricultural production, sustainability, rights, and power—encapsulated in such concepts as food security and food sovereignty. As a logical continuation of the previous theme, it highlights the limits in our current understanding of the causes of hunger over long periods of time, including the power relations that sustain it. The suggestion is for a definition that avoids the neoliberal win-win narrative and rather shifts the paradigm towards environmental sustainability, global social justice, human rights, and fair trading agreements.

While the book is a delightful addition to discourses on Africa's development, there are at least two things that could have improved it. Firstly, there is reference to "West" and "Western" in various chapters but no explanation is provided as to what they mean in the context of the book. For example, is it the "West" in terms of North America and Europe or as a "white, Christian Man" (p. 2) or both? Properly contextualizing these terms would have been useful in the first chapter because based on what we know from development studies, such binaries as Self/Other, West/Rest, North/South, and Developed/Developing cannot be taken for granted, especially for a book that critically engages with challenging concepts. Secondly, there should have been a conclusion to examine implications of the "challenging concepts" for the theory and practice of development in Africa. Some chapters provided a few insights but a conclusion by the editors could have provided a broader reflective overview, as it would have properly concretized the editors' hope that their endeavor leads to improved policy prescription and intervention for Africa's development. Having said that, the book's length and writing style auger well for a good read. Thus, I recommend it for students, scholars, and practitioners of development in Africa and possibly elsewhere.

Nathan Andrews, *Queen's University*

Alexi P. Kireyev (ed.). 2016. *Building Integrated Economies in West Africa: Lessons in Managing Growth, Inclusiveness, and Volatility*. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund. 385 pp.

The West African Economic and Monetary Union (WEAMU) is one of the four formal currency unions in the world, consisting of the countries Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. Like other common markets, such as the European Union (EU), the WEAMU eliminates custom duties, establishes a common external tariff, creates common rules for competition, and guarantees the free movement of persons, establishments, provision of services, and capital flows. *Building Integrated Economies in West Africa* is a comprehensive analysis of the lessons learned from the WEAMU so far and the policy recommendations to achieve development and stability objectives.

Editor Alex Kireyev and his International Monetary Fund (IMF) colleagues' efforts resulted in an excellent manuscript that provides a comprehensive and engaging analysis of the different institutional challenges, while keeping in sight the common goals of the WEAMU. The foreword, written by the IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde, outlines the importance of the book for policy-makers in West Africa, as well as policy-makers in countries contemplating to create or join a monetary union. In addition, Lagarde emphasizes that the book is a facet of the Fund's commitment to helping WEAMU countries manage their economic challenges. The book is well organized and opens with a succinct introduction that highlights the findings and recommendations for each of the six parts: overview and policy setting, growth and inclusiveness, fiscal policy and coordination, regional monetary policy, financial development and sustainability, and competitiveness and integration. The parts are further divided in chapters, in which each of the experts at the IMF comment on specific fiscal mechanisms that govern the Union. The chapters are clear and include numerous tables and figures that visualize empirical data and organizational structures of the WEAMU.

The first part, overview and policy setting, provides an outline of the history and organization of the monetary union. The authors explain that the WEAMU countries have taken significant steps toward economic integration, but that progress has been slow because several countries remained noncompliant with the convergence criteria and nontariff restrictions within the common market persist. The second part, growth and inclusiveness, assesses why economic growth in the WEAMU countries has been lower than the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. The part indicates that "macroeconomic" shocks are key contributors to the lack of development in the region. These shocks are caused by political instability and the lack of diversity in output and export. The IMF experts suggest that inclusiveness and equality as well as the mobilization of financial resources will stimulate growth in the West African region. The third part, financial policy and coordination, states that the high fiscal deficits exert pressure on the Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCAEO), the common central bank of the WEAMU. Achieving fiscal discipline remains a challenge in a monetary union without a central fiscal authority. However, given that the macroeconomic shocks are uneven in the region, fiscal federalism is necessary to share the risks. The authors argue that better tax coordination and tax policy harmonization could help increase revenue collection and improve the fiscal space. The fourth part, regional monetary policy, argues that the BCAEO has significant weight in the

banking system. However, the current financial markets and low inflation rates prevent the central bank from having a stronger impact on liquidity conditions and inflation. Although investments are necessary, the BCAEO should be cautious because elevated levels of central bank liquidity provision to commercial banks in the region may cause instability, as widening fiscal and external imbalances can lead to weakness in the fiscal, monetary, and supervisory coordination between national and supranational institutions. The fifth part, financial development and stability, explains that financial institutions in the WEAMU countries too often do not comply with international standards for prudential norms. The IMF sees financial stability as a critical factor for financial growth and a necessity for attracting foreign investments and capital flows. Therefore, the framework for crisis prevention needs strengthening, as it is a crucial instrument of macroeconomic development. The sixth part, competitiveness and integration, argues that WEAMU countries have few exportable commodities and should invest in upgrading capacities in key sectors to become more competitive on the international market. Furthermore, the region should take advantage of the regional market. As a result of weak implementation of trade and financial integration, the common market has not significantly contributed to reduced poverty. However, the IMF remains hopeful that a focus on regional policies in sectors where comparative advantages are the strongest, combined with the distributive effects of integration, will enable the WEAMU to foster economic growth.

Building Integrated Economies in West Africa offers a systematized overview of challenges and accomplishments of low-income countries forming a monetary union. The authors' ability to describe an extensive and complex topic in an articulate book is remarkable. The drawback, however, is that the authors could have made more of an effort to build on existing research and include theories to justify their policy recommendations. Furthermore, the authors neglect to critically evaluate the impact of external factors that hinder growth in the WEAMU countries, most importantly, the systemic political constraints arising from economic policies that favor the interests of western countries at the expense of developing nations. Despite the inadequate theoretical justifications and critical assessments of western influences, the book is a noteworthy reference work for policy-makers, scholars, and students seeking to establish, develop, or enhance their expertise the WEAMU or monetary unions in general.

Anne Mook, *University of Florida*

Julie Laplante. 2015. *Healing Roots: Anthropology in Life and Medicine*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn. 289 pp.

Healing Roots should be compulsory reading for students of pharmacology in Africa. That statement summarizes the wealth of information and in-depth analysis contained in a book that set out to, and succeeded in articulating the dissonance that exists in attempts to validate indigenous medicine using completely alien and super-imposed standards. Dr. Laplante's research focuses on the plant, *Artemisia Afra* (*A. Afra*) or *Umhlonyne* in Xhosa and Zulu, which is "one of the oldest and best-known of all indigenous medicines in southern Africa," and has

been used by locals to treat a wide range of ailments when taken as “enemas, poultices, infusions, body washes, lotions, smoked, snuffed or drunk as tea” (p. 3).

Laplante’s anthropological quest focused on the subjection of *A. Afra* to Randomized control trials (RCT), in order to determine its efficacy against tuberculosis. *A. Afra*’s RCT (pre-clinical trial stage) was conducted in Cape Town, South Africa between 2005 and 2010 by the research consortium, The International Center for Indigenous Phytotherapy Studies (TICIPS), and was funded by the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine in Washington D.C.

The author’s level of understanding of African traditional medicine is uncommon for a non-indigenous researcher, and this goes beyond the fact that she spent time interviewing, observing, and engaging stakeholders involved in the indigenous knowing and use of *A. Afra* and those involved in the pre-clinical trials of the herb. From the pages of *Healing Roots*, it becomes clear that Dr. Laplante did not conduct the research as an outsider, an external observer. She sought to embed herself in the life of *A. Afra*, and that act forms the core of her thesis, which is that indigenous medicine’s efficaciousness is grounded in its holistic approach to life and living; indigenous medicine lives with, thrives in, and attends to the needs of human beings within the same physical and spiritual space.

While indigenous medicine encompasses all of life itself, RCT thrives on the exclusion of a molecule through a process that sanitizes the plant of life and the lived experiences of end-users. Dr. Laplante’s work is instructive as it does not outrightly repudiate the RCT process in its entirety per se, but probes the necessity and possibility of validity the efficacy of indigenous medicine through a process that drains it of its mediums of effectiveness. These mediums, which Laplante was able to establish through her interactions with the major traditional users of *A. Afra*, the *Izangoma* and *bossiedoktors*, include being called to become a healer, establishing proximity with the plant, and “establishing good relations with the plants.” Both *Izangoma* and *bossiedoktors* agree that the way *A. Afra* is manipulated from the cultivation to the experimentation stage during RCT separates the plant from the people it is meant to heal and renders it inefficacious to a large extent.

Laplante’s interaction with *Izangoma* and *bossiedoktor* around one single plant *A. Afra*, gives her a one sided view of African traditional medicine. In its entirety, African indigenous medicine is deep and diverse, contrary to Laplante’s submission that it is ‘less about objects’ such as plants, barks and minerals than about the ways to relate accordingly through these mediums (p. 245). In Africa, there exists herbal practitioners who administer herbs gained from generations past, and who do not necessarily embrace such other mediums as sounds, dances and performances to invoke ancestors. Successful traditional bonesetters, midwives, and other health practitioners in Africa often utilize only herbs and tried and tested techniques to assist patients in healing. In her experience, therefore, Dr. Laplante refers to only an aspect of African indigenous medicine.

The author’s view of the RCT process as disfigured or inadequate due to its insistence on singling out molecular configurations can be said to apply across several aspects of African indigenous medicine. Many other trajectories exists, which ensures the effectiveness of indigenous medicine, but which does not make it to RCT due to the way the latter is structured. However, one can say that the mode of preparation of indigenous herbal remedies, appears to

promote the effectiveness of certain molecules within the plant; for some remedies, plants are boiled, for others smoked, for others grinded, and so on.

In all however, African indigenous medicine does come with its own distinct reality and there is need for research methods to be enlarged, and to eschew certain restrictive demands in order to benefit suffering humanity in search of health and wholeness.

Chika Ezeanya-Esiobu, *University of Rwanda*

Charles Laurie. 2016. *The Land Reform Deception: Political Opportunism in Zimbabwe's Land Seizure Era*. New York: Oxford University Press. 398 pp.

In *The Land Reform Deception*, Laurie recounts modern Zimbabwean land seizures through the lens of career politicians, war veterans, and opportunistic thieves. While the topic, nepotistic land distribution, and the subject, Zimbabwe, are far from new ground, Laurie's text enriches the existing literature with gripping testimonies from politicians, farmers, Zimbabwe's internal intelligence service, the military, and police officers. He confidently challenges the assumption that Mugabe's government deliberately redistributed all of Zimbabwe's seized land. In short, Laurie argues that President Mugabe's redistributive land policy had the unintended consequence of abrogating property rights across much of Zimbabwe while the regime was forced to concede to land grabbing by Zimbabweans from all walks of life. According to Laurie, lax enforcement by the police and military as well as sweeping declarations by politicians resulted in land grabbing and evictions that the Mugabe administration was forced to recognize as *fait accompli*. Laurie embeds these evocative narratives in an analytical framework already adeptly punctuated with descriptive statistics evincing the work's foundational argument. These complementary data draw in both scholars and laypeople.

Laurie is not afraid to confront the received wisdom regarding Zimbabwe's land reform. For example, Laurie disagrees with Sam Moyo's 2011 account that bandits complied with the 2002 Land Acquisition Act. Zimbabwean farmers' testimonies in Laurie's work serve as evidence to question Moyo's assessment. Likewise, Laurie directly indicts ruling elites who profited from land seizures, a claim which suggests that previous research misidentified the thieves and victims. For example, Laurie opposes accounts such as Scoones et al. (2011) as well as Moyo among others who he argues fail to recognize economic political elites as the beneficiaries of seized land during this period (p. 195). Instead, he inculcates not only opportunistic bandits but also political and military elite who took advantage of the security vacuum created by a criminally negligent government.

A thorough descriptive narrative supports Laurie's indelible, analytical contribution to the property rights research program. In this work, he constructs a typology of "best" land invaders; these invaders are the most suited to seize land and delegitimize the claims of existing inhabitants. To Laurie, the economic and political backgrounds of those invaders are directly related to how they seize the land, how confident the bandits can be in retaining it, and how long they plan to control it. Clearly, the nephew of the president may be more secure against opposition than a subsistence farmer who seizes another subsistence farmer's plot. Laurie also considers land that has changed hands over the course of his study. While some veterans and

politically-connected invaders maintain a parcel of land, others lose the parcel that they seized to other, more 'successful' invaders (p. 256). Laurie's sophisticated understanding of these invaders extends to the motives for land seizures. Laurie also usefully differentiates land seized and used agriculturally, land seized and used commercially, land seized as an investment asset, and land immediately sold (p. 185). These analytical typologies begin to demonstrate the overall depth and descriptive commitment of Laurie's manuscript, which itself parallels the complexity of Zimbabwean land seizures.

The Land Reform Deception lays out several power asymmetries that privilege invaders over farmers during the land seizure period. While the opportunistic invaders seek financial profit the new claim, the inhabitants lose more than their financial wellbeing (p. 268). Victims also forfeit emotional and social value that they vest in their farm and farm life. Farmers who resisted invaders also faced temporally asymmetric battles: their time-sensitive, immobile assets (crops) faced harangue from invaders and saboteurs who often could retreat to their day jobs in Harare or other urban centers. Of course all of this farm theft, market uncertainty, and acquisition by mostly-inexperienced farmers reduced Zimbabwe's agricultural productivity.

This definitive work causally ties reform efforts with specific political opportunists through interviews, numerical data, and legislative outcomes. Members of parliament and police individually benefited from this period of chaos, and Laurie explains why and how they participated in the seizures. Importantly, though, Laurie explicitly and clearly details chaos through approximately eleven years of lawlessness, legal ambiguity, and finally codified redistribution. At times, land distribution may be the outcome of purposeful design, but here it was also a response by Zimbabwe's weak government to concede to massive seizures by political elites and opportunistic bandits.

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Ryan Gibb, *Baker University*

Christopher J. Lee. 2015. *Frantz Fanon: Toward a Revolutionary Humanism*. Ohio: Ohio University Press. 233 pp.

Few subject matters, perhaps, have received as much critical study as man's inhumanity to man which manifests as colonialism, neocolonialism, apartheid, among others. One of the great minds who have studied colonialism is Frantz Fanon (1925-1961). Remarkable about Fanon is his less than two-score year stint with life which belies his robust intellectual, philosophical, and political stature. Fanon's intellectual relevance continues to reverberate as inhumanity against man generally and against the black race, in particular, has continued apace. Christopher J. Lee's *Frantz Fanon: Toward a Revolutionary Humanism* presents an encapsulated study of both Fanon and Fanonism, an academic concept that has regrettably been relegated to the

background of the historical significance of Fanon himself. The book is Lee's attempt at properly situating Fanon within the historical realities that both produced him and his political, philosophical, and psychological arguments now referred to as Fanonism. Lee underscores Fanon's "radical empathy" by which Fanon committed class suicide by jettisoning his middle class privileges for a life among the oppressed. These views are well espoused by Lee.

Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s informed standpoint noted "the relative disregard for Fanon's personal history in contemporary scholarship, which occasioned the anachronistic use of Fanon's work and caused his alienation from the specific colonial contexts and revolutionary spirit that influenced his thinking" (p. 22). Similarly, Lee denounces the ahistorical study of Fanon and emphasizes the inalienable need for a historical contextualization of Fanon's work. Lee argues that the ahistorical study of Fanon's work severs it from its nuanced and pragmatic depth. Lee's intellectual biography does not, therefore, focus on any one concept or book by Fanon but studies the entire gamut of Fanon's scholarly oeuvre. Lee refutes the opinion that Fanon is an entry point to understanding Martinique (his place of birth) and Algeria (his adopted country) and posits contrarily that Martinique and Algeria should be entry points to understanding Fanon.

Lee shows how the paradox of Fanon's "French-ness" which granted Martiniquais equal political and social status, in principle, but denied them same in practice based on race, made Fanon conscious of the socio-political and economic implications of Martinique's racial demography. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon depicts psychological realism, which Lee explains as "a grounded dialectic between the social and the unconscious" (p. 75). Lee discusses the so-called North African Syndrome, a psychosomatic condition which Fanon encountered among Algerian immigrants in Lyon, France, who suffered from physical ailments that Fanon thought were attributable to social alienation. In Lee's view, the psychological effects of racism on the psyche of black persons which makes them to relate differently with white persons than they would do with blacks informed Fanon's foray into psychoanalysis.

Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism*, Lee points out, presents a critical social realism that "posed the fact of colonialism (and anti-colonialism) against views that would have Algeria merely be a part of France" (p. 135). Fanon's membership of the staff of the *El Moudjahid*, a publication of the National Liberation Front (FLN), was a boost to its French edition and readership. Lee sees *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon's last book as "providing solutions to the problems of racism and dehumanization" thus underpinning the symmetry between it and *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Perhaps the paradox of Fanon's "French-ness" that both granted and denied him equal citizenship produced in him another paradox of "being a physician and committed to armed struggle" (p. 158). To Fanon, violence has cathartic potentials but should not be gratuitously employed. It is "a situated act, specific to colonization and decolonization" (p. 156). Decolonization is anticolonial violence and therefore "antiviolence violence." Lee notes that Fanon was never fully able to resolve this paradox thus presaging his own difficulty in striking a convincing balance between a humane physician and an advocate for violent decolonization though he set out to do so.

Lee examines Fanon's "radical empathy"—a distinct ethic emblematic of Fanon's politics and writing by which he sought a 'Third' world not categorized by physical development but

one that is “beyond the existing worlds of the colonizer and the colonized” (p. 178). This is Fanon’s “new humanism.”

This intellectual biography affords Lee the opportunity to mentally revisit his formative years in Gaborone (Botswana), his home country, during the apartheid era in neighboring South Africa. It provides not an in-depth study or analyses of any of Fanon’s philosophical or political ideas but enough of all that Fanon stood for to whet any scholarly appetite.

Oluchi J. Igili, *Adekunle Ajasin University*

Giacomo Macola. 2016. *The Gun in Central Africa: A History of Technology and Politics*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press. 249 pp.

One rich element of modern colonial histories is that they acknowledge the nuance with how colonialism affected different nations. Giacomo Macola successfully crafted what he declared as “the first detailed history of firearms in central Africa between the early nineteenth and the early twentieth century” (p. 19), which is an example of applying nuance to a basic idea: what happened when guns were introduced to Central Africa on a cultural level? This comprehensive examination of guns’ social symbolism is conjoint with a broader history of firearms in the region, which encompasses the early introduction of guns to gun regulation in the 1920s across dozens of different nations.

Macola’s central argument is that there is no single correct answer as to how Central Africans saw guns outside of utilitarianism. His attempts to explain the varied responses to the integration of European weaponry among African nations are multifaceted, and he continuously emphasized that it is important to examine how different nations responded separately from how other nations did. One example of this is the different Luvale and Ngoni views of the relationship of guns to masculinity. There was strong evidence in the late nineteenth century of a link between “gun ownership and masculinity” (p. 65) among the Luvale hunters and raiders of northwestern Zambia and southeastern Angola. To own a gun was to master nature, and to be superior to other predators. The Ngoni, however, saw owning a gun as emasculating. Macola attributes the reluctance of Ngoni to accept firearms in part to social conventions that military bravery “was the key to unlocking the potential for self-advancement inherent in Ngoni institutions” (p. 136), which had to be done predominantly with spears and other melee weaponry. Macola broke down similar studies of all of the major nations within Central Africa, and he treated them as entities independent of broader social and cultural waves in Central Africa.

Macola’s scholarship is a technically superior piece. The text indicates a deep understanding of the historiography with no major omissions of the secondary literature, a nuanced perspective on literary ideas like constructivism and Actor Network Theory, and a diverse range of primary sources. Sources that he used included European travelogues, oral histories, linguistic records, early colonial documents, and surviving guns. Macola was correct in his assessment that the “nineteenth and early twentieth century was variegated. So, too, must the sources that permit us to study it” (p. 25). The different weaknesses of these sources like the

racialist perspectives in travelogues and insular oral histories are mediated with the advantages of the other primary sources.

The book's strength is simultaneously its principle weakness: density. Macola's depth of analysis of historical events and social climates is extremely valuable for specialists in African and material histories for its unique insights into the cultural signs associated with firearms in Central Africa. It would also be a useful supplementary material for insight into the cultures of different Central African nations for colonial, military, and technological historians. The book's drawing on bulky theoretical pieces that explore "recent constructivist approaches to the history of technology and consumption" (p. 161) similarly limits the book's accessibility to the general public. The book is weighed heavily in jargon, and difficult for non-specialists to follow Macola's arguments. Macola even warned in the introduction, however, that "enthusiasts and encyclopedists should steer clear" (p. 17) of this book. This book has a narrow audience of historians and anthropologists but does an excellent job catering to this audience.

This book is a part of the broader wave of interdisciplinary histories concerning the African continent. Macola's scholarship highlights the strong potential for historians and anthropologists with his solid, yet dense, book. This book is a refreshing reminder to treat societal trends as separate from broader historical waves. Colonialism was not a singular event that affected every nation the same way, so it would be futile to assume that different legacies of colonialism, be it Vietnamese bicycles or African firearms, have as rich and varied histories as the individuals that viewed, examined, and used these artifacts.

Quentin Holbert, *Memorial University of Newfoundland*

Emily Margaretten. 2015. *Street Life Under a Roof: Youth Homelessness in South Africa*. Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press. 213 pp.

Street Life Under a Roof is an in-depth account of Point Place, a five-story apartment block and self-run shelter without running water, electricity, or sanitation in Durban, and where over one hundred young people live as a temporary escape from sleeping under the open sky. It is a rough urban environment with frequent deaths from gunshots, stabbings, beatings, tuberculosis, road accidents, and HIV/AIDS. The book is a well written and often gripping ethnographical study of the young, marginalized, and poor youth who live there, and who are separated from distant homes that are either unable or unwilling to provide for them. Throughout, the data that substantiates the analysis is rich and very detailed.

Margaretten explores the aspirations and fears of the resident youth from the context of complex social relationships they produce, contest, and reshape in order to increase life chances. A main theme is the construction of kinship relationships that provide opportunities for betterment and survival. These help resolve disputes, open up for relations of social and material reciprocity, and diminish uncertainty. The constructions of identities within Point Place are shown throughout to differ from those outside. For instance, categories of kin, and the naming and claiming of relations such as "brother," "sister," "baby," and "mother" are not just for fun but designate personal ties. They substantiate different obligations of companionship between youth in ways that traverse the familiar categorizations in terms of age, gender, and

ethnicity. Thereby, the youth employ these terms to increase the possibility of trust, affection, love, and importantly, to secure shelter, safety and food. The multiple meanings and uses of the term 'love' are also shown to validate social practices around sharing; love is used to increase material gains and express mutual support; and it is used to signify the ambition of establishing a lasting connection (p. 67). Remarkably, the multiple invented relations of kin that provide for possibilities of future hopes are sometimes recognized by state institutions. This is exemplified as the constructed relations of kin gain the acceptance of city courts and "relatives" are allowed privileges that non-relatives normally would not be allowed, such as signing off for the release of friends and being allowed to follow juvenile cases.

The context specific, social construction of sexual norms at Point Place is another main theme. Here, the variability of sexual exchanges is shown to go beyond the simplistic characterizations of female sexual favors that are exchanged for money or gifts from males, and the related materiality and consumptive dimensions of sex. In fact, prostitution and commercial sex (activities commonly associated with homeless young women) are openly scorned by women at Point Place.

A third area of interest is the difficult and potentially life-threatening negotiations around condom use (p. 86). On the one hand, the main challenge for young women is their limited ability to demand usage, which is based on their reliance on boyfriends for material provisions. But on the other, young women balance out the risk with the assumption that non-usage will improve the chances of establishing a common future of shared sustenance and having children with unfaithful boyfriends. In an everyday capacity access to important resources such as shelter and food are thereby intertwined with the organization of domestic duties, and considerations concerning the danger of particular male-female relationships. As a consequence, women often accept male unfaithfulness provided it is external to Point Place and their safe, shared space with boyfriends inside is preserved. Nevertheless, this difficult balance is frequently offset by ideals of masculinity centered on conspicuous style, charm, and money, and which are embedded in cultural and historical imageries. In practice therefore, male fidelity is rare and partnerships are often short. And relationships often break down and get violent when HIV and AIDS strike because masculine norms and self-worth can no longer be upheld.

Overall, the book demonstrates that street youth are not in dire need of rehabilitation, in the sense of having to change their ostensibly idle and irresponsible lifestyles, as city authorities would have us believe. Rather, their complex social relationships are expressions of people striving towards the same hopes as the rest of society. These are important points that policy makers should heed. The book's empirical findings and discussions around gender dynamics make a worthy contribution to anthropological analysis of youth and understandings of the logics of social organization that develop in tough urban environments.

Paul Stacey, *University of Copenhagen*

Jamie Miller. 2016. *An African Volk. The Apartheid Regime and Its Search for Survival*. New York: Oxford University Press. 439 pp.

In the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in April 1974, which opened the way for the independence of Mozambique and Angola the following year, the apartheid government of Prime Minister John Vorster (1966-78) intensified an “outward policy” to win friends among the leadership of the independent African states. Initially this policy had some success, but the disastrous South African invasion of Angola in late 1975 effectively brought it to an end. The Vorster administration then worked with the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, to persuade the white minority government of Rhodesia to concede the principle of majority rule, while in early 1978 South Africa agreed, under pressure, to a plan for a transition to independence in Namibia worked out by a US-led Western Contact Group. It is on these four years in the apartheid regime’s long “search for survival,” 1974 to 1978, that Miller focuses his attention in this impressive monograph.

He only discusses, then, a brief period in the over forty-year life of the apartheid regime. His somewhat strange title refers to the efforts that that regime, representing the Afrikaner *volk* (people), made to “Africanise” itself, for though Afrikaner meant person of Africa, previous Afrikaner governments had been able to delude themselves that South Africa was somehow not part of a black-dominated continent. Miller, an Australian who received his doctorate from the University of Cambridge and has held posts at American universities, explores how the South African leadership under Vorster tried to legitimise apartheid by reaching out to independent African states and trying to persuade them to accept the bona fides of “separate development,” together with the idea that South Africa, even under white minority domination, was indeed an African country. After these attempts failed, Vorster had to deal with Kissinger and accept the idea of a decolonised Rhodesia and Namibia. Those who pushed for a military rather than a diplomatic approach again won Vorster’s support, however, and the raid by the South African Defence Force into Angola in May 1978 greatly increased South Africa’s loss of international credibility.

With rare exceptions—Dan O’Meara, an ex-South African based in Canada, being one—scholars based overseas have not done major work on the Afrikaner apartheid regimes after 1948. For long many such scholars had an ideological resistance to analysing those regimes dispassionately, while such work meant much reading of documentary evidence in Afrikaans. Jamie Miller has admirably spent a long time burrowing in the South African archives—some of which have been effectively closed to scholars since he used them—and he interviewed whomever he could, to understand why the regime acted as it did. He writes exceptionally well, and his book is well-structured and beautifully published by Oxford University Press. Though some of the ground he covers is not original, no one has researched this story in anything like the depth he has, and the result is a major contribution to knowledge of the ideology and discourse of the apartheid state in relation to the rest of Africa.

That is not to say, however, that this long book is without its limitations. Though Miller provides considerable background in his first chapters, his focus on the mid-1970s leads him, in my view, to over-emphasise its importance as a turning-point and to play down the continuities. In many ways Vorster continued Verwoerd’s attempt to use decolonization in

what was inevitably a vain attempt to legitimise apartheid. Even had the Angolan intervention not brought the “outward policy” to an end, the apartheid state’s harsh response to the Soweto uprising surely would have. The policies of the late Vorster years were in many ways continued by Vorster’s successor, P.W. Botha. Miller ends his account, in a third part of his book, to which he gives the hardly apposite title of “From Collapse to Reconstruction,” with the fall of Vorster. In my view, he exaggerates the international significance of the Cassinga raid of May 1978, while leaving, say, the arms embargo of the previous November, following the murder of Steve Biko, unexplored. Though P.W. Botha continued to use a big stick, he also continued Vorster’s diplomacy on the issue of SWA/Namibia. But though these and other parts of Miller’s argument may be challenged, his book will, without doubt, long remain a key work on apartheid foreign policy in the 1970s.

Chris Saunders, *University of Cape Town*

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni. 2016. *The Decolonial Mandela: Peace, Justice and the Politics of Life*. New York: Berghahn Books. 162 pp.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s book articulates Nelson Mandela’s lifework as a uniquely African humanist decolonization project. What he calls the Mandela Phenomenon is a post-racial pluralist humanism as part of a Global South initiated Third Humanist Revolution. Rather than restrict his analysis of Mandela’s life to a tabulation of instrumental wins and losses on a national or international political stage Ndlovu-Gatsheni instead approaches Mandela’s life as building towards a larger goal of global emancipation and peace. His book is divided into three chapters bookended by an Introduction and Epilogue.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s *Introduction* grounds his argument that Mandela embodies a Third Humanist Revolution by drawing on political, sociological, philosophical and cultural scholarship to contextualize both Mandela’s life and humanism’s evolution. This segues into Chapter One, “Decolonial Theory of Life,” where Ndlovu-Gatsheni positions Humanism in response to the oppressing forces of Hellenocentrism, Westernization, and Eurocentrism (and its consequence Orientalism). Ndlovu-Gatsheni adeptly challenges those who would present Mandela’s story as a univocal and linear narrative when more realistically and humanly Mandela evolves intellectually to incorporate multiple schools of thought (i.e., African traditions, Christianity, Marxism, Ethnic Republicanism, Intercultural Liberalism) as they move him towards his goals of liberation and peace. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that these influences and his evolution helped to forge a “committed decolonial ethical leader and [one who] who successfully avoided degeneration into reverse racism, nativism and xenophobia until his death” (p. 68).

In Chapter Two, “Mandela: Different Lives in One,” Ndlovu-Gatsheni cites challenges of telling Mandela’s story such as not canonizing him as a saint living a flawless life or constructing a fairytale ending to his efforts at building a united nation. Mandela struggled with existential contradictions (e.g. privileging family life vs. political life, submission to the ANC vs. his individualism) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni cites such contradictions along with various life experiences as politicizing the young Mandela. As with other accounts of Mandela’s

politicization imprisonment factors prominently in Ndlovu-Gatsheni's analysis yet he argues, "Imprisonment features prominently in the pedigree of African nationalist struggles ... [however] Mandela's long imprisonment made him part of a project of those in control of the apartheid state" (p. 88). Ndlovu-Gatsheni complicates the possible readings of Mandela's imprisonment and implicates various social others who would have a hand in constructing Mandela's life story.

Chapter Three, "Mandela at CODESA, and New Conceptions of Justice," considers how Mandela's negotiations at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa happened against the backdrop of the USSR's fall, growing liberal apathy, apartheidists' sabotage attempts, and opposing forces seeking both economic preservation and nationalization. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that the Nuremburg model of victor's justice was sidestepped in favor of an Afrocentric survivor's justice (i.e., reconciliation over retribution) in hopes of a lasting peace. Mandela reached out to and broke bread with those who had ideologically isolated, persecuted, tried, and imprisoned him thus incurring sharp criticisms of those who viewed these overtures as a betrayal. Ndlovu-Gatsheni notes that South Africa has not seen the economic miracle that some have hoped for although leaders expect greater future prosperity. While great inequities still persist in South Africa they have arguably faced less interracial bloodshed and overall economic downturn as have countries instituting fast-track economic reforms such as Zimbabwe.

In his "Epilogue," Ndlovu-Gatsheni acknowledges that some would place Nelson Mandela alongside Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King while others see him as coveting accolades. Other critics have characterized Mandela as a naïve idealist decrying injustices in Africa and globally, sometimes alone, in pursuit of his pluriversal world. Ndlovu-Gatsheni counters that Mandela's is a "dignified legacy from which to continue the decolonial humanist struggle" (p. 141). Ndlovu-Gatsheni prefaces this conclusion by figuratively elevating the racism that Mandela fought to a form of witchcraft (i.e., racecraft) that is as frequently practiced as it is denied and that wreaks psychological devastation on its targets.

In sum, this book is effective in providing different ways of viewing Nelson Mandela and his work that humanize him without either tarnishing or overstating his legacy. Author Ndlovu-Gatsheni provides a convincing argument for placing Mandela at the helm of a Third Humanist Revolution though arguably this revolution has yet to reach fruition. This book is relevant to scholars in several disciplines. Specifically, this book will appeal to scholars in Humanism, African Studies, International Policy, Peace Studies, Cultural Studies (specifically those interested in political narrative and biography) and those studying (Post)colonial thought.

Gordon Alley-Young, *Kingsborough Community College – City University of New York*

Ebenezer Obadare. 2016. *Humor, Silence, and Civil Society in Nigeria*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press. 177 pp.

In *Humor, Silence and Civil Society in Nigeria*, Ebenezer Obadare tinkers with the subject of civil society and challenges the existing notions of associational life as the entirety of civil society by canvassing for the inclusion and recognition of non-associational life in Nigeria's civic space. Introducing the book, Obadare posits that seeing civil society only in terms of voluntary civic

associations sells the idea short, both historically and substantively (p. 1). Hence, starting from the standpoint that civil society is beyond the standpoint of aggregate of associations (p. 2) or that associations are by no means exhaustive of the totality of the forms, dimensions, and practices of civil society (p. 10) Obadare poses several questions. These include the possibility of thinking of civil society outside formal institutions; the implications of a non-associational imagining for the idea of civil society; and the implications of a non-associational understanding of civil society for the current thinking about civil society organizations themselves (p. 8).

Going forward, Obadare discusses the contentious debates on civil society and the emergence of civil society in Nigeria in Chapters 1 and 2. In examining the terrain of contention that permeates civil society literature, the author acknowledges that the idea of civil society has always been a site of constant hermeneutic battles and that civil society has always meant different things to different scholars and thinkers and that each thinker's emphasis has tended to be shaped either by local exigencies or ideological worldview, or often by a combination of both (pp. 32, 42).

Chapter 2 traces the provenance of civil society discourse to the struggle in the late 1980s and 1990s to dislodge the military from power and establish a liberal democratic rule in Nigeria. Hence, civil society in Nigeria was borne out of a desperate necessity considering the temporal period during which it emerged and, as such, discourses on the subject has been democratization driven and it is still very much in the thrall of democratic consolidation (p. 57). In Chapters 3 and 4, the uses of humor and silence as instances of informal strategies of resistance outside rigid associational formats are explained and uncovered. Using these tropes, as alternative forms of resistance, Obadare explains—despite their assumed and proclaimed shortcomings—how they have been deployed to challenge and contest political hegemony in Nigeria. In this regard, he evinces the example of late Chief Bola Ige, Nigeria's former minister of justice, famed political orator and a leading activist during the military years who adopted the phrase of "*siddon look*" and "*tanda look*" as his evocation of silence and willful refusal to be complicit in the tragedy of governance at the time in Nigeria.

The analysis of the uses of humor and silence is an attempt to divert intellectual energy towards "social life as a whole," as opposed to only associations towards it. With specific references to the Nigerian condition, Obadare draws up various instances where humor has served and helped the suffered and their "sufferness" in their daily lamentations of everyday life in post-independence Nigeria. While humor and jokes might have spoken variously to the perceived venality of the Nigerian state and its agents (p. 70) its usage must also be held circumspect, as it has a potency to "make a painful impression on the person against whom it is directed" (p. 77). Nonetheless, the real utility of humor lies in its capacity to challenge and respectfully disrespect political authority.

Siddon Look and *Tanda Look*, two metaphors of willful but forced silence utilized by late Chief Bola Ige during the military regimes of Ibrahim Babaginda and Sani Abacha, advances the extra-organizational explanation of civil society according to Obadare. Notwithstanding the scholarly admonitions on the futility of silence, Obadare's epitomizes the Chief Ige's silence stating that by acquiescing to the regime of Babaginda and Abacha especially fondest wish to keep everybody silent, Bola Ige was at the same time resisting and undermining it, mobilizing

both exit and voice in a single agential masterstroke (p. 101). Hence, silence was a way of giving voice while at the same time evading the penalty that open speech attracted; a way for silence to point to something beyond itself.

Concluding the book, Obadare generously posits that current civil society research should not be concerned with what goes on within the realm of the state, but also what goes on outside the realm of the state because of its profound impact on state life (p. 116). And also because humor and silence, are important tropes in non-associational discourse, a focus on associations alone, according to Obadare, imposes arbitrary limits, rather than freeing civil society theory and practice from the shackles of associational conditioning and focus on the powers in everyday insurgencies, insurrections and gestures of tacit refusal and iconoclasm, gestures that sullenly and silently contest the forms of an existing hegemony (pp. 129, 9).

Ebenezer Obadare's book comes highly recommended to students and scholars interested in the study of civil society and non-associational life in Nigeria.

Fisayo Ajala, *Spaces for Change. Lagos, Nigeria*

Jennifer Riggan. 2016. *The Struggling State: Nationalism, Mass Militarization, and the Education of Eritrea*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 243 pp.

This book provides a good vantage point to understanding the internal workings of what is probably the most secretive, heavily militarized, and authoritarian state in the world. The book deals with how citizens form their images of the state, the nation, and the link between them, through their daily interactions with state actors. The author explains the nexus as well as the rifts between citizens and the state by focusing on schools as public institutions that create citizens and state projects such as mass conscription and militarization that are used to enact the state's sovereignty over its citizens and create 'strong' images. However, state coercion and authoritarian rules represent part of the state's struggle for legitimacy and expose the weak distinction between nation and state. This is an argument that is akin to Migdal's state-in-society approach that takes states as arenas of power struggle mainly shaped by image and practices (*Boundaries and Belonging*, 2004).

By arguing that states struggle to gain legitimacy mainly through executing their own nation-building projects, the author takes the case of Eritrea and show how educational institutions are being used as a platform to promote revolutionary values of Eritrean nationalism as defined by the state, constituting self-sufficiency, progress and development-oriented, absolute willingness to sacrifice, and a warrior ethos. These values evolved through the thirty-year war for independence, which is commonly referred to as "The Struggle." Thus, the book explains how education was used as a key instrument of the militarized nation-building agenda of People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) that embodies both the state and the nation of Eritrea since independence in 1991. The ruling party promoted militarism as part of Eritrean nationalism having roots primarily in the war for independence and later to justify the defence of its borders. This was strengthened through the use of iconic expressions such as "Eritrea is a nation of soldiers" which was further reinforced by popular symbols such as *Shida* (commonly worn plastic sandals) that embodies the exaltation of "The

struggle," a blatant example of what the author referred as a quotidian nationalism. As the author explains, however, the insistent application of coercion and mass conscription by the government to make citizens participate in the nation-building project and its defence, has given new meaning to these common expressions and symbols for teachers, students, and others that began to imagine the whole country as a prison.

Organizing the book in five chapters, the author presents a revealing discussion on the other forms of PFDJ's struggles including those to produce loyal national subjects, to reproduce and objectify itself, and to achieve institutional coherence. These struggles were also mirrored by a similar struggle by state employees, particularly teachers who struggled with their feelings about the state, the nation, and their responsibilities to it. As the author persuasively argues, this struggle placed teachers in an indeterminate situation of being wedged in between participating in the government's program of mass militarization and fulfilling their commitment to educating the nation. This also indicates the inconsistencies of state power as oppressive to, and at the same time, enacted by teachers as they are directly involved in the making of soldiers.

A major strength of the book is the author's judicious use of participant observation to make connections between schools as public institutions that are responsible for producing educated citizens and processes of militarization that similarly construct national subjects and define their relationship to the state. The author provides a rich description of her entry into the country from its margins, her interviews, and lived experiences as a teacher, a peace corps volunteer, and even her intimate relationship with an Eritrean teacher. Her detailed account of teachers' daily experiences in and out of public schools enabled her to shed light on seemingly complex issues like the emergence of authoritarianism, nation and state, asserting the power of ethnographic research. In one of the very few factual errors in the book, Riggan refers to Tigrinya as both an ethnic and a language designation (cf. pp. 17, 37, 40, 75, 167, 168), although the term should only refer to the language. Also, a map would have been supportive of the description provided in the introduction section that deals with ethnic and linguistic groups' distribution in the country (cf. pp. 17). Nonetheless, the book is very informative to the general reader and as a reference for students intending to apply similar research methodology.

Zerihun Berhane Weldegebriel, *Addis Ababa University*

Mark Sanders. 2016. *Learning Zulu: A Secret History of Language in South Africa*. Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press. 198 pp.

Language can serve as a window into a culture and its people; that is the essence of Sanders' *Learning Zulu*. The book evokes Toni Morrison's main message in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992) of using Blackness to make Whiteness visible, and using Black people as a backdrop in White people's lives. The author, a White South African, writes about his experiences of learning not only the language of the majority of Black South Africans isiZulu but also what he refers to as "their ways of being." In this semi-autobiographical book the author discusses his experiences, with the Zulu people characterizing the background and contours of his life.

The book is divided into five chapters. All chapters are essentially about Sanders learning the culture and language of the Zulu people. The author begins the book by asking for *uxolo* (forgiveness). He asserts that writing *Learning isiZulu* is part of his atonement. While he does not explicitly state what he should be forgiven for or why he needs to atone, one can speculate that he wants to be for the sins of the apartheid regime against Black people in South Africa. But why ask for forgiveness when the very act of learning isiZulu and the Zulu culture under apartheid was revolutionary for a White person. Not many White people in South Africa wanted to learn the languages of Black people. Oppression of Black South Africans stripped African languages of their social capital or value. Only English and Afrikaans had social capital, Africans had to learn those languages in order to adjust and adapt to economic and socio-political oppression. So, by learning isiZulu, a language that carried no social value in apartheid South Africa, the author was rather an insurgent of sorts. Normally, it is the oppressed that learn the language of oppressors, not the other way around unless it is for facilitation of oppression. But in this case, he chose to learn the language of the oppressed for the sake of learning the language.

Chapter One discusses the legacy of Colenso who wrote the first English-Zulu dictionary and advocated for proper usage of isiZulu and rejection of “fanagalo/fanakalo” that was largely used by White and Indian people to communicate with Zulu people. Chapter Two deals with Sanders’ entry into both the language and culture of the Zulus through English. This chapter evinces depth in its analysis of outstanding Zulu novels and their meaning in the Zulu cultural context. It is important to point out that as prominent as these Zulu novels are, they were considered “safe” and apolitical enough for the apartheid government, which banned all politically oriented and freedom advocating books, to endorse their publication and dissemination. By focusing on these politically “safe” novels, flagrantly all written by men, Sanders presents a depoliticized South Africa in a country that was highly politicized. Culture exists within a political landscape, yet the author is able to decontextualize and depoliticize culture in this chapter.

Chapter Three is entitled “Ipi Intombi” after a theatrical piece that received accolades in the Western world for its portrayal of African life. In this chapter, the author focuses on the notion of cultural appropriation that financially benefitted White designers and producers of the play “Ipi Intombi.” The author also discusses the success of Johnny Clegg, the musician who is famously known as the White Zulu. This chapter lays bare the value of whiteness through cultural appropriation. It illuminates that Zulu culture performed by White people is more revered and valued than when it is performed by its own people. In other words, cultural appropriation is more about racial power than it is about cultural power. Yet, the author glides over this critical point and disregards issues of racial power that are concomitant with cultural appropriation.

Chapter Four seems displaced and disjointed from the first three chapters. This chapter is focused on the South African President Zuma’s Zuluness. The chapter is titled “100% Zulu Boy,” a slogan used by supporters of Jacob Zuma. The author seems to fall into the pitfall of the inability to distinguish between the political leadership of Zuma and his ethnicity. His focus on Zuma’s statements about what it means to be a Zulu man is erroneous as Zuma is not the authority on Zuluness. He is the President of South Africa and the president of the National

African Congress, not the paragon of the Zulu culture. Zuma's assertions on what it means to be a Zulu man are not the quintessence of Zuluness. At some point the author says the White judge who presided over President Zuma's rape case is similar to Zuma in terms of speaking both English and isiZulu. In the context of apartheid South Africa, for White people learning isiZulu was indeed, as stated earlier, an act of insurgency of some sorts. The author praises the White judge for understanding isiZulu and choosing to reveal this at the end of the trial and yet chastises President Zuma for speaking isiZulu, not English, throughout the court proceedings. This part of the book reveals the apartheid-era language politics, in the sense that when a White person speaks an African language, it is perceived as admirable and unnecessary, but when a Black person speaks his or her African language it is perceived as defiance. Speaking English for Zulus, Africans in general, was never a choice but a known instrument of oppression. However, this point also seems to elude the author, who simply says that speaking English was a necessity for one to be employed; he should have added "under normal circumstances." In this chapter, the author also asserts that there are egregious acts committed in the name of the Zulu culture, and he denounces the "bad" Zulu culture and only aligns himself with the positive Zulu culture. The irony in the author's denouncement of the "bad" Zulu culture is that he never condemns the "bad" English or Afrikaner culture that made it an anomaly for him to learn isiZulu through colonialism and apartheid.

Chapter Five continues to address egregious acts committed by Zulu people in the name of isiZulu. It discusses xenophobic attacks that occurred in 2008 and how isiZulu as a language was used as a litmus test to identify and attack non-South Africans from other African countries. Again, the author disassociates himself from the language that can be used to enact violence because that is not the language he "loves." He rightfully condemns using isiZulu as a shield to engage in behaviors that are deleterious to other Africans. Again, the irony of condemnation of violence used in the name of Zuluness is amplified by his silence on the violence enacted in the name of English and Afrikaner cultures and languages within South Africa.

Overall, the book is well written and well researched albeit at times the author seems self-congratulatory. The subtext of the book is that he has made sacrifices and taken risks for learning isiZulu. Were the risks related to being an insurgent of sorts? He proclaims that learning isiZulu and Zulu culture "involves reparation and its attendant complications" (p. 10). Elaboration on what he means by "reparations and its attendant complications" would have enhanced the substance and quality of the book. Nonetheless, the book is a good testimony of resistance and survival of the Zulu people, culture, and isiZulu the language. While the author acknowledges the context of apartheid as a backdrop of his work, he adeptly circumvents the traumatic psychological and physical violence that the people, the language, the culture endured under apartheid.

Sanders takes to task Nxumalo and Ntuli, both renowned isiZulu authors, for being isiZulu "purists." Can he really blame them for holding on to a language that the apartheid government strategically and operationally tried to erase? Is it about language purism or language survival? With the end of apartheid, the democratic South Africa has eleven official languages but English and Afrikaans remain *de facto* official languages. Perhaps what the author perceives as isiZulu

purism is a way of restoring and salvaging what the inferno of apartheid was supposed to have annihilated and what the present democratic South Africa devalues.

The book can be a valuable source for learning about cultural appropriation, language as a socio-cultural construct and the role of language in politics and power. Moreover, the book will be beneficial to those who wrestle with the question posed by Morrison: “what prompts and makes possible this process of entering what one is estranged from...” (p. 4)? The question seems to be what Sanders is also attempting to tackle.

Shirley Mthethwa-Sommers, *Nazareth College.*

Sharon Sliwinski. 2016. *Mandela's Dark Years: A Political Theory of Dreaming*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 45 pp.

Nelson Mandela's life was not only defined by his fight against systemic oppression, but his life was also devoted to advancing the dignity of his people and the promotion of racial harmony in post-apartheid South Africa. This made Mandela one of the extraordinary human beings of our modern era. While his extraordinary life continues to attract scholarly/popular works, the attention on his years as a political prisoner appears to be disappearing from the scholarly landscape. This is why Sharon Sliwinski's *Mandela's Dark Years: A Political Theory of Dreaming* is relevant and timely in our attempt to better understand Mandela's life in totality.

Sliwinski's book is generally well-written with huge doses of political theory intermixed with in-depth conceptualization of dreaming or dream-life. Although short, the book has largely succeeded in examining the subject matter in six sections or chapters. Chapter one sets the tone for the book as the author recounts her reading of Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, and the struggles he faced as a political prisoner on the Robben Island. What triggered the idea for the book, as the author narrates, was the section called “The Dark Years” in Mandela's autobiography. Like other prisoners, especially the prisoners of conscience, emotional/psychological hardships can be as tormenting as physical pain/suffering. The urge to survive and gain freedom could be described as the ultimate goal/dream of a prisoner. As the author notes, Mandela recounted the recurrent dreams or nightmares he had in his autobiography. But the key question of interest is: Why should Mandela's dream matter beyond the ordinary conception of dreams? Finding an answer to this question appears to be the fundamental objective of Sliwinski's book. In the words of Sliwinski, “Mandela's nightmare seemed just as dramatic and important as his famous speech from the Rivonia Trial in which he named the apartheid's injustice and defined the ideal” (a democratic and free society) for which he was prepared to die (p. 4). What then is a dream? And how significant are dreams?

The author examines these questions in chapter two and subsequent chapters. Drawing on many scholarly works on dreams, the author did a great job by integrating the ideas of what I will describe as dream scholars for the analysis. For example, the author echoes Sigmund Freud's conceptualization of dreams as not only a distinct species of thinking, but dreams dramatize an idea and construct a situation out of thought that have been transmitted into images (p. 5). From the ordinary viewpoint, a dream is considered as an “experience that takes place on an unconscious plane, usually under the cover of sleep” (p. 27). Advancing these ideas

with reference to Mandela's dream-life, the author reminds readers that a dream-life is not a documentary display of events, but a "symbolic account of the dreamer's lived experience" (p. 7). The author provides three interpretations of this idea with reference to Mandela. First, the author argues that Mandela's dream-thinking created a sense of alienation as a result of his prolonged imprisonment. Second, although Mandela was not physically free, he still had the freedom to experience what Sliwinski describes as a wander in an empty and uninhabited world of dreams. Third, Mandela's dream-life, as the author observes, "testified to the experience of being ostracized from the larger political community of humanity" (p. 7). The chapter's discussion of enlarged thought or mentality in reference to Mandela in the post-apartheid era is novel. It is clear that these discussions fall within the broader debates on the relevance of dream-life/psychoanalysis and the question of rationality. Sliwinski has actually addressed this very issue with reference to Mandela's dreams. According to her, Mandela's dream-life represents a good case of a political thinker who has shown that the "most potent and transformative forms of political thought" do not necessary depend on rationality. But in dark or extremely difficult times, another form of thinking (dream-thinking) is needed to survive (p. 13).

The author builds on these theoretical ideas of dream-life and Mandela's nightmares in chapters three, four, and five. Discussion of issues such as dream-work as civil defense, the distinction between dream-work and dream-thoughts as well as other aspects of dream-life and its relation to Mandela were examined (pp. 17-25). Like other chapters, the fourth chapter takes readers into deeper echelons of complex conceptual discourse on dream-life and Mandela. The author's critical analysis of dreaming as a dialogue with oneself and the retelling of a dream as a form of communication with another person is quite revealing. Chapter five extends the book's central arguments on dreams with reference to Mandela's nightmares. As the author notes, Mandela's dream-life was one of the channels he used to exercise his sense of freedom (p. 37). Chapter six concludes the theoretically "heavy dose" analyses with the author making a case for the importance of dream-life as an alternative thought-landscape or safe orbit worth exploring, especially in dark times (pp. 43-44).

As the preceding review has shown, Sliwinski's book is an excellent/enjoyable piece. However, the book has a major shortcoming worth noting. It is apparent that the framework through which Mandela was analyzed in the book was largely through the European or Western-focused lens. Mandela was indeed a global political/cultural icon, but he was also a proud African who grew up with African ideas, values, and viewpoints on freedom and dreams that could also be interpreted from an African-centered perspective. Unfortunately, the author did not discuss any of these, let alone draw on any African scholar or writer on dreams in her analysis of Mandela's dream-life. Notwithstanding, the book is still a valuable addition to the literature on dream-life and Mandela's life.

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Noah Tiska. 2015. *Nollywood Stars: Media and Migration in West Africa and the Diaspora*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 348 pp.

Nigeria's film industry Nollywood is a dynamic industry compared to none other across the continent. Its development can be dated back to 1981 when the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) banned the Nigerian government from distributing Hollywood films for what it called a misappropriation of copyrighted media. This led not only to the creation of an enormous cinematographic gap, but the creation of "distaste for traditional, licit modes of consumption" (p. 9). Thus, coupled with successive military governments that had a preference for documentaries and the rise in urban crime rate, Nollywood as a system was born.

Noah Tiska, an Assistant Professor of Media Studies at Queens College, City University of New York, in six chapters reviews the main theme of Nollywoods stars' success story over time. There are sub themes like promotion by local video distributors, migration of stars and media and the use of adults as child performers, to name a few. He sets out to redress two conventional ways in which Nollywood's creative performers are misread. First, Nollywood and its stars operate/act in a copied form/manner that is imitating the trends from the West without an understanding of the "consequential cross-cultural, transnational politics of the process" (p. 9). Secondly, from the cultural critics in Africa, the view that Nollywood's stars are extremely local configurations who are restricted to Southern Nigeria, having nothing to say to the world beyond Nigeria's borders and worst of all unenlightened black Africans indebted to tradition and tribalism. So Tiska asks one very pertinent question which runs as a thin line through the book: "What would a theory of cinema stardom look like if it began from Nollywood and not Hollywood?" (p. 9). To address these questions, the writer, in captivating detail, traces how Nollywood and its stars have survived several odds, using the most meager resources, obsolete technology (in the eyes of the West) like the VHS and VCD, audio-visual distractions/distortions, and low quality outputs amongst others to break boundaries and become an accepted cinematic medium globally. Three paradigms seen in Nollywood presentations are its privacy (small groups of spectators usually in a domestic setting), its screen size presentations (this over time has developed from television to the laptop and even smart phones) and its autonomy (an individual's power over the media to start, stop, or pause at will). To address these issues, the writer traces the fact that Nollywood's star system is the first to develop with African film performers on the African continent. He cites a Ghanaian, Van Vicker, who frequently portrays natives of Nigeria (e.g., Igbo and Hausa) in his Nollywood films. Also, Funke Akindele's impressive range as an actress, especially in her imitation of Lady Gaga in the "Lady Gaga" film, as used to indicate the great confluence of Nollywood performers and their roles. He uses biographical facts like those of Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde, Funke Akindele, Uche Jombo and other stars to give insight into the stars' personae and how Nollywood thrives in West Africa and the diaspora. He shows how actors act fluidly as fictional characters, reflecting themselves or in a documentary.

Nollywood Stars begins with a brief introduction then an address of the academic star studies with Nollywood phenomenon. Subsequently, the writer addresses the matter of materiality or format and how it affects Nollywood stardom, then the corporate identity of Nigeria's telecommunication power, Globalcom, and its promotion of stars as moving-image

advertisements. The last three chapters address the piracy of the media in the age of globalization, the past, present and future contours of child stardom in Nollywood and concludes with a look at “youth stardom against the backdrop of West Africa’s child welfare movements” (p. 27) indicating their interest in foreign child performers. The writers choice of words are apt in relation to the film industry such as “the level of spectatorial agency” (p. 91), “realism” (p. 127), “thematic relevance” (p. 190), “antiessentialist approach to screen acting” (p. 10) and “transnationalism” (p. 6), to name a few.

The stars of Nollywood can be called ambassadors of “bricolage” (p. 9) wherever they go—adaptable, fluid yet dynamic. The writer was able to outline the merits and demerits of Nollywoods cinema stardom and redress the theoretical perspective, but in his conclusion he alluded to the issue of sexism (gay and lesbianism), leaving the reader hanging as to whether this is not an un-discussed subtheme in his discourse. Yet in light of the above, I recommend the book for reading and inclusion in cinematic discourse.

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Andrew Walker. 2016. *‘Eat the Heart of the Infidel’: The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram*. London: Hurst and Company. 281 pp.

Walker writes with fluidity, which makes reading enjoyable. He demonstrates understanding of the complex nature of the Nigerian socio-political and religious space. *Eat the Heart of the Infidel* is divided into three parts with a preface. The preface begins with a compelling narrative of a freed slave-boy who travelled through Africa and Europe before later settling down in Northern Nigeria as a colonial teacher. John Henry Dorogu was his name, born a Muslim and died a Christian among the predominantly Islamic community leaving behind a devout Muslim wife (pp. ix-xvi). Walker’s rendition gives the impression that the average Nigerian is religiously confused and oscillating between Christianity, Islam and a times secularism. This therefore raises the question/conflict on the religious identity of the Nigerian state. However, Dorogu’s narratives should be considered as tokens required to connecting with his white host, and his alien acquisition of foreign goods could also be understood as symbolic representation and evidence of his adventures than succumbing “to the sin of avarice,” cultural and religious confusion.

Part one begins with “If you Can’t Beat Them, Shun Them,” which centers on how Othman dan Fodiyo, a Muslim purist used force to convert Hausa states from religious superstition and fear to the worship of only Allah-the true God. Othman’s effort resulted in the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate (pp. 3-25). Next, “*Disputed Territory*” talks about the high level of political, economic, moral and religious corruption that befell the caliphate after the death of Dan Fodiyo (pp. 27-44). “*Modes of Dealings*” discusses the overthrow of Dan Fodiyo’s caliphate by British colonial interest in the 20th century and the establishment of western style government and education, which created tension in the North. Western culture was therefore considered as *haram* (forbidden). In order to reduce the tension, the colonial authorities established Arabic teaching colleges along side western education (pp. 45-64). That British action sowed the seed of a dual religious and academic identity among the people. It is this mixed identity that attracted

the initial support the Boko Haram group enjoyed among Muslim adherents, which was premised on the pretense of returning the region back to its pre-colonial Islamic status. Since force was used to convert the people, it could easily be reasoned that force is also necessary to sustain the intent of the Othman's jihad, thus justifying the presence of a violent Boko Haram.

The second part starts with "Heart Rot." It represents Walker's suggestion that the root cause of Boko Haram in Nigeria is the dysfunctional educational system which has resulted to encouraging ignorance (pp. 67-74). Walker's thesis is faulty because the word Boko Haram did not initially connote violence as it was a language of disagreement with alien educational curriculum from that of Islamic teaching. The sinister meaning Boko Haram has assumed since 1999 is in indeed the manipulation for political gains by Nigerian politicians. Next comes "Big Potato on Top," which talks about the high level of corruption among the Nigerian ruling elite, which has compromised the institutions of governance for a cabal of self-serving and unpatriotic individuals' thereby promoting insecurity (pp. 75-90). "Stomach Infrastructure" shows how politics work in Nigeria (pp. 91-107). From the voter to the politician, everyone is interested in personal benefits at the expense of the state. "Eating the Cord of the Society" narrates how religion has become a major determinant in Nigerian politics to the detriment of issues and rationality. This hypocritical mentality is actually eating the cord of the society (pp. 109-131). Walker is on point on this issue.

Part three's first section, "The Rest of Us are Just Hawking Peanuts," explains that motives for any action must first be understood as a way of resolving the impacts of the action. The support the Boko Haram sect has enjoyed in its followership is encouraged by the fanatical (mis)interpretation that death as a result of carrying out Allah's injunction is divinely rewarding (p. 135-168). Those outside the fold of Islam are therefore divinely condemned to death. "Kill Zone" has become the code name not only for Bornu State but the whole of the northeast Nigeria (pp. 167-196). "Strange Cartography" shows the inability of the Nigerian state to curtail Boko Haram due to difficulty in properly identifying the nature of the sect. From the political, military, academic, and literate to the illiterate freelance commentators, Boko Haram represents different confusing and illogical interests. As long as this strange cartography remains, a coordinated response to the sect activities may remain a mirage (p. 197-216). And, finally, "Off With the Rat's Head" reminds readers that despite the efforts of the Nigerian government, the Boko Haram menace is far from ending (pp. 217-19).

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Tom Young. 2015. *Readings in the International Relations of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 370 pp.

Africa is considered as the continent of the future. Young demographics, rising economies, rich minerals and resources base, and relatively stable polities have generated ever greater interest in the African affairs. In the last two decades, efforts have been made by great powers like the United States and Russia and emerging powers like China and India to engage with Africa in a more purposeful and practical manner. In addition to the interest of major powers, multinational firms, non-government organizations, and inter governmental entities have had a

sizeable presence on the continent. Engagement of such a diverse set of actors, increased international interest, and an emerging African scenario in response require a more nuanced appreciation of the international relations of Africa. The book reviewed below provides an entry point for fostering such an understanding.

Readings in the International Relations of Africa introduces readers to the complexity of the politics of the continent. The book is a collection of previously published writings spanning over a period of the last four decades. The oldest piece in the book was published in 1974 (about the genocide in Burundi), and the latest piece was published in 2014 (about the terror attacks in Algeria). Overall the book contains twenty-seven scholarly articles organized in eight sections. The book opens up with a discussion on “sovereignty and statehood” (in Africa) followed by the sections on the international order, great powers, conflict, war and interventions. There is a separate section dealing with key development issues surrounding the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and also a section on the geopolitical engagement with Africa in the post Cold War era.

Even though colonial domination cast a long shadow over the African engagement with the post colonial world, the writings in the volume do not dwell too much on the colonial period of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is more contemporary in nature. Africa experienced the Cold War competition between the superpowers. Major focal points of the cold war years like the Congo crisis of the 1960s, civil war in Angola in the mid 1970s, communist revolution in Ethiopia and the overall politics in the horn of Africa in the 1980s, apartheid regime (since 1948) in South Africa, and international response to the policies of the regime, and interventions in Chad and regional politics surrounding the civil war (in the early 1980s) are covered in the volume. In terms of the post cold war crises, Somalia and Congo find sufficient space in the book but Rwanda and Darfur do not.

Developmental issues of the continent have always been severe and have needed concerted efforts by international agencies. Questions regarding Africa’s development provide an opening to the various issues of the political economy of the continent and the world. Issues like the nature and extent of international aid, policies of African regimes to utilize available aid, the relationship between donor and recipient states, the role of international agencies like the World Bank in facilitating developmental efforts, the nature of the African state, and conditions imposed by donors for democratization and governance spring up in the debate about Africa’s development. They find adequate representation in the volume.

Problems of Africa’s development are not limited to the aid efforts of international agencies. It rather offers us a window to look upon the international relations of Africa using aid as a tool of engagement. The involvement of former colonial powers like Britain and France, emerging powers like India and China, and the role of regional powers like Nigeria and South Africa assume importance in this context. The volume covers in detail British aid policies, overall French policies towards the continent and also the emerging Chinese approach towards engaging with Africa. Chinese engagement with Africa opens up space for the discussion on the validity and utility of existing theoretical approaches of International Relations (IR) to explain the relationship.

The volume includes writings that discuss the emergence of the African Union and how foreign policies of regional actors like Nigeria and South Africa played a part in it. It touches

upon the evolution of NEPAD as a development strategy in the new millennium and debates about the development problems of Africa in the new millennium. In terms of shortfalls of the volume, the omission of any discussion on the processes of regionalization and the role of regional organizations like ECOWAS and EAC in the emerging African political milieu could be noted. To sum up, even taking limitations into account, the book provides an excellent introduction to understand the international relations of Africa.

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