

BOOK REVIEWS

Cawo M. Abdi. 2015. *Elusive Jenna: The Somalis Diaspora and the Borderless Muslim Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 289 pp.

Elusive Jenna is a portrayal of the many dynamics the process of immigration and immigrants take in search of an imagined or actual better life. In this case, as refugees from a war torn, and for a long time, stateless country, characterized by relentless political turmoil, life in developed countries can be considered utopic escapes, *Jannah*, for Somalis. Yet from the normal daily interactions with Somalis in the U.S. neighborhoods such as those in Minnesota and Ohio, with the largest Somali populations (p. 173), one can easily miss out on the precarious and complex journeys, family dynamics, religion, culture and the very economic survival techniques refugees undertake and experience in pursuit of happiness. As an example, there is the pressure on the scattered families phenomenon characterized by nuclear family members living in more than one country, the step migration from Somalia to Kenya refugee camps, and migration to many countries using exploitative middle men on their way to South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the U.S., and, sometimes to less extent, a reverse migration to the same countries. As an accentuation, global economic social and political hierarchies of countries place western developed countries in the top tier making U.S. the ideal preferred destination. Thus, migrations to developing countries are viewed and understood as liminal spaces and steppingstones for migrating to developed western countries, journeys only undertaken when all options have failed.

Cawo Abdi follows Somalis living in three countries: the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, and the United States. Abdi documents their lived social realities within these contexts not as separate entities but as part of the whole immigration experience, as they negotiate these spaces as immigrants in search of the next viable, most convenient, socially, and economically mobile country. In each country, however, Somali immigrants encounter benefits as well as challenges, some of which can be overcome, some that cannot, and others that can be tolerated. The author critically analyzes the interactions between government policies with immigrants' hopes and dreams such as permission to work, housing, travel documents, and in general how Somalis are incorporated into these three countries. Abdi also highlights agency and survival skills to subsist in each of the three countries that immigrants confront. The importance of this approach, the author states, "is that we can see how the interaction between the context of reception and the immigrants' own characteristics shapes their integration and adjustment in each society" (p. 15).

Islam as a religion is emphasized as crucial and as an adaptive mechanism utilized to legitimize Somali incorporation into the large Muslim community (*Ummah*) that spans boundaries. This borderless community identity bound together by religious beliefs and

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v17/v17i3a5.pdf>

practices provides a safety net, housing, jobs and sometimes, assistance in obtaining working documents in both the United State Emirates and South Africa. Islam helps Somalis position themselves in countries with racialized and culturally controversial histories. For example, in South Africa, with a history of racial economic hierarchies, Somalis distance themselves from South African blacks and instead take a religious identity among Indian Muslims to avoid the connotations that accompany identifying with the predominant black populations living in poor inner city neighborhoods. In the United Arab Emirates, Somalis have to align themselves with the Indian immigrant communities as the country is predominantly Islamic in its religious affiliation. However, on arrival to the United States, their religion, Islam, does not work to their advantage, at least not at the national levels. With an exception of those who integrate into the US middle class or higher, the majority of the Somalis find themselves categorized and living in inner city neighborhoods and competing for government subsidies, jobs, and other resources with poor minority groups. Moreover, skills such as education and English language competency become pivotal to their main economic adaptation. In this case, religion takes a marginal position as a beneficial tool of incorporation to the American mosaic communities. Thus, these three countries require a negotiation of their identity exposing, like in most cultures, the “Malleability of their cultural tool kit” (p. 111). The author, using South Africa as a case in point states that “this testifies to the malleability of religion and race and how newcomers position themselves within a society polarized and segregated on ethnic and racial bases” (p. 112).

In sum, this timely book begins with an introduction that captures the experiences of three immigrants from three different countries; Osman Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, Ardo Bellville in South Africa, and Adam in Minneapolis. The author situates their immigration experiences within the politics, cultural, and economic policies in each country as case studies and as a microcosm of the Somali immigrant dynamic and complex experiences in these countries. The author then compares migrations, elaborates on her multi-sited ethnographic research, gives a reflection on self and ends the chapter by providing an organization of the book. In chapter one, the author “provides a background for understanding the scattering of Somalis as refugees and migrants” (p. 27), chapter two takes readers to the United Arab Emirates, chapter three to South Africa, chapter four to the United States, and the last chapter, the conclusion, “compares and contrasts the findings in the three case studies” (p. 28).

Serah Shani, *Westmont College*

Iris Berger. 2016. *Women in Twentieth-Century Africa: New Approaches to African History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 233 pp.

Over the past decade I have read quite a number of works by Catherine Cocquery-Vidrovitch, Barbara Cooper, and Nwado Achebe on the roles and responsibilities of women in African history such that I was not sure if Professor Berger’s new book would offer anything new. Yes, not only is her approach to this complex and dynamic subject

refreshingly novel, but she also taps into the most recent secondary materials available on the subject to write an informative book. She approaches the subject by collapsing the role of women in twentieth century African history into eight broad themes. The author shies away from the cliché periodization of African history into pre-colonial, colonial, and post colonial and instead writes under the framework of action-based efforts of women.

In chapter one, Berger, Professor of History Emerita, SUNY-Albany, gives an overview of women's experience at the onset of colonial rule. Here she argues that women were quick to see and seize the chance caused by a vacuum created by the transition into colonial rule and asserted themselves by "challenging family control" (p. 10) and engaging in new economic openings such as cash cropping. She contends that at the onset of colonial rule, women in Africa "were fully engaged in the economic life of their communities" unlike their peers in Europe at this time (p. 11). Here the author asserts the strident agency of African women in shaping not only the history of the continent but also its economic life. Sadly, the incoming colonial rulers ignored these economic contributions and failed to take into account women's ideas and abilities in the new colonial economic set up.

The author argues in chapter two that colonial rule disrupted the lives of women by marginalizing them in almost all facets of colonial life. This marginalization, however, strengthened rather than weakened their resolve to contribute to the evolution of their societies. For example, they resorted to "spiritual power" (p. 31) to protest colonial marginalization and to carve out new space for themselves. Such attempts at self-reassertion of course only increased the ire of the colonial masters, which manifested itself in oppressive legislation. Women always resisted these wanton laws through diverse forms—peacefully through new religious movements, or in direct confrontation against the White rulers such as in the Aba Women's War in Igbo land in 1929 (p. 40).

In chapters 3, 4 and 5 Professor Berger reiterates the role of women in the decolonization process: in the increase in the enrollment of girls in schools, and in women directly resisting colonial policies that were anti-women, and also confronting colonial chiefs "responsible for implementing and enforcing" them (p. 70). The life of struggle led by iconic women freedom fighters such as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria, Frances Baard in South Africa, and Wangari Maathai of Kenya are highlighted in chapter 5.

Indeed, a strength of this book is the author's use of micro biographies of such women leaders to paint a macro picture of the illustrious role of African women in decolonization and also in the creation of women-centric platforms for the immediate post-independence governments. Another novelty in this book is the author's apt use of contemporary African fiction such as by Buchi Emechata and Mariama Ba as points of departure in her very lucid arguments. The potential of modern African literature in revealing the striving, and shaping opinion on African women's issues, comes out very clearly. Clearly, the author has mastered the subject matter as is evident in her drawing examples from all parts of the continent to illustrate her points.

In chapters 6, 7, and 8 Berger traces the ongoing struggle of African women to shape better policies and laws on critical issues like marriage, sexuality, and the Aids pandemic. Curiously, here the author contends that despite the suffering visited upon women in the conflicts which raged in Africa in the 1990s, such as the Rwanda genocide and the Liberian civil war, they came out of these conflicts with quite hefty dividends in the form of empowerment tools such as women friendly constitutions and legislation which call for gender equity, more sexual freedom, and better inheritance rights. Yet, she concludes that just as women were celebrating the rise of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia or Professor Maathai's Nobel Peace prize, "a backlash" (p. 204) arose from conservative forces in the pulpit and politics, for example in the "decency bills" in Uganda. But, it seems the vigilance of the women's movements locally and internationally will come in handy to stem this conservative tide, which indeed is an optimistic note to end an equally optimistic book on the role of women in twentieth century Africa.

Hassoum Ceesay, *University of The Gambia, Banjul*

Geert Castryck, Silke Strickrodt, and Katja Werthmann (eds.). 2016. *Sources and Methods for African History and Culture: Essays in Honour of Adam Jones*. Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag. 698 pp.

Sources and Methods for African History and Culture is divided into ten sections consisting of thirty-seven chapters, with twenty-four written in English (on which this review will focus) and thirteen in other languages. The book is a compendium of scholarly essays on multiple sources of information for the reconstruction of African transitional history in honour of Adams Jones to mark his retirement March 21, 2016 from Leipzig University. Jones is a renowned Professor of African History and Culture who specialized in identifying and interrogating sources and methods on African history. The book begins with a prelude that chronicles the intellectual strides of Adam Jones (pp. 11-24).

Section One, "Oral Tradition and its Methodology," focuses on research on the early recollection of the African pre-literate past would depend to some extent on the adoption of oral account such as traditions of origin (John Thornton, pp. 27-43), praise-songs (Robin Law, pp. 45-63), and scientific aid to validate oral accounts (David Henige, pp. 75-91) to reconstruct those pre literate engagements.

As Europeans began to have contact with Africa, their observation of developments in the continent was documented, which is the subject of Section Two, "Written and Material Sources for the Pre-colonial History of Coastal West Africa." These early written and material documents are germane to understanding Africa's history such as symbolic art objects (Peter Mark, pp. 95-100), rare European documents (Gerard L. Chouin, pp. 101-16), and application of source-criticism on early European account (Natelie Everts, pp. 117-34).

Umma Aliyu Musa (pp. 175-97) ably demonstrates the use of photographs as another source of information on African history in her chapter in Section Three, "Maps and Photographs as Historical Sources." Chapters in Section Four, "African Encounters

with Christian Missions,” suggest that early information on the activities of Christian missionaries in Africa can be noticed in architectural designs and monuments (Paul Jenkins, pp. 239-54). Also, documented evidence of African impressions and acculturation of Christianity (Lize Kriel, pp. 275-87) provide further insight into these encounters.

Section Five focuses on “New Perspectives on East Africa’s Early Colonial Past.” Colonial rule in Africa has been argued as epochal as it formally introduced Africa into the orbit of world politics and cultures, thus influencing African ways of life. For example, there was the introduction of firearms and their negative effect (Felix Brahm, pp. 291-304). Other chapters in this section examine the unique relationship between the Sultan of Ottoman, Abdulhamid II, and Sayyid Khalifa of Zanzibar (Hatice Ugur, pp. 305-16) and the revealing archival documentation on the early colonial impact on Africa (Geert Castryck, pp. 317-36). However, there is need for source-criticism and validation of oral or written accounts for the reconstruction of African history to reduce fallacies (Manuela Bauche, pp. 337-56).

The chapters in Section Six examine “Interpreting African ‘Voices’ in West African Press, Petitions and Performances.” With the presence of a literate colonial community, Africa began to associate with some colonial values such as using the print media as another means of communication, which provides information on the social stratification in early colonial Sierra Leonean community (Odile Goerg, pp. 339-76) and the value of petitions are sources of information for African history (Andreas Eckert, pp. 377-92). The theme of Section Seven is “Re-constructing Careers in Twentieth-Century Africa.” Interrogating colonial records of African employees is another source of information (Joel Glasman, pp. 413-30), and having contact with living survivals of ex-colonial employees can help validate oral and written accounts (Dmitri Van Den Bersselaar, pp. 431-47).

As Europeans and Africans begin to exchange visits and often live in each other’s continents, early images of their lived experiences were captured in the writings of these visitors. Jochen Lingelbach (pp. 523-540) looks at correspondences among European immigrants in Africa and Sara Pugach (pp. 541-562) of African immigrants in Europe in their respective chapters in Section Eight, “Entanglement of African History and Europe’s Twentieth Century.” Section Nine, “Cultures of Memory and Politics of History,” focuses on how priests in Africa can be regarded as chroniclers because their incantations are full of memory of past events that connect with the present, thereby demonstrating a link between the past and the present. Careful interpretation of African spiritualist words and actions can be informative about ancient practices (Peter Lambertz, pp. 577-94), and the proper use of historical knowledge can mitigate conflict (Joram Tarusarira, pp. 613-25).

Chapters in Section Ten, “Measures for African Economies,” examine how modern Africa is an emerging market for profitable investment (Robert Kappel, pp. 629-49), but there is the need to develop new strategies for African economies to meet the challenges of modern development (Helmut Asche, pp. 651-70). However, investors should go

beyond using only the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as markers to explain African growth rate (Ute Riefdorf, pp. 671-87).

Africa is a large continent with diverse histories and cultures. The various essays in this book succinctly discussed interesting sources of information on African pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial historical experiences. Some of the essays interrogated unexpected and “weird” accounts that reveal the depth of historical knowledge about African peoples and cultures. The book is a befitting farewell gift to Adams Jones from both older and younger scholars of Africa.

Simon Odion Ehiabhi, *Adekunle Ajasin University*

Jennifer Cole and Christian Groes (eds.). 2016. *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press. 352 pp.

If we could characterize the last two decades of the twentieth century as the times of the de-structuring of national economies thorough Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, then the first two of the twenty-first will probably be remembered by the problematization of migrant populations in Europe and in the United States. Within academia, several scholars have examined the relation between these divergent processes. Some have looked at the advent of migrant and anti-migrant political movements by studying the uneven distribution of resources among populations or nation-states. Others have examined the mediating power of economic hardships in the relationship between migrant populations and their host communities. While insightful, much of this body of work rests a set of assumptions that warrant further deconstruction. Primary among these is the notion that in order to construct comprehensive objects of analysis researchers must divide immigrants from locals, countries that expel from countries that receive, past violence from present opportunities; falling into what Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller (“Methodological Nationalism and Beyond,” 2002) have termed as a “methodological nationalism.” Novel ethnographic research has begun to question the nature of these dissections and, by exploring the fabrics of everyday life, recalled that the transnational experience is above all an amalgamation of worlds (Dreby, *Everyday Illegal: When Policies Undermine Immigrant Families*, 2015; Alarcón, Escala, and Odgers, *Making Los Angeles Home: The Integration of Mexican Immigrants in the United States*, 2016; or Coutin, *Exiled Home: Salvadoran Transnational Youth in the Aftermath of Violence*, 2016, to name a few). In a similar fashion, Jennifer Cole and Christian Groes’ edited volume *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration* adds important arguments to the scholarly conversation. By attending to diverse textures such as childcare among Ghanaian immigrants, motherhood within the Cameroonian diaspora, young Guinea-Bissau men who traffic cocaine, or marriage among Mozambican women and European men, the volume collectively suggests that migration is not a process that can be explained solely by “push” and “pull” structural factors, but that in the interstices

of the quotidian experience, migrant's social relations, desires, and creativity are also at work in the making of a place they can call "home."

Affective Circuits is the outcome of the conference "Intimate Migrations: Marriage, Sex Work and Kinship in Transnational Migration," hosted by Roskilde University and the Danish Institute for International Studies in April 2013. The authors analyze how African immigrants in Europe shape their sense of personhood and build community while living under the constraints of violent economic and political structures. While critically engaging with the structural analysis of neo-liberal assemblages and their generative role in fueling the mass exodus of Africa's "reserve army of labor," the book's chief contribution is its centering of migrant's fierce capacity to redefine, reproduce, and contest the bi-national social worlds they inhabit. For this purpose, the essays explore the nature of the migrant's "Affective Circuits," an over-arching theoretical apparatus proposed by editors Christian Groes and Jennifer Cole focusing on the exchange networks of goods, ideas, people, and affections in which the migrant subjects both participate and are embedded in. As an allegory to the flows of electric charge, *Affective Circuits* is a comprehensive framework that enables the contributors to focus on connections and interactions rather than on the forces of expulsion or reception. While they maintain the importance of such forces, they do so while attending to the forms of exchange—its material and affective components, its bidirectional movement, and its discontinuous intensity—which at times can be reckless and effective and at others slow and futile.

In the same vein, the volume is an outstanding example of how editorial endeavors can provide a comprehensive analysis if committed to a collective concern, theory, or agenda. As the chapters trace the flow of diverse matters—such as that of love, money, obligations, jealousy or information—each explored through the volume's shared framework, *Affective Circuits* can be read as a multi-sited ethnography on the relational nature of migration. For a selective reader, the essays can be also grouped into four thematic clusters. The first one corresponds to the essays written by Cati Coe, Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg, and Pamela Kea who analyze the bi-national logics and the effects of transnational migration on the dynamics of parent-child relations. In the second, Carolyn Sargent, Stephanie Larchanche, and Leslie Fesenmyer trace how systems of beliefs affect the way that immigrants relate to their communities of origin. In the third, Helene Neveu Kringelbach, Christian Groes, and Jennifer Cole study family life and transnational marriage in relation to both life-goals and long-term ancestral obligations. In the fourth, authors Henrik Yigh, Julie Kleinman, and Sasha Newell look at diverse questions that revolve around youth and gender; exploring how the cocaine trade has constituted a space of opportunity for young men, how young people transform relations among peers, and how movements of goods and fashion define belonging and exclusivity.

By studying the textures of everyday life, the volume provides two key nuances to the study of the African diaspora in the twenty-first century. First, scholarship should not solely focus on the study of the immigrant individual, as migrant populations are embedded in broader networks of exchange to which they recur in order to give

meaning to their transnational experience. Second, political and economic restrictions do affect the movements of populations to Europe; nonetheless, immigrants resort to myriad strategies in order to create, reactivate and navigate their bi-national social networks to make their life "habitable." Above all, *Affective Circuits* is a direct challenge to the usual narratives of exclusion, suffering, and abandonment that pervades contemporary depictions of African migrants by shedding light on their capacity to elude, challenge, and transform structures of power as they re-imagine their life worlds.

Alejandro Ponce de León, *University of Texas at Austin*

David C. Conrad. 2016. *Sunjata: A New Prose Version*. Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge: Hacket Publishing Company. 140 pp.

Certainly, the "seventh folklore miracle" of the world is the heroic epic poetry of Africa, the incredible wealth of which has been recognized over the last decades after a long period of ignorance. The heroic epic genre in Africa came out of the fog of ignorance (non-recognition, non-discovery) to the light illuminating its incredible richness from the previously unknown depth. Before 1960 (which is the year of the publication of D. T. Niane's *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*) western scholars still do not know that there was an African heroic epic. Frobenius himself undoubtedly discovered Sunjata's text and other types of West African heroic epic (1907–1909, published in English, in *The Voice of Africa*, vols.1-2), but he considered them knightly stories. Due to the wide range of researches on the new types and new variants across the continent, the emblematic story of West African Mande peoples, the Sunjata epic, stands out in the African material, which to this day has become one of the most important sources of historical and cultural identity for the peoples of the continent.

The Sunjata epic left behind, for example, the Nyanga Mwindo epic of Congo rich in variants and Fulbe epic material discovered in many places in West Africa as well as the Mongo-Nkundo Lianja, likewise of Congo, as Africa's richest known heroic epic type. According to Stephen Bulman's bibliography ("A Checklist of Published Versions of the Sunjata Epic," *History in Africa*, 1997) we know about forty to fifty pieces of total or fragmented versions, and since then they have only increased their number, among other reasons due to recent publications by Conrad. He has already published a different (very large, 5445-line) version with the same publisher as the present volume (*Sunjata. A West African Epic of the Mande Peoples*, 2004).

The present volume, surprisingly for many, emphasizes prose as the special genre definition in its title, although the first known versions of Sunjata are prosaic (Frobenius, 1911–1912, Zeltner 1913, Humblot 1918). The Russian E. Meletinsky, whose noteworthy, but maybe little known study to Western European/American researchers, says that oral epic texts can be of three types: verse form, prosaic (free or informal speech), and mixed (both verse and prose/free speech at the same time). This is contrary to Ruth Finnegan's controversial thesis (1970), namely that the basic criterion for a true epic is verse form. As far as Conrad's text is concerned, it is apparent from some places that refer to poems/songs, that we are faced with a mixed-text version.

A whole study should be devoted to the analysis of the text. Due to the review's scope, however, only three (+ one) aspects are raised. On the one hand, as in his previous publication (2004), Conrad is likely to leave a significant amount of the collected texts in this volume (see his notes in parentheses). Obviously, of course, seeing aspects of publishing aspects (above all the additional costs), we have learned in the Hungarian folklorist school (Gyula Ortutay, Vilmos Voigt and others), and for the sake of authentic communication, everything must be collected, noted, and published. (In addition, it may be that the omitted parts would be interesting, whether for professional circles or more general readers).

It raises a similar problem, but it can only be a financial background to the absence of the original version (in both cases). Gordon Innes in his classical Mande epic text publications (the first of which contains three Sunjata versions, 1974, 1976, 1978) publishes the African language version in an unequivocal manner (although we can mention many dozen of other publications with this solution). However, we also quote from the other end of the research, but also from West Africa: Christiane Seydou's large epic text publications (2010a, 2010b, 2014a, 2014b) are also two-language. Conrad's (though excellent and in English style probably folkloristically authentic) epic text collections, however, lack for the most part the original language transcription. Of course, we are aware that the original language texts are essentially neither accessible to professional nor other interested readers. However, their communication is only the most important means of authentication, and to be honest, a gesture towards the particular ethnic group.

By the way, a special feature of Conrad's text is what is known as the parts alien (we can call them inserts) to the story. From the Asian epic research (see for example the Kyrgyz *Manas* epic), we know that the epic performances, which can take up to several days and consist of hundreds of thousands of lines, are full of "statements" that contain daily "news" or "actualities." But we also know about it from Africa: one of the Mongo Lianja versions, for example, refers to whites arriving on ships and their religion. Conrad's version as well, while with it justifying the *living* existence of the given epic, has such a specific peculiar moment: "One time a Frenchman asked my father if he knew anything about how Paris was built. My father said: 'Yes I know something: the history of Paris. This Paris you ask about, it was not built by Frenchman! It was not built by Americans! It was non built by the English! It was not built by thy Russians... They only saw it appear.'" (p. 99)

This phenomenon (with many others), in any case, raises the necessity of the comparative examination for this and all version of of Sunjata, even of all existing types of the African heroic epic. Since French-language researchers (such as Lilyan Kesteloot) have arrived at valuable observations from the involvement of medieval *Chanson de Roland* and West African epics, more contexts should be explored.

Comparative research for Sunjata also has a question mark that I often feel is that professionals are moving away from hot topics. Since this version of Conrad, apart from the first short chapter filled with Islamic type praises, seems to have little penetration of Islamic elements. So I recall what Frobenius wrote in his prose version under the title in

1911: "The pronounced *pre-Islamite* features of the Sunjatta legend and its connection with Libya." There is no doubt that the culture of today's generations of Mande peoples is heavily influenced by Islam. It should, however, be looked at by thoroughly analyzing the material of Bulman's and other versions, whether the pre-Islamic primordial African cultural world is concealed underneath the versions of the Islamic robe or not. This opportunity seems to strengthen, I think, even the distance between the two versions of the famous *La Charte du Mande*, which is so prevalent today: (1) the ancient version of the formulation of Human Rights in the epic that was not touched by Islam, and (2) a 44-point reconstruction prepared by traditionalists in a powerful, overwhelmed Islam environment, nowadays in Guinea. (Some years ago Professor Conrad had published a guideline study on this theme).

Szilárd Biernaczky, Eötvös University

Iginio Gagliardone. 2016. *The Politics of Technology in Africa: Communication, Development, and Nation-Building in Ethiopia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 179 pp.

Iginio Gagliardone was puzzled by the disproportionate relationship between the enormous Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) infrastructure and the limited access to internet and mobile-phone service in Ethiopia. Despite the limited access to the internet, Ethiopia has the most severe measures on the continent to contain its destabilizing potential. To disentangle the puzzle, Gagliardone conducted a decade's research in which he identified the complexities between politics, development and technological adoption in Ethiopia. The book rightly fits into the broader literature on ICT and development in Africa. However, it contends that ICTs in Africa and specifically in Ethiopia, is a conflict-center and therefore plays an active rather than the passive role assigned it by some advocates of ICT for development.

In his analysis, Gagliardone adopted the framework of technopolitical-regime to provide a compelling account of how the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) Ethiopian's ruling coalition, outwitted its political competitors in the adoption and use of ICTs to execute its political program. The actors involved in the ICTs negotiation include the EPRDF, the opposition, civil society organizations (CSOs), the media, and donors all interested in influencing the kind of ICTs that emerge in post-civil war Ethiopia. Prior to the civil war, Ethiopia, was highly polarized. The peasants were marginalized while the elites occupied privileged positions. This aside, the Amharic language and culture were projected over all others. Leading to the civil war, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), EPRDF's antecedent, identified the marginalized ethnics and peasants as beneficiaries of its contentious acts. Consequently, the post-civil-war statecraft led by the EPRDF adopted Ethnic Federalism and Revolutionary Democracy as its ideologies in pursuance of its goal of advancing the interest of the marginalized. Two major things that stood out from how the government played the technopolitical game as discussed by the book are: first, it weakened the mainline political elites and did not play to their strength; and second, it dismantled the

existing state structure, adopted Ethnic Federalism, used ICTs for implementation and made sure its opponents are marginalized.

Other important concepts discussed by Gagliardone are how Ethnic Federalism allows all the key ethnic groups to elect their representatives in the federal government, promote their language, culture, and history while revolutionary democracy is founded on communal collective participation and representation based on consensus. Gagliardone further observed that during the civil war, the TPLF adopted a system to directly interact with followers. The EPRDF tried to replicate this system on a larger scale to connect the country by building ICT infrastructures when implementing its Ethnic Federalism agenda. This process includes the Woredanet, which provides huge plasma-TVs that use ICTs for direct videoconferencing between the center and the peripheries to eliminate intermediaries and distortions of information. Additionally, Schoolnet was developed to transmit prerecorded lessons to students to ensure uniformity in a nationwide curriculum. In designing and implementing ICTs, the government sidelined political opponents and refused to be influenced by donors and CSOs. Moreover, the government monopolized ICTs and ensured internet usage remained minimal as priority was given to Woredanet and Schoolnet in bandwidth allocation. The limit on internet access was deliberate to curb the negative consequences of liberalizing ICTs and ensured that the opposition does not use ICTs to outwit it in competition.

Gagliardone further presents an insightful picture of how the EPRDF exploited the ambiguities of major policies of Western donors to victimize its political opponents and avoid international condemnation. For instance, the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation of 2001 adopted by the EPRDF in 2009 was used to jail thirty-three persons, primarily journalists including the Zone9 bloggers and two Swedish journalists accused of being terrorists.

Furthermore, the book unravels the inadequacies of the policies espoused by Western organizations in addressing Africa's challenges and a need for policy alternatives. Again, because Western prescriptions for Africa's economic problems call for liberalization and other policies that often weaken the state, most countries resist them. Consequently, revolutionary democracy was chosen by the EPRDF as an alternative to liberal democracy. With Woredanet's support, the EPRDF implemented the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange to connect traders, buyers, and financial institutions to solve its perennial food problems. This initiative has been hailed by the WTO and others.

Gagliardone touched on the emergence of China as global power and donor, which has allowed many African states to access alternative funding sources. In fact, his book is worth reading for it points out how China's funds without strings attached and its "non-interference" policy make China attractive. However, this non-interference stance restrained China from sharing its success story regarding ICTs policy with Ethiopia. Another important lesson the reader will find is that irrespective of the huge external financial source, African governments exercise substantial agency in their interaction with foreign donors.

The framework of technopolitical-regime presents appropriate lens for analyzing the politics of ICTs adoption and implementation in Ethiopia and could be explored in other parts of Africa. It would have been great if Gagliardone had provided a research-design on how he conducted his research for replicability since he is a pioneer in using technopolitical-regime to analyze ICTs adoption in Africa. This criticism aside, his analysis of Ethiopia is very robust. The book is a useful resource for scholars of African Studies, Comparative Politics, Development Studies, Media and Communication, just to mention a few.

Samuel Kofi Darkwa, *West Virginia University*

Camilo Gomez-Rivas. 2015. *Law and Islamization of Morocco under the Almoravids: The Fatwas of Ibn Rushd al-Jadd to the Far Maghrib*. Leiden: Brill. 207 pp.

Camillo Gomez-Rivas had barely raised his head from the formidable task of reviewing the Arabic judgements and epistles of the celebrated Cordoban jurist and public figure Ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 1126 CE) before in his Introduction he's forced to wage battle against troublesome traditions of historiography which are either Ibero-centric (really meaning Euro-centric, presented by authors primarily interested in the *reconquista* and rise of Castile and Aragon), or *mushriq*-centric (the equally unhelpful assumption of many Arab authors that most events of interest during the period took place in Cairo or Baghdad, in other words in the eastern sector of the Arab world). He calmly refrains from romanticizing the Muslim presence in Iberia, nor does he feel compelled to dwell on its flaws. While he summarizes the argument of Abdallah Laroui (1977) to the effect that the "decadence" of the 11th century Byzantine and eastern Islamic states "gave the Maghrib its chance" (that is in fact already a western European negative characterization: 11th century Constantinople and her enemy, the advancing Seljuks under Sultan Alp Arslan, were both major powers; they were simply not in touch with the Maghrib), he finds that explication also flawed. Gomez-Rivas argues persuasively for a new scholarship which will view the Maghrib as of interest for its own sake, taking the Africa-based Almoravids (1042-1147 CE) and their successors the Almohads (1121-1269 CE) as empires not solely "African" or "Iberian," but combining elements and cultural strengths of both areas. This formulation sounds strange to those of us in the present "north versus south" age, but in the Almoravid era the forces of the *amir*—who nevertheless still recognized the notional primacy of the caliph in Baghdad—held sway from the periphery of Ghana to central Spain. Ibn Rushd corresponded with jurists in Iberia and in Northern Africa, and although Ibn Rushd was Iberian, the Almoravid leader Ali deferred to his judgement, and so on. It was a state with domains on two continents. It is part of Gomez-Rivas' argument that the work of Ibn Rushd (whose judgements were quoted in Morocco as late as the 16th century) and his colleagues did much to cement a coherent legal practice in the region, solidified a sense of community in Almoravid dominions, and finally helped lay the foundation for the modern state of Morocco. And if it is the fact that the Muslims were eventually ejected from the Iberian peninsula, that denouement took place 366 years after the death of Ibn Rushd, in quite a

different age. Regarding Gomez-Rivas' Introduction, since this section occupies nearly one-third of his work, the author might have done better to title it, "Ibn Rushd al-Jadd and Islamic Jurisprudence in the Setting of the Almoravid Age." It provides a substantial overview of the period. The work in general also would have been aided by the addition of a map or two.

When we turn to the actual judgements of Ibn Rushd, no one needs to be a partisan of the Maliki school of jurisprudence he espoused to see his arguments are calm, consistently without regional or social prejudice, and seek to apply Islamic principles (as he understood them in his legal tradition) in a broad manner. Wherever there is a possibility the more humble contestant is in the right, Ibn Rushd gives him the benefit of the doubt. He helped bring different regions of the Almoravid domains together — although again, he would never have claimed any such influence. The jurist's argument that even one of the five pillars of Islam, the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), was for the moment of lower priority than the ongoing *jihād* against Almoravid enemies is one more example of shifts in perspective deemed to be imperative in a dangerous age. Other cases he examines shed light on the increasing privatization of land in the Maghribi section of the Almoravid domains, which phenomenon proceeded concomitant with urbanization.

Speaking more broadly — although this line of argument would have sounded strange to Ibn Rushd — the founding of Marrakesh and growth of urban centers in Morocco (to which the Cordoban judge indirectly contributed) were emblematic of a move away from the riparian and Mediterranean-focused cultures which had previously predominated in the region. The founding of al-Fustat (the urban entity preceding Cairo) in Egypt, of Cairowan in Tunisia, and of Marrakesh were all part of this trend. Center and periphery are mutable concepts.

Kenneth W. Meyer, *Western Washington University*

John W. Harbeson and Donald Rothchild (eds.). (2017). *Africa in World Politics: Constructing Political and Economic Order*. Boulder: Westview Press. Sixth Edition. 346 +xiv pp.

In this edition of *Africa in world politics*, the authors capture the growing realities of development that African states are confronted with, in economic and political areas of engagement with each other and with the outside world. The book acknowledges that some Africa states have made remarkable economic progress, which have erased the era of Africa marginalization and birthed greater economic prominence on the world stage. However, in spite of this markedly improved economic progress and growth, the political perfection of many Africa States remains elusive. Hence, the vital question raised in the book: "To what extent will Africa's growing prominence on the world stage translate into sustainable well-being for the continent in political, social-economic, environmental, and cultural terms?" (p. xiii).

In answering this question, the book is divided into four parts. In the first part, Harbeson and Crawford Young recounts contemporary realities in historical

perspectives. Harbeson argues that the multitude political imperfections characterised by, weak democracies, corrupt and patronage leaders, ethnic rivalries are part of the realities “thwarting the realization of ever elusive quests for viable, legitimate post-colonial states” (p. 7). He thus, canvasses for empirically based research and policy formation that can reveal the metric of simultaneously forming legitimate, democratic, and economic viable states; whereas Young dwells on the heritage of colonialism and its enduring influence on the political quagmire of the continent.

The second part examines the variables that can help African countries build viable political economies. In this regard, Todd Moss underscores the importance of international capital. He maintains that if agents and institutions that facilitate capital into Africa can be effectively managed, Africa can become enlisted among the next generation of emerging markets. Similarly, Pitcher draws attention to the rising government investment initiatives, with the aid of sovereign wealth funds and public pension funds among others. He warns that this form of entrepreneurial governance should be effectively managed while improving regulatory and institutional environment if the governments wish to be saved from the perils of a global financial crisis like the ones it avoided in 2008. Taylor posits that the illusion of Africa Rising resulting from heavy demands of raw materials from the BRICS, particularly China, does not necessarily equate to development but rather deepen dependency.

With strict logic, authors in the third part reflect on the enduring problem confronting African State in constructing substantial and sustainable post-colonial state. Writing on “The International ‘Factors in African Warfare,” Reno draws connections between patronage politics, state building, international influences and African wars. Whereas in Sudan and South Sudan Lyman reflects, as the chapter’s subtitle suggests on ‘the tragic denouement of the comprehensive Peace agreement” and recommends that effective change can only come from within. And Campbell locates the problem in Nigeria in the absence of and controversy over national identity and legitimacy of the state as well as the isolation of the elite from the people (of northern Nigeria), which paved way for terrorism.

Authors in the last section advance that although African countries have developed dogged diplomatic structures for confronting current socio-political and economic challenges, these diplomatic structures and arrangements are in themselves insufficient FOR liberating Africa from its current socio-political and economic quagmire confronting the continent. This central position that Africa’s overreliance on external assistance and weak state institutions are part of the substantial element impeding the manifestation of a viable post-colonial state is quite valid. Africa’s nations are being positioned as extended territories for gaining additional score points and boosting traditional and non-traditional influencers of national interests. China’s search for viable markets and establishing a military base in Africa is indicative of this fact. Thus, the valid recommendations for internal solutions, nurtured by careful government policies and vigilance “completely free of all kinds of foreign domination as to be the starting point of any true rise of Africa” (p. 86).

Unequivocally, the book provides clear and unbiased assessments of the enduring situations confronting African society at large amidst the changing dynamics of the international system. The arguments of the authors disclose in-depth understanding and analyses of the enduring realities in Africa, which affords them the collective clout of explaining how in spite of marked economic progress, poverty, state weakness, and the struggle for building a viable post-colonial state still lingers in most African nations. The mixed account and analyses by diplomats and scholars further gives credence to the reliability of the book. On calm examination, the book can be easily comprehended by students and policy makers as it draws strength from empirical social realities. Hence, the book is highly recommended for students of African politics, particularly those focusing on the dynamics of economics and political variables among African nations in contemporary times.

Oluwatobi O. Aje, *Covenant University Nigeria*

Jonathan Haynes. 2016. *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 375 pp.

It is not uncommon for artistic expressions to bear true reflection of the societies that birth them, that being the inalienable duty and quintessential feature of arts. What is, perhaps, is to chance upon a parallel between the very structure of a society and the structure of its film industry. For, just as Lagos, indeed Nigeria, is a huge testimony to private efforts in providing housing in an unplanned, unregulated manner, so Nollywood, third in the world after Hollywood and Bollywood, provides a place for Nigerians to “live”—employment-wise—all generated by small scale independent producers. Such is the near-complete absence of government input in the lived realities of Nigerians and the resilience of the creative industry practitioners, a fact Haynes notes explicitly. *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres* traces the contours of Nigerian video film industry in its kaleidoscopic representation of Nigeria’s postcolonial realities as captured through Nollywood. As a brand, Nollywood has almost completely eclipsed other subdivisions of the Nigerian film industry. Haynes clearly delineates “Nollywood,” as referring to English-language video films that spring from the production and distribution system based in Lagos with tentacles in the South-Eastern Nigerian cities of Onitsha, Aba, Enugu, and Asaba, the seed pod of which was *Living in Bondage*, a 1992 Igbo language film.

Haynes, through this book, leaves his mark in the critical studies of an industry that, in about two decades, had over fourteen thousand titles to its credit. With a bird’s eye view on the gamut of Nollywood titles from which he zeroes in on specific films, Haynes charts a course through the slippery terrain of taxonomies noting the blurring nature of generic categorizations. This sets Haynes’ book apart from others of its kind such as Adeshina Afolayan’s (ed.) *Auteuring Nollywood: Critical Perspectives on The Figurine* which focuses on one film but broadly reflects the industry and also from Krings and Okome’s (ed.) *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African*

Video Film Industry which interest lies in the diasporic influence of Nollywood and the controversy therefrom.

First, Haynes identifies the initial genres; money ritual films, senior girls' films and the triad of family, love and community films espousing the interplay between African cultural practices and the doctrinal dynamics of Pentecostal Christianity. Fundamental factors that coalesced to birth Nollywood are recounted and analysed: the 1992 crisis between the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and trained professionals working behind and in front of the camera, a ready-made basis provided by Nigeria's Yoruba travelling theatre tradition, the astronomical increase in the cost of production of celluloid films owing mainly to the devaluation of the naira, and the public's loss of interest in stage plays. Haynes examines the ground-breaking efforts of pacesetters like Kenneth Nnebue, Amaka Igwe, and Tunde Kelani which later burgeoned into a magnificent video film industry. Kelani's "Other Nollywood" stands out, Haynes observes, because of technical superiority which paved way for its entry into international film festivals.

In part two, Haynes dwells on the cultural epic genre bemoaning its lack of representational accuracy of the Igbo cultural heritage partly because it occludes republicanism, an innate feature of the Igbo people. Haynes hails Kelani's "Other Nollywood" as a worthy example because of its veritable documentation of Yoruba cultural heritage. Other genres which Haynes names in this part are 'igwe'-centric or royal films, village films, crime films, and a resurgence of the ritual film genre not for 'get-rich-quick' purposes as in part one, but for power and politics.

Haynes caps off the final part with two other genres; the diaspora films and campus films. Haynes notes the near-complete absence of both the supernatural and Pentecostal Christianity structures in diaspora films and a heavy dose of cult-related thematic concerns in campus films. To Haynes, Nollywood oscillates between a heroic assertion of Nigerian culture against a flood of imports and a commercially-driven betrayal of Nigerian culture, participating as it does with mixed motives in Nigeria's contemporary realities. That the practitioners adopted "Nollywood" coined by New York Times reporter, Norimitsu Onishi, perhaps attests to this ambivalent disposition.

Futuristically, Haynes sees an economically vibrant "New Nollywood" predicated partly on the recent establishment of multiplex cinemas in a few cities in Nigeria. This is, however, dubious given the prevailing precarious state of the country's economy. Although lacking in ideological stance, Haynes howbeit lauds Nollywood's veritable seismographic recording of the Nigerian temperament.

Oluchi J. Igili, *Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria*

Steve Howard. 2016. *Modern Muslims: A Sudan Memoir*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press. 217 pp.

Steve Howard is a rare breed of scholar who lived among the people he wrote about in the Sudan. The Republican Brotherhood, led by the late Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, who was a small but fearless intellectual, was a modern Sufi movement that attempted to

restore what it considered the truly peaceful and egalitarian Islam. The author notes that the attempted reformation of this movement was thwarted when their leader was executed for alleged apostasy at the age of seventy-six. He was hanged by the Sudanese regime led by dictator Gaafar Nimeiry in 1985. The Sudanese people rose up against Nimeiry and deposed him four months later; Taha's execution is thought to have contributed to the popular uprising that overthrew the military strongman.

The established political and religious elites considered Taha a threat to their monopoly on the interpretation of Islam and politics, the author elaborates. It could be argued that Taha's "Second Message of Islam" resembles Martin Luther's 95 theses. Both caused an uproar and indignation among the established religious leaders and heresy charges were labeled against both reformers. While Luther lived long enough to see the fruits of his reformation, Taha, a trained engineer, was executed before his movement could accomplish its goal of reforming Islam.

The author, a former Peace Corps volunteer in the neighboring Chad, was received with a typical Sudanese hospitality better illustrated by the Arabic proverb "when a guest comes to a host, the host becomes the guest and the guest the host." The movement advocated for a version of Islam that is peaceful, egalitarian and gender inclusive. Taha is fondly referred to in the book as *Ustadh*, an endearing term in Arabic that means a teacher. This honorific title is only given to religious teachers known for their learning. In Sufism, the term is also applied to the guide of a *tariqah*, a religious movement.

The Sudanese proverb "do not keep your stick away from these three: a woman, a drum and a female donkey" indicates the discrimination women face in their country. Taha elevated the position of women in his movement as equal to men. The author makes clear that women played a significant leadership role in the Republican Brotherhood. While the term "brotherhood" may seem to exclude sisters from the movement, nothing could be further from reality. All genders were equal members of the brotherhood. The author notes in his book, especially in the chapter "A Women's Movement" that the Republican Brotherhood had a soft spot for women's issues and considered them as an integral part of the movement contrary to the prevailing Sudanese culture. This new thought of emancipating women challenged an entire worldview that considered half the population as inferior to men.

Howard shows, throughout the book, a particular knowledge of the Republican Brotherhood, and a general understanding of the people of Sudan. Many of the findings of the author can apply to the rest of Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa where different versions of Sufism enjoy a huge following. This book is not an academic work and never confines the Republican Brotherhood into a scholarly box. This is a living book that reads like a thriller, and it contains a treasure trove about the movement, their leader, vision, mission, and theology.

The intrepid author demonstrates an insider's knowledge of the movement that accepted him as a respected member, but he presents his findings with integrity and clarity. His cultural knowledge and linguistic ability reflect his thirty years of studying and admiring the Republican Brotherhood. The book is courteous of the movement, but

it does not idolize it. This book bears witness to the fact that Islam is not a monolithic religion. The violent version of Islam familiar to many Westerners is the exception rather than the rule. The overwhelming majority of Muslims do not wield any sword to conquer a territory or impose their faith on anyone; they simply live their lives. This book is a must read for students and educators; it is also helpful to political leaders and their constituents.

Aweis Ali, *Africa Nazarene University, Nairobi*

Alison Jolly. 2016. *Thank You, Madagascar: The Conservation Diaries of Alison Jolly*. London: Zed Books. 391 pp.

Alison Jolly has left an engaging legacy for others to read. The book is not an autobiography, although she does speak from her own point of view on aging: "I am getting not only so old but so heavy that I am positively embarrassed when young men have to hoist me upwards with shoves on the bottom" (p. 246) and even death: "Somehow dying doesn't worry me at all. At least not yet. I've had lots of fun and excitement in life" (p. 361). The book is not a field journal with mind-numbing details of particular scientifically-collared lemurs on dark nights, but she informs the reader on many aspects of lemur and Malagasy society. The book is a treatise on conservation in Madagascar and a call for readers to join the effort of saving the natural world because "people of vision do change the course of history" (p. 78).

The book's setting could not be mistaken for anywhere else in the world. Jolly captures Madagascar's uniqueness beautifully: "Little by little the clouds lifted until the rainforest rose above Ranomafana town, bathed in sun. Sun here has a peculiarly golden tone, like sunset at noon. The folds of the hills were deep and green and black, covered in trees like tufted velvet" (p. 199). Jolly uses local words, but always explains the meaning. Readers learn them "*mora-mora* – slowly, slowly" (p. 329) with little effort. She explains why Malagasy surnames seem so long, why girls remain in school longer than boys, and many other questions about the island life that creep up, but would remain unanswered during a once-in-a-lifetime tourist visit.

The book is divided into five parts. Parts, and chapters within, them begin with a reflection drawn from Jolly's fifty-year engagement with the island. These include the voices of many of the Malagasy she has worked alongside and respects greatly. The diary entries, ranging from 1963- 2014, follow. Most are taken from entries at the time of four major conservation conferences in which Jolly participated. Part 1, "Villages," reveals the basis for the need. Jolly quotes Esther Boserup as saying, "It is hungry, or desperate or ambitious people who change their world" (p. 17). No doubt remains that a problem must be addressed. Part 2, "Politics," relates the coming together of global stakeholders with locals to form a National Environmental Action Plan. "Our cash killed Bedo" (pp. 121-24) is a sobering morality tale to be heeded by eco-tourists about learning from locals, or long-term residents, what is appropriate and what is not. Part 3, "Environment and development," describes the work of convincing Malagasy people who believed in their cultural heritage and practices that things must change. Stories of

murder and mayhem join with those of serious research and progress for a well-rounded view of development. Part 4, "Weather," portrays the effects of the normal cycle of drought for which the flora and fauna of southern Madagascar have made adaptations. Climate change, however, is stretching those amazing modifications to the breaking point. The environment is not fully recovering on its own. Part 5, "Money," is controversial. Should mining companies be allowed to function in Madagascar? What must be done to keep their greed for the minerals, as rare as the animals and plants, in check? Jolly is supportive of the mining.

Hilary Grant, in the foreword describes the intended audience of *Thank You, Madagascar* as "Those who love Madagascar, whether tourist, nature lover, dedicated conservationist or professional primatologist" (p. x). These readers will be satisfied, informed, and intrigued. If other readers are looking for a female Thoreau living alone in the wilds, they will be disappointed. Although her style is as literary as *Walden*, she rarely writes of solitude. Jolly travels from village to palace and back with equal pleasure because as Grant notes: "Lemurs were only a part of the picture, not the obsessive whole, because she knew and understood the people—from dignitaries to peasants—as well as she knew lemurs" (p. ix). Some of these esteemed visitors included the Duke of Edinburgh, David Attenborough (BBC), and Jeffery Katzenberg (CEO DreamWorks—before the release of *Madagascar*).

Thank You, Madagascar is recommended for those who are interested in conservation, Madagascar, or a woman who lived with passion, humility, and few regrets.

Amy Crofford, *Africa Nazarene University*

Dominika Koter. 2016. *Beyond Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 220 pp.

Beyond Ethnic Politics in Africa is a well researched book, adopting a comparative method to study other variables and factors, apart from ethnicity, that dictate electoral politics in sub-Saharan Africa. Koter examines Africa electoral system using two French West Africa states, Benin Republic and Senegal, as the main case studies. Contrary to the general belief that ethnic appeal is the only mobilization option for African politicians, Koter argues that some African states have diverse electoral supports from all ethnic groups by mobilizing voters through the use of intermediaries. The book combined primary and secondary data collection to analyze the electoral mobilization strategies in the main case studies of Benin and Senegal and secondary cases of Mali, Guinea, Kenya, and Botswana. Koter discusses the problems of electoral mobilization in Africa and difficulties politicians encountered in forging ties with voters, especially those outside their ethnic group, and the role of ethnicity in electoral politics in Africa.

Benin and Senegal have some similarities like shared colonial history; multicultural ethnic nationalities with some spreading across the border of the two countries but differ in their social structures and hierarchical ties. The variation in social structure was as a result of uneven patterns of authority and hierarchy and the impact of colonialism (p.

43). Since African parties aren't ideologically based, highly fragmented and personalized, politicians employed different electoral mobilization strategies depending on the political environment. Koter postulates that the stronger the hierarchical ties between the local leaders and their followers, the more effective the use of intermediaries for electoral mobilization. Where the tiers are weak or non-existence, African politicians directly appeal to the ethnic background.

Since the traditional leadership in Benin is very weak and lacks the capacity to serve as electoral intermediaries, politicians adopt ethnic mobilization strategies, and thus an election is viewed as competition among the ethnic groups over the control of the national resources. The strong hierarchical ties in Senegal provides opportunities for the traditional and religious leaders to serve as electoral intermediaries between politicians and voters, thereby having considerable influence on the outcome of elections. In Benin, Koter argues, political parties are highly regionalized on ethnic blocs and an election is extremely ethnicized and viewed as a zero-sum game among the diverse ethnic groups. Where there is the use of intermediaries in Northern Benin (among the Bariba) it is, however, marginal nationally.

In contrast to Benin, appeals to ethnic identity are strikingly absent on the campaign trail, in media coverage, and in academic works on Senegalese elections (p. 96). The use of the Senegalese marabout and traditional leaders as vote carriers (intermediaries) meant that parties and candidates have diverse and nationally spread voters from all ethnic groups. The overriding influence of Mouride leaders on their followers compared to the Tijanniyya has been translated to electoral assets for personal gains, material rewards, and negotiating for community projects from politicians. Koter further pointed out that the incumbents always have unrestricted access to the state coffers; intermediaries are likely to support the incumbents. The widespread patron-client relationship between the politicians and intermediaries proves to be very useful in ensuring a diverse electoral support for candidates and political parties across the ethnic divides.

In Senegal where the intermediaries play a crucial role in electoral competition, Koter argues, they are more effective in influencing rural voters than the urban counterparts. The variation Koter explained is the nature of the weak tiers between leaders and their follower in urban areas. While local leaders can control both the economic and social activities of a village, they cannot manage to the same extent the complicated urban existence of their followers (p. 129). The individualistic character of the urban voters is a challenge to the intermediaries influence and thus there is a semblance of programmatic campaign in urban cities in Senegal. Hence, there is always a higher level of support for the incumbent in rural areas than in urban areas (p. 136). Similarly, urban voters are likely to support an opposition candidate. Koter found the same pattern for the use of intermediaries in Mali and Botswana where hierarchical tiers are very strong. In other words, ethnic politics is profound in Kenya and Guinea because the traditional institutions have been destroyed by both the colonizers and the first set of political leaders.

The ineffective use of intermediaries in urban centers thus limits their role as agents of nation building and national integration. While, mobilization through intermediaries ensures diverse electoral support and electoral inclusiveness, it has been unable to propel a national identity and integration; at best it has ensured equitable distribution of public goods among different ethnic groups.

Isa Ishaq Ojibara, *University of Ilorin*

Henning Melber (ed.). 2016. *The Rise of Africa's Middle Class: Myths, Realities and Critical Engagements*. London: Zed Books. 219 pp.

This volume contributes to the burgeoning debates around the African middle class for sustainable understanding of the trajectories, ramifications and complexities of the economic development and democratic change contributions and capabilities of the middle class in African societies. The edited volume was based, partly, on some papers earlier presented at conferences and events on “Responsible Development... Inequality, Citizenship and Middle Classes” (p. ix) coordinated by the editor. Leveraging the critical contributions of contributors from economics, political science, anthropology, and development practice, the volume intends to be a necessary corrective to popular celebratory narratives of the middle class as important agents of democratic change and economic development in African societies. The orientation of the volume was clearly set by the editor right from the Introduction: “Somewhere above the poor but below rich’: explorations into the species of the African middle classes” (pp. 1-16). The Introduction provides ‘a critical framework and reference point for the contributions’ (p. 1) in the volume which detail the origin, nature, complexities, heterogeneity, actual roles, existences, fallacies, realities and dynamics of the middle class relative to democratic processes and development across Africa. The Introduction is useful in setting not only the theoretical but also the empirical and epistemic perspectives and interventions of the volume.

The volume has a total of ten substantive chapters. All the chapters contribute in different but related ways to the central historical, conceptual and roles arguments of the middle class in Africa. Even though the chapters were written by authors from different disciplinary backgrounds, they are very multi/transdisciplinary and finished with noteworthy intellectual finesse. Chapter 1 by Lentz provides a detailed literature and empirical background for the debates around the African middle class drawing conclusions that set a research agenda based on transnational studies in the area (pp. 17-53). In similar intellectual fashion, in Chapter 2, Stoffel provides a human development perspective for the construction of the middle class within the broader framework of the Global South. Taken together, Chapters 1 and 2 contribute “comparative perspective with some cross-references to studies outside the African context” (p. 9) to give a more nuanced and robust base to the volume. Chapter 3 by Akinkugbe and Wohlmuth examines the role of the African middle class as a base for entrepreneurship development (p. 69). The chapter critically interrogates the missing role of the middle class in filling entrepreneurial gaps created by the delinkages between microenterprises

and large companies in the investment spaces of Africa. The overall contribution of the chapter is “about the role of the African middle class as a base for entrepreneurial development” (p. 87). Chapter 4 by Hellsten ‘challenges the assumptions that the expansion of the middle class will somehow automatically steer Africa towards democracy and good governance’ (p. 95). Hellsten argues that “without any clear ideological and practical commitment to solidarity and social justice for all; there is no guarantee that the ongoing economic change towards middle income, consumer-societies will also transform the states into liberal democracies” (p. 95).

Chapter 5 (Neubert) marks a stylistic departure point from earlier chapters by introducing case study from Kenya. The chapter contextually interrogates the concepts of class against the background experience of Kenya, engages the the Kenyan middle class, examines the blurred boundaries and instability in Kenyan middle class, illuminates issues of choice and socio-cultural diversification/milieu, and concludes that the hope that the Kenyan middle class will lead to democratic transformations, political relevance and middle class consciousness is not fulfilled as against common belief. Orji examines middle class activism in Nigeria in Chapter 6. This chapter adopts the style of Chapter 5 by conceptualizing and profiling the Nigerian middle class and maintaining that the new middle class in Nigeria is more urbanite, more educated, strongly rooted in the private sector, and “possesses a greater capacity to communicate and share information through the new digital technology” (p. 133). The chapter through two case studies demonstrates political activism and the middle class and shows the level of connections and disconnections in the middle class engagements. Chapter 7 by Schubert provides the case study of post-war Angola as emerging political subjectivities in terms of livelihood—leading a descent life and survival in cities—as interfaces of nascent political subjectivities. The objectivity and subjectivity of the middle class is demonstrated through the case study of Mozambique by Sumich in Chapter 8. The chapter after unraveling the origin and post-war existences of the middle class in Mozambique concludes that there is certainly a disjuncture among expectations, ambitions and realities in Mozambique middle class. Ngoma in Chapter 9 explores the South Africa’s middle class through racism, class, inclusion, exclusion, inter-race relations and political participation particularly through the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The conclusion Ngoma draws is akin to de-celebratory direction and the need for a more critical examination of the middle class in Africa. Chapter 10 by Shule demonstrates the identity and role issues of the middle class in Dar es Salaam and Kiswahili through video-films. The “chapter examines the perception of the middle class elite on the Kiswahili video-films in Dar es Salam, Tanzania” (p. 190). The conclusion of the chapter is that the non-involvement of the professional middle class accounts for the poor quality of the video films.

The volume is polemic, bold, engaging and an excellent read. It is a comprehensive account of the middle class and development debates in Africa, and the relationship with democratic change is commendably noteworthy. The relevance of data in the book transcends Africa even though the book is based on Africa. Its multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary elements particularly make the book of immense value. It is a

worthwhile critical compendium of information not only on Africa's middle class but on sustainable social, cultural, economic, and political change in Africa.

Olayinka Akanle, *University of Ibadan*

Wanjala S. Nasong'o (ed.). 2015. *The Roots of Ethnic Conflict in Africa: From Grievance to Violence*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan. 208 pp.

Nasong'o's edited volume makes a significant contribution to the analysis of ethnic conflict trajectories in Africa in relation to the root causes and eruption of violence. The book aptly captures the totality of the phenomenon of ethnic conflicts in Africa by juxtaposing historical imperatives and contemporary dynamics of political exclusion that culminate in ethnic violence on the continent.

The first chapter sets out to introduce the book by emphatically stating that Africa is characterised by multi-ethnic states. Indeed, the establishment of artificial states by historical processes including mobility and colonization whose subsequent ethnic heterogeneity and segmentation has provided favorable conditions for ethnic mobilization and resultant deadly conflicts. The second chapter provides a succinct theoretical foundation for explaining ethnic conflicts in Africa. Without discrediting the merits of other theoretical approaches, the chapter adopts the grievance model to plausibly analyse how grievances results in the mobilisation of ethnic groups.

In chapter three, Nasong'o illuminates the contribution of the politics of exclusion to the North-South conflict. Challenging the overgeneralising the comprehension of the conflict as mere Arab-African racial conflict or Islam-Christianity rivalry (p. 121), the chapter linked the conflict to the British colonial policies that benefited Northerners more than Southerners, exclusivist politics perpetrated by the Abboud and Khalifa's regimes including reversal of the colonial Southern Policy, compounded by the Arabization and Islamization of Sudan politics as well as Numeiry's accommodation of conservative Islamist politicians.

Chapter four traces the centrality of historical factors and political exclusion leading to uneven distribution of power and economic resources and subsequent generation of ethnic conflicts in Africa. It examines the origins of the Ugandan conflict in relation to the British colonial strategy of divide and rule (p. 60), the militarization of Ugandan politics and manipulation of ethnic tensions to mobilize northern Ugandans and external influence. Stephen Mwachofi Singo and Sam Okoth Opondo devoted chapter five to the analysis of the complexity of the prolonged Eastern DRC conflict. While accepting the influence of ethnic heterogeneity and poor governance, the chapter precisely underscores the utilization of existing grievances in the manipulation of ethnic divisions by rebel groups to gain access to power and economic resources in a war economy.

The next chapter explores the key factors that culminated in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. By including the role played by the Germans and Belgians in politicizing ethnicity by promoting the Tutsis at the expense of the Hutus leading to deep Hutu-Tutsi rivalry, the disparities in the distribution of power and economic resources

between the two major ethnic groups, post-Cold War political opportunity, and how post-independence peace arrangements could not materialize in reconciling Hutu-Tutsi hostility, Celine A. Jacquemin's chapter six captures the entirety of the roots of the Rwandan genocide.

In chapter seven, Martin S. Shanguhya attributes the dynamics of violence in Zanzibar since independence in 1963 to politicization of the Zanzibaris grievances by opportunistic political parties. Ethnic and racial relations between Arabs, Africans, Shiraz and other ethnic groups as well as deeply felt political grievances over unfulfilled revolutionary objectives on the part of the Zanzibaris with Arabs preferring more political autonomy than is accepted under the agreement of the Union with mainland Tanzania are also central to the tensions that have often erupted into violence since independence, and continue to divide ethnic groups.

Using Rwanda and Somalia's linguistic homogeneity, chapter eight by Tom Onditi Luoch delved on demystifying the role of language as a unifying factor in ethnic conflicts. Rather historical factors leading to political exclusion, uneven distribution of political and economic power, and the configuration of African societies can be used to amply account for ethnic conflicts in Africa.

Nasong'o's recommendations in chapter nine with regard to power sharing as the most effective ethnic conflict management strategy can be put into question. While the idea of consociational democracy is noble and has materialised in halting conflicts in some states, the reality of one ethnic group having dominance and hegemonic influence disproportionate to others might remain because power cannot be shared equally; in practice. Over and above, the book is an important illumination into the complex factors causing ethnic conflicts in Africa drawing from historical complexities, political exclusion, and modern equivalent structures that culminate in grievances resulting in ethnic mobilization and subsequent radicalization due to incumbent governments' policy responses. The comprehensiveness of Nasong'o's edited book can be noticed in the quality of content backed with an evidential base of African case studies.

Torque Mude, *Midlands State University*

David B. Ottaway. 2017. *The Arab World Upended: Revolution and Its Aftermath in Tunisia and Egypt*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers. 269 pp.

David Ottaway's *The Arab World Upended* examines the causes of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, their profoundly divergent aftermaths, and the possible path of the two countries' political development. Having previously authored *Algeria: The Politics of Socialist Revolution* (1968) and *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (1978) together with his wife, Marina, Ottaway is not new to writing about revolutions. *The Arab World Upended* uses Crane Brinton's *The Anatomy of Revolution* among other works on social upheavals as its framework for analysis. Ottaway vividly reveals that the phases of revolution outlined by Brinton such as honeymoon, dual sovereignty, Thermidorean reaction, and restoration while visible in both the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, they differed in the degree they were observable in the two countries because some were

more visible than others. The author asserts that while both Tunisia and Egypt “went through strikingly similar revolutionary phases, fracturing in the same way over Islam’s role in the revolution,” they ended differently: “Tunisia under a multiparty democracy, Egypt by a new military dictator” (p. 223). However, both are under serious threat from Islamic extremists resolute to create the last Islamic State (caliphate) on Arab land.

The book consists of an introduction and thirteen chapters that are divided into five parts. The introduction introduces the study and situates it in the growing literature examining the Arab Spring uprisings from a revolutionary and comparative perspective. Comprising chapters 1-4, part 1 discusses the context of the Arab Spring debating the different Western and Arab understandings of the term revolution. Additionally, the socio-economic and political conditions prevailing before the 2011 uprisings broke out are discussed. In parts 2 and 3 comprising chapters 5-6 and 7-10 the book focuses on the phases of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt in their early years, respectively using Brinton’s outline as a reference point.

In part 4 consisting of chapters 11-12 focusing on the paradoxes and challenges, the book discusses the impact of a counterrevolution from abroad and the challenges facing the two countries following the collapse of the short-lived, chaotic rule of Islamic parties. The first two years in postrevolution Tunisia and Egypt are examined to measure the prospects for other uprisings in the future. Ottaway foresees more uprisings in both countries. The author opines that “Certainly there is the expectation of more turmoil” (p. 233) if there are no changes to the socio-economic situation. Lastly, part five concludes the book by summarising the similarities and differences between the Arab revolutions and classic Western and contemporary ones and a summing up of why the outcomes were so extremely different in Tunisia and Egypt. The key reason among others, Ottaway found it resting in the fact that the military remained in its barracks in Tunisia, which was not the case in Egypt (pp. 245-46).

Forming one of the book’s key strengths is its qualitative nature and use of primary sources including interviews, observation, and media coverage in English, French and Arabic languages. The book is also theoretically well-grounded manifest in its use of major works on social upheavals particularly, Brinton’s *The Anatomy of Revolution*. This helped its structuring of the diverse muddled flow of events that characterised Tunisia and Egypt in the wake of their 2011 revolutions. Moreover, the author convincingly justifies his choice of comparing Tunisia and Egypt and not attempting a wider comparative study outside them. He notes that this was “partly for reasons of space but mostly because comparison to other Arab uprisings of 2011 seemed pointless in the absence of discernible outcomes to the civil wars still consuming Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya as of early 2016” (p. 8). This greatly assisted to make the book rich both from an analytical and narrative perspectives. It clarifies a number of points hitherto not clear in the contemporary history of the two countries such as the future of their revolutions and the decisions of their military to intervene and stay out of politics respectively. However, the book has been somewhat watered down by repetition and typographical and omission of words errors at a number of points. The latter include but are not limited to those found on pages 4, 11, 57, 172, and 214.

Combined, the book's strengths outweigh the weaknesses making it an invaluable contribution to the works on the contemporary history of Egypt and Tunisia. Besides, it is simple to read. Historians, political science, peace and conflict studies, and war and strategic studies scholars and students plus policy makers will find value in this book.

Enock Ndawana, *University of Zimbabwe*

Andrew Pearson. 2016. *Distant Freedom: St Helena and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1840-1872*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. xiv, 314 pp.

Distant Freedom originates not in historical archives but in the earthly remains of liberated slaves who had been brought ashore on St Helena from slavers captured by the Royal Navy's anti-slavery squadron. A selection of these remains is now on display at the Liverpool anti-Slavery Museum in an exhibition, "Liberty Bound," a title echoing that of Dr. Pearson's book. Irony is never far from the story of ex-slaves who remained, paradoxically, sometimes for many years, "recaptives" or "liberated slaves."

St Helena is remote, 1300 kilometres south-east of Ascension and 1800 kilometres west of Mocamedes on the coast of Angola. Discovered by the Portuguese in 1502, first claimed by Britain in 1659, the island's climate and co-ordinates eventually made it a useful way-station both for the East Indian Company and the British Crown which took control in 1834. In 1840 the exhumation and repatriation and re-interment of Napoleon's remains severed a tie which had been important to St Helena, so that the Vice-Admiralty Court and the Liberated African Establishment, were potentially beneficial responsibilities for the island, involving all aspects of the island's economy.

The court was one of a number established to judge suspected slavers and liberating their human cargo. With its favourable setting within the circulation of Atlantic winds and currents, and the slave trade moving south from West Africa, St Helena proved a more effective centre for the West African anti-slavery squadron than Freetown had been. On 14 March 1840, the *Waterwitch* brought the first slaver to be condemned by the St Helena vice-admiralty court. Despite an uncertain start, and some fluctuations as the antislavery campaign progressed, over the next thirty years, unexpectedly, the St Helena court condemned more slave ships and liberated more Africans than any other British possession, in absolute terms 450 vessels and almost 25,000 people.

The Establishment which processed these African refugees was a complex social organism. They were housed in Lemon Valley, five kilometres south-west of Jamestown on the coast, and Rupert's Valley only a kilometre northeast of the town. Space had to be made for isolation and quarantine. One complication was the variation in numbers, depending on the success or otherwise of the squadron: sometimes the tents and sheds were empty, sometimes they housed over a thousand. Andrew Pearson's account of the lives is exemplary in its attention to detail, just use of the sources, humanity, and sense of context. Reception was almost a reprise of the sale into slavery. The island was ill-prepared for the influx of people. The life chances of the liberated Africans depended on medical intervention, environment (housing), facilities, levels of staffing, and supporting logistics. Housing was improvised, until something permanent was undertaken; the

Treasury preferred to feed the liberated Africans cheaply, communication between staff and the recaptives was fraught with suspicion and hostility. While some official accounts testify to contentment and satisfaction, there are reports of cruel and exploitative overseers, and inhumane conditions—“filth, stench, close packing”—and little attempt was made to learn the language or culture (for example, native therapies for characteristic diseases) of the ex-slaves. Nonetheless the overall record of St Helena compares favourably with other comparable establishments.

After liberation and rehabilitation, education, and evangelization, the recaptives were never intended to become permanent residents. Emigration and possible apprenticeship made their most common programme. As Andrew Pearson points out it is arguable that indenture and apprenticeship were a modified continuation of slavery itself. Some effort was made to convince the recaptives to depart voluntarily, in a state of grace and physical health. Eventually over 17,000 emigrated, the majority to the West Indies. In all destinations the recaptives were probably absorbed into the labour force. Some few were taken up as servants by military or civilians, or enlisted in the merchant marine or the British armed forces, and later a group sought repatriation to Luanda.

Individual voices are rarely heard in this story, and Andrew Pearson is to be commended for his attention to them when they emerge: an old woman who refused to emigrate, or Dr McHenry, the first Medical Officer (and later emigration agent), who had to treat seventy patients a day and showed respect for African healing.

In 1875 there was a remnant community of five hundred liberated slaves on the island. After liberation the freed slaves never rose from the bottom strata of society; apprenticeship and education had failed. Charlotte Harper, the last surviving recaptive living on St Helena, died in 1929, aged 100.

This is an engaging, lively, responsible and thoughtful book, which should inspire further research, at least into the fate of resettled emigrant slaves.

Tony Voss, *University of Kwazulu-Natal, Durban*

Reiland Rabak. 2015. *The Negritude Movement: W.E.B. Du Bois, Leon Damas, Aime Cesaire, Leopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, and the Evolution of an Insurgent Idea*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 431 pp.

Reiland Rabaka's scholarship has often been informed by the leaders of the Negritude movement and their exceptional cultural and political influence. However, *The Negritude Movement* is his first book devoted entirely to the subject, and it proves noteworthy from a variety of academic perspectives. Published in 2015, the book examines the way the Negritude movement engages with other Africana intellectual traditions and continues to remain pertinent today. Specifically, Rabaka reveals the intellectual lineage of the movement as based in the New Negro Movement and its most prominent thinker, W.E.B. Du Bois. Furthermore, the book unveils how Negritude creates a conceptual framework to connect the discursive continuity of Du Bois with Franz Fanon, who Rabaka considers Negritude's "most illustrious intellectual heir" (p. 247). From this perspective, *The Negritude Movement* illustrates how Leon Damas, Aime Cesaire, and

Leopold Senghor are positioned as a pertinent link attaching the ideologies developed by Du Bois with the later philosophy of Fanon in a transnational intellectual and political tradition that continues to shape academic debates.

Rabaka presents a comprehensive and well researched study on the origins and legacies of Damas, Césaire, and Senghor as both writers and politicians. The methodology of the book is based on the significance of the discourse established by Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* as essential to the poetics and politics of Negritude. The author explains that this landmark text of Du Bois provides an intellectual framework to understand the larger problematics and *leitmotifs* of the subsequent movements in the modern Africana intellectual tradition, for example the Pan-African Movement, the Harlem Renaissance, and Negritude. This methodological positioning allows Rabaka to expose the common thread that ties not only the discourses of Du Bois and the Harlem Renaissance to Negritude, but also that these historic discursive shifts culminated in the work of Fanon who achieves new insights on decolonization through the work of Negritude.

The compelling arguments of *The Negritude Movement* are reinforced by an effective chronological structure that guides the reader dexterously through the theoretical dialogue that unfolds between Rabaka and the five intellectuals who comprise the subject of his study. After establishing the concept of “Du Boisian Negritude” in the Introduction, the first chapter, “Prelude to Negritude: The New Negro Movement, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Early Evolution of the Negritude Notion” explains how the paradigm shift of Du Bois shaped the Harlem Renaissance, and consequently the Negritude movement. The second chapter, “Damasian Negritude: Leon Damas,” emphasizes Damas as maintaining a distinct form of Negritude from Césaire and Senghor, which includes more attention to the Harlem and Haitian Renaissances.

Indeed, the third chapter, “Césairean Negritude: Aime Césaire,” begins by highlighting the different interpretations held by Césaire and Damas of the law of departmentalization imposed by the French government. The chapter concludes with an insightful analysis of Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* as a defining work in the Negritude discourse. The fourth chapter, “Senghorian Negritude: Leopold Senghor,” studies Senghor’s unique engagement with Negritude as a socio-political practice, which offers new interpretations of “Africanness, blackness, Frenchness, and socialism” (p. 35). The last chapter, “Fanonian Negritude: Frantz Fanon,” concludes that Fanon works through the poetics and politics of the Negritude movement to furnish a new philosophy of disalienation and decolonization that is often reductively misinterpreted by scholars. Nonetheless, Fanon’s new philosophy is steeped in the themes and ideas produced by Negritude, and therefore his work is seen to be directly in dialogue with Du Bois as well.

The Negritude Movement is an in-depth analysis of the significant relationship between major critical figures of the modern Africana intellectual tradition that scholars from a variety of academic disciplines and fields will appreciate. Rabaka demonstrates how the foundational discourse employed by Du Bois is a point of origin for the later Harlem Renaissance, Negritude movement, and the work of Fanon. The value of

Rabaka's book is seen in his ability to establish Césaire, Damas, and Senghor as an epistemological and theoretical discursive turn that unites the methodological frameworks of Du Bois with those of Fanon. The leaders of Negritude merit a unique analysis with regards to their political engagements as well as their cultural ones. Thus, *The Negritude Movement* unveils a transnational Africana intellectual tradition that extends from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and to the United States. This tradition and its thinkers prove more relevant than ever considering ongoing political and social discourses of oppression.

Connor Pruss, *University of California, Los Angeles*

Kathryne A. Rhine. 2016. *The Unseen Things: Women, Secrecy, and HIV in Northern Nigeria*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 218 pp.

This scholarly anthropological contribution to the subject matter of HIV and gender relations in Northern Nigeria constitutes a useful addition to the earlier works on HIV/AIDS that make some useful pointers to religious communities and Northern Nigeria in particular. Prior to this particular study, John Iliffe's *The African AIDS Epidemic: A History* (2005) had broken new ground and given praise to religious communities since they harbored low rates of HIV infections. Similarly, Babalola's 2007 article, "Readiness for HIV testing among young people in northern Nigeria" in *AIDS and Behavior* (11.5), and Iliyasu et al.'s 2009 article "Prevalence and predictors of tuberculosis coinfection among HIV-seropositive patients" (*Journal of Epidemiology* 19.2) and 2011 article "Domestic violence among women living with HIV/AIDS in Kano" (*African Journal of Reproductive Health* 15.3) discuss themes that highlight rates of HIV infection and gender relations among others. Some emphases include the argument that a healthy person can be HIV-infected is only significant for women. Nigeria has the third highest population of people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Despite this, the knowledge of HIV/AIDS and uptake of voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) remain low especially in rural areas. Women comprise about half of the 33.4 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. In sub-Saharan Africa, where the epidemic is worst, they make up an estimated 57 percent of adults living with HIV/AIDS, and three quarters of young people living with HIV/AIDS on the continent are female.

Rhine's contribution therefore cannot be gainsaid. Based on an emic approach the author interviewed participants and experts on HIV in Northern Nigeria. A majority of her respondents were women who shared how they were infected with HIV, their fears and expectations for now and the foreseeable future, which were highlighted in a narrative fashion. This particular contribution is situated within the context of gender relations in a society that is vehemently confined within customary and religious dogma that is patriarchal and demonizes women at the least opportunity. She decided to explore the aspirations, dilemmas, and everyday lives of women participating in the world that HIV prevention and treatment campaigns have opened up to them. She considers the social relations that produce suffering and well-being among ordinary Nigerians. She duly argues that neither scholars nor public health professionals are

particularly concerned with women's efforts to provide bodily, emotional and social resources to others.

In five chapters, she discusses critical issues under well-crafted themes, namely: first loves, twice married, dilemmas of disclosure, intimate ethics, and hope. Based on anthropological scholarship the author examines marriage and the effect of the HIV virus on the ways intimate relationships are formed and fractured in Northern Nigeria. Secondly, she focuses on the effort of women to conceal and reveal their secrets and emphasizes secrecy's performative qualities. Finally, she relates these ethnical acts to the labour of care-giving which are practices at the core of the hopes women possess and the burdens they carry as they negotiate life with HIV in the era of antiretroviral therapies.

In the first chapter, "First Loves," Rhine concludes that the acts of concealment and exposure reflects women's exercise of agency and further implicated in an increasing risk of contracting HIV. In the second chapter, "Dilemmas And Disclosures," she pays attention to additional narratives of respondents and discusses among other things that the relative freedom of women to select and ignore men is a recent phenomenon (p. 55). This notwithstanding, she argues that while men engage in extra-marital relationships and women circulate through husbands, it eventually create the epidemiological conditions through which HIV is transmitted within marriage in northern Nigeria (p. 59). In the third chapter, Rhine emphasized how secrecy and indirect speeches were useful in helping both women and HIV counselors to achieve their objectives. When women were told their HIV status, Rhine argues, "Their private information will remain confidential" (p. 83) with a further reassurance that hospital policies prohibit them from sharing files without permission. This notwithstanding, Rhine projects the transitions in the social perceptions of women opening up or speaking about their HIV status especially those who know they did nothing wrong, for their infections came from their husbands. This however does not take away the quandary of lies: "HIV infected women are frequently the targets of lies" (p. 101). Significantly, the third chapter questions what is at stake in women's HIV disclosure in northern Nigeria.

In the fourth and fifth chapters, Rhine deals with two themes: intimate ethics and hope. She emphasizes the fact that some HIV positive women have survived to become the 'face' for the education and fight against HIV. Rhine argues that "the social and physical threats related to HIV's stigma, force women to take inventory of their moral and social resources... a positive diagnosis also brings to light their ethical sensibilities that is, the tacit thoughts, actions and statements that guide them in their efforts to live a good life" (p. 104). Rhine further opines though there are a lot of HIV support groups in northern Nigeria with Kano city alone hosting seven of such, here observation during the meetings suggests that even in the support groups women kept their status secret and even attribute such secrets to God. For example, she hints that "Muslims, they said, should not expose the secrets that God protects" (pp. 130-31). She reports that some of the women join these support groups to find HIV positive husbands and severally some physician introduced HIV spouses to each other. The contrast is that some HIV men took advantage of desperate HIV women who were in need of husbands.

This anthropological piece is a useful contribution to the research on HIV in Africa. The issues of gender relations and the need to further interrogate such social relations cannot be gainsaid in contemporary times. It is a pertinent scholarship to comprehend both in academia and in civil relations. When policy makers get hold of it, they should do the biddings of her nuggets and be stimulated to make useful social and public health policies toward this end.

Samuel Adu-Gyamfi, *Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology*

Keith Somerville. 2016. *Ivory: Power and Poaching in Africa*. London: C. Hurst & Co Publishers. 325 pp.

Human beings have always hunted different animals and harvested different plants for various reasons. One of the animals that has been overwhelmingly hunted by humans for both domestic consumption and commercial purposes is the elephant. Most prevalent research in this area largely blames recent surges in elephant killings on growing internal insurgencies and rising external demand and clamors for total ivory bans. Conversely, Keith Somerville's *Ivory: Power and Poaching in Africa* (2016) sets out to unveil the complex relationship between power and elephant poaching in Africa, mainly proposing a more holistic ivory control approach that includes regulation, sustainable use, and the inclusion of local communities in conservation initiatives. Divided into seven chapters, the book lays bare the intricacies, hypocrisies, and paradoxes surrounding the age-long hunting of elephants in Africa, stretching its coverage into an indeterminate past and up to the nearest present. Somerville states that "As with the history and political economy of the ivory trade itself, the genesis of this book is complex and does not have an easily identifiable motive or start date" (P. 1).

The introduction foregrounds different debates between opposing camps of conservationists and how different power dynamics influence the ivory trade and the recurring discourse that links insurgency and increased poaching, especially since 9/11. It also recognizes and clarifies nuances and reservations surrounding the term "poaching" among wildlife researchers. Somerville retains the term, but stresses that it has flexible meanings: "from evil and brutal killings of animals for gain to traditional practices rendered illegal by externally imposed law" (p. 7). Chapter one discusses the relationship between Africans and elephants prior to the arrival of Europeans. Early Africans killed elephants for meat and hides and also to save their crops, but later on ivory became one of the principal raw materials (alongside slaves, gold, crude oil, cocoa, etc.) that attracted the earliest Europeans to Africa, especially "traders, those dubbed explorers and then hunters and financiers of hunting and slaving expeditions" (p. 13). Early Europeans like the Portuguese brought weapons (e.g. guns and gunpowder) to the continent. This, coupled with the external demand for ivory outside the continent, led to increased hunting of African elephants, with traditional rulers and other powerful Africans playing the role of middlemen and "gatekeepers" in the ivory trade. Chapter two reveals how European colonialism in Africa led to large-scale killings of elephants mainly by white settler hunters "whom the colonizing powers wanted to attract as

another cost-effective way of reaping economic rewards from occupation" (p. 25). It was during this period that local African hunters were dispossessed of their lands and other natural resources, including the right to hunt elephants. Slave traders were also significantly involved in ivory trade as "slavery became bound up with ivory through the need to transport trade goods inland from the coast to purchase ivory, which then had to be carried back to the coast" (pp. 30-31). Consequently, elephant herds became scarce in many parts of the continent leading to "a constant search for new and more lucrative hunting grounds" (p. 37).

Chapter three discusses the criminalization of African hunters under colonial rule. In their efforts to fund colonial governments in Africa and to maximize profits from colonialism, European powers not only taxed the commerce in ivory but also resorted to either completely banning or largely restricting elephant hunting by local hunters. This led to the criminalization and demonization of African hunters, giving birth to the dichotomy of white hunter/black poacher. This brought about the exclusion of locals from decision-making concerning conservation and consequently formed the basis for their resistance to conservation laws and their usual complicity in illegal poaching, evident even today. As chapter four shows, conservation efforts were (and still remain) filled with corruption, crime, and conflict, not only in East Africa but elsewhere on the continent. At independence, African countries inherited conservation policies from colonial powers and continued to alienate locals from conservation decisions and practices. Most of these governments "largely stopped local communities from taking back ownership [of resources] they'd lost under colonialism" (p. 101). Armed conflicts and disorder in newly-independent nations further led to escalated killings of wildlife. Sophisticated weapons in the hands of rebels in eastern, central, and southern Africa have also brought untold damage on elephants. Central and southern Africa are discussed in chapter five with Angolan, Central African Republic, Sudanese and other armed conflicts shown to be "far more complex than just simple case[s] of elephants killed to fund war" (p. 135). Amidst the gloomy picture of dwindling elephant populations and conflicting statistics mainly produced by Western-funded conservationist NGOs, there are some glimmers of hope in Botswana in southern Africa and Gabon in central Africa where conservation seems to be more successful than elsewhere. Chapter six presents the sagas, debates, conflicts, battles, antagonisms, and arguments surrounding the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) formed in 1975. The demise of CITES was inherent from inception as it advocated "bans and shutting down the potential for community-based, sustainable-use approaches favored by many African states and local groups" (p. 181). As a result, the 1990 CITES ban on ivory trade would soon be challenged by some African countries like Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe shortly afterwards. Such moves against the ban from within later added to frequent armed conflicts and insurgencies on the continent and the recent growing Chinese demand for African ivory, among other factors, to explain the resurgent massacre of elephants in Africa since the mid-2000s, as discussed in chapter seven.

The principal strengths of this book, among others, include its wide-ranging coverage of the ivory trade, its poignant details and revelations surrounding the numerous, truncated, and one-sided reports and statistics produced by most wildlife researchers working on Africa as well as the pitiful exclusion/alienation of African local inhabitants from their resources and their portrayal as brutal poachers by the few highly-placed gatekeepers of this lucrative trade. The book is unbiased in its discussion and presentation of facts, figures, and motives. Besides its veracity and objectivity, it is carefully researched and written—an almost-typo-free book. It seems that its appropriate conclusion is rather found in its introduction because the very last sentence of the book apparently takes a stance contrary to its author's objectivity and distance from taking sides with the opposing camps involved in elephant/wildlife conservation. Its last sentence reads: "Demand reduction may help, but ultimately, aligning survival of elephants with workable, locally-acceptable forms of sustainable use is likely to be the **only** answer that combines conservation of the elephant population with the needs and interests of the human populations in range states" (p. 325). And the book's blurb/description seems to pick up from there, stating (misleadingly?) that for Somerville "regulation—not prohibition—of the ivory trade is **the best way** to stop uncontrolled poaching." The most compelling aspect of the book is its author's neutrality and objectivity. And this is rather captured in its introduction: "Readers will not find this a history of the elephant, or of ivory, or a defense of any one particular approach to the ivory trade and conservation" (p. 3). As Somerville notes, "There is no single dominant supply driver of illicit [elephant] hunting" (p. 317). And his book demonstrates this admirably, making it stand out as a remarkable, authoritative, indisputable and resourceful reference book on elephant and wildlife research in Africa.

Kenneth Toah Nsah, *University of St Andrews*

Samia I. Spencer (ed.). 2016. *Daughters of the Nile: Egyptian Women Changing Their World*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 402 pp.

This could also have been subtitled, "Egyptian women out in the world," since more than half of the subjects are not living in their native land. This tome is a kind of scrapbook or victory lap if you will of thirty-seven high-achieving Egyptian women in the business, public-service, and academic domains writing brief sketches of their lives. The proceeds of the book are being donated to charity and it doesn't claim to be a scientific study of Egyptian female achievers, so we can't judge it too harshly. Nevertheless, a reading of the book brings to light several common characteristics of these women and some noteworthy statistics. First of all, and getting out of the way a point which may disappoint some but will not surprise most: no social mobility emerges in these self-portraits; these were all daughters of the technocratic middle class, the elite or of the ionospheric sub-set of diplomatic families; no contributor fought her way up from humble beginnings. And the least of these women "merely" succeeded. However, many of the careers of the contributors do demonstrate gender pathbreaking; i.e. many of them achieved positions which are "firsts" on a global scale, not merely in Egypt. In

the domain of engineering, Tyseer Aboulnasr is currently Dean of Engineering at the University of Ottawa, Safaa Fouda rose to be a Deputy Director at Natural Resources Canada, and Awatef Hamed became the first woman to head a Department of Aerospace Engineering in the U.S. Others excelled in unexpected ways: Caroline Maher at one point was the global number three-ranked female Tae Kwan Do competitor and later entered the Egyptian parliament, Mona Risk pursued a career in chemistry but now pens bestselling romance novels, and Helene Moussa, who also did praiseworthy work with refugees, was at one point the Dean of the School of Social Work in Ethiopia. There is no sectarian point to be made, but the proportion of Christian contributors, about 25 percent, conforms to the estimated (but non-official) percentage of non-Muslims in the Egyptian population. Western education: nearly all the subjects attended a variety of western or Catholic elementary schools (nineteen per cent of them attended Notre Dame de Sion in Alexandria); a startling sixty-one percent attended or later taught at the American University in Cairo (AUC, one attended the American University in Beirut). We shouldn't read too much into the attendance at AUC, but it is interesting.

As might be expected in gender groundbreaking cases, many of these women launched themselves by conspicuous academic outperformance, as in: it's difficult to ignore or dismiss a young woman's achievements when she has been ranked number one in Physics at the country's premier university, etc. Even the most hardened male chauvinist is unable to argue away such a demonstration of excellence. Most of these women have taken such beginnings and proceeded on from there.

Nor do these women shy away from culture wars; indeed they are ready to enter the fray—though not speaking with a uniform voice. For example Azza Heikal, lamenting that the most famous book about Alexandria, Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*, was written by an English author (Durrell provokes the same complaint in Cyprus, about which he wrote *Bitter Lemons*) and panning the depiction of Egyptians in the work, penned her own *The Education of an Alexandrian* in 1996, in an attempt to redress the balance. But Mona Abeid, another contributor, speaks of Durrell positively. Cultural warriors don't always agree. Two of the contributors quote Constantine Cavafy, probably Alexandria's most famous 20th century poet—but who wrote in Greek. These women are well-read, aware of world cultural trends, and expect to play a role therein and in several cases have done so. Generally, the worldview of these women is inclusive, culture-spanning, and optimistic.

As I suggested, some of these individuals are not only high achievers but genuine non-conformists as well. When the Mubarak regime permitted the New Wafd party to be formed as a sop to democratic impulses, they forgot to tell Mona Ebeid (another AUC graduate) that the new party wasn't actually supposed to do anything. She entered parliament and debated, pushed legislation, and after the 2011 revolution participated in the Advisory Committee of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

When we view the 2014 photo of Ebeid with then-Minister of Defense El-Sisi, it is evident that the Field Marshal regards the parliamentarian with genuine affection and admiration. Readers will feel the same about Ebeid and most of these women.

Kenneth W. Meyer, *Western Washington University*

Anders Themner (ed.). *Warlord Democrats in Africa: Ex-Military Leaders and Electoral Politics*. London: Zed Books, 2017. 254 pp.

The editor of this book assembled chapters covering a very important political theme in post-Cold War Africa, roughly from the early 1990s to as recent as 2016. The contributors focus on sub-Saharan African countries that experienced civil wars, analyzing how the former warlords transitioned into civilian politicians under the democratic dispensation. Generally, there is an atmosphere of pessimism, about the prospects of democratization in the selected countries (DRC, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Liberia, Rwanda, Guinea Bissau, and South Sudan), particularly because of the practices of the former warlords, many of whom have continued to apply their wartime tactics even where ceasefires had been declared. Anders Themner describes such leaders as “Warlord Democrats” (WDs) or “Big Men,” who have not been fully committed to the democratization process, both as individuals and through the weak and dysfunctional political and state institutions which they oversee (pp. 1-2).

The book’s seven main chapters take the reader through various case studies of the so-called WDs, in each case the author(s) begins with a brief biographical account of the “Big Man” before discussing their involvement in a country’s civil war, and their conduct in the post-civil war era. Depending on circumstances, most of them tend to straddle between serving as “real democrats” or to fall back on their military/warlord background—characterized by aggressive or violent behaviors (pp. 3-5). The main theme that cuts across the main chapters is that the organization of democratic elections has not been enough to fully change the behavior of the WDs and their institutions. The chapter by Judith Verweijen focuses on the career Mbusa Nyamwisi of the DRC and leader of the RCD/K-ML. She highlights that while Mbusa seemingly transformed into a “democrat” and participated in the 2006 and 2011 general elections (and served as cabinet minister between 2003 and 2011), he returned to his civil war tactics of promoting violence and ethnic-based patronage when he was removed from his cabinet post by President Kabila, thereby threatening the fragile peace process (pp. 42-43 and 47-55).

The other chapters discuss the careers of Paul Kagame (Rwanda); Sekou Conneh and Prince Johnson (Liberia); Afonso Dhalkama (Mozambique); Joao Bernado Vieira (Guinea Bissau); Julius Bio and others (Sierra Leone); and Riek Machar (South Sudan). The chapter on Kagame, whose image is on the book’s cover page, is interesting to read, particularly because since the end of the Rwandan civil war and genocide (1994) he has emerged as a “darling” of the international community, due to his ability to stabilize the country and his promotion of the development agenda. On the ground, he has reportedly merely transformed the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) from a rebel

movement into a political party that the President (a Tutsi) uses to victimize political opponents (mostly Hutus)—many of whom have fled the country (pp. 72-74). Kagame is stated to be “presiding over a military government with civilians working under its authority” (p. 75). This is what could also be described as an “illiberal democracy” — where elections are rarely free and fair, and are often staged to rubber stamp the RPF’s continued dominance (pp. 82-84). In Mozambique, although Dhalkama has yet to win a presidential election through his party, RENAMO, he has on several occasions flouted the terms of the 1992 Peace Agreement, by resorting to violence whenever his demands are not addressed by the FRELIMO-led government (pp. 138-49).

This book has some shortfalls, most notably, the omission of the roles played by women during the civil wars and the transition to the democratic dispensation. Recent scholarship on Africa has shown that women also played pivotal roles, sometimes not necessarily as the main leaders, in such historical processes. Works by Iris Berger, *Women in Twentieth-Century Africa* (2016) and Jean Allman, *Women in African Colonial Histories* (2002), have emphasized the notion of not treating African women as “passive victims” of historical processes but rather as “active participants”. The authors also failed to properly explore how the “civic culture” of the sampled WDs and their societies has historically supported the flourishing of “Big Man” politics—which has hampered the democratization process in many countries, even where there was no civil war. These shortfalls aside, I would recommend this book to scholars and general readers interested in studying the dynamics of the state, institutions, and political leadership in post-Cold War Africa. Those with interest in evaluating Africa’s so-called “Second Wave of Democratization” will also find this book captivating.

Paul Chiudza Banda, *West Virginia University*

Ambassador Omar Alieu Touray. 2016. *The African Union The First Ten Years*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Rowman & Littlefield. 241 pp.

The trajectory of Africa’s economic and political development, continentally, since the independence decade of the 1950’s, is vividly portrayed by the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its evolution into the African Union (AU). Whilst the OAU was seen as an embodiment of Africa’s trials and tribulations after colonialism, the African Union is widely perceived as the economic progression from Nkrumah’s slogan: “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto you.” This transition from political preoccupations, such as independence, imperialism, and neocolonialism, was in reality hoisted upon Africa by global events of cooperation and integration (principal among which was the European Union of 1993) as well as the experience of the so-called “lost decade” of the 1980’s. Touray’s book stands out for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it was written by someone who is both an insider and outsider. As an insider, he served for about six years as The Gambia’s Permanent Representative to the Union and Ambassador to Ethiopia, host country of the OAU and the AU. Later, as Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, he served in the Executive

Council. As an outsider, he published this book seven years after leaving. Secondly, the author was able to employ seemingly contradictory schools of sociopolitical thought and harmonize them into one approach (“fusionism”) in order to understand the motivations for and the process and outcomes of the Union. Thirdly, he was able to use his first-hand experience for the benefit of the reader.

Chapter 1 outlines the arguments of the various schools and combines their common postulations into a fusionist theory. It proceeds to apply this to the experience of the AU in its first ten years of existence. Chapter 2 looks at Africa at the turn of the 21st century, cataloging the usual negative picture of a continent in economic, political and social crisis. The statistics are chilling: Africa accounted for 12.5 percent of the world’s population but produced only 3.7 percent of global GDP; the share of FDI dropped to 5 percent of GDP; external debt accounted for 80 percent of GDP; 70 percent of the world’s HIV/AIDS cases; 80 percent of countries in the world with low human development; and a long list of violent conflicts. Chapter 3 looks at the genesis of the AU from the adoption of the Sirte Declaration in 1999 to the appointment of Zuma in 2012. Chapter 4 goes back to decolonization and the challenges faced by the OAU. It points out a fact that many observers ignore; that the OAU’s shortcomings were reflections of those of its member states. This chapter should have been the second in the book. Chapter 5 ploughs through the historic development blueprints of Africa from the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) to the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) (2002). Chapter 6 assesses the human development agenda of the AU and observes that: “It was often much easier for African Union officials to report on the legal instruments that have been signed and ratified, or the workshops and conferences that had been convened than to demonstrate the impact that these activities had at the ground level” (pp. 103-104). The chapter concludes that at the ground level the “grim figures” continued in 2010, with half of the continent’s 800 million people suffering from poverty, disease and lack of access to basic services. Although it recognizes “the impressive advances that some countries made” (p. 103), such successes were limited to “a handful of cases” (p. 103). Chapter 7 examines the theory and practice of collective security and shows a disjuncture between the Union’s ambition and capacity. Chapter 8 catalogues human rights and governance norms and ends with a “balance sheet” which shows that the Union’s progress in governance remained modest and fragile. Chapter 9 presents the policy organs of the Union and makes a comparative analysis with the European Union (EU). Chapter 10 zeroes in on the “voice of the people: the African parliament,” which faced “considerable challenges, but also held considerable prospects” (p. 182). Chapter 11 focuses on the “continental bureaucracy: the commission” and its balance sheet reveals internal managerial difficulties and poor relations with the Permanent Representatives’ Council (PRC). Chapter 12 concludes.

I recommend this book to all those interested in Africa’s international relations, politics and development.

Although more attention should have been paid to the continent's progress from 2000-2010, compared to the earlier record, the book is well researched, well written, and easy to read.

Karamo NM Sonko, *Heeno International*

Sadia Zulfiqar. 2016. *African Women Writers and the Politics of Gender*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 223 pp.

Sadia Zulfiqar's *African Women Writers and the Politics of Gender* offers a deep insight into the marginalized status of African women, their resistance to patriarchal structures in their communities, and their opposition to Eurocentric forms of feminism. Zulfiqar navigates difficult terrains to proffer solutions to the lack of an adequate agency for African women. She supports new platforms created by new female African writers, and she adequately historicizes the gender battle in the African literary canon. She does so, so impeccably; not from a position of inferiority, but from a high pedestal by reclaiming and reconstructing the identity of African women through the narration of Leila Aboulela, Mariama Ba, Buchi Emecheta, Chimamanda Adichie, and Tsitsi Dangarembga. She attempts to decenter male hegemony in the African literary sphere by affirming that African women are creators of African oral literature rather than perpetuators of it.

In the first part of her book, she explores the theme of abandonment in Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* and *Scarlet*. She navigates the history of women's oppression in Senegalese society; this oppression manifests itself through the limitation of feminine rights backed by strong patriarchal, religious, and cultural doctrines. She suggests that both Ba and Buchi Emecheta advocate for the need to have men and women as allies. The lack of a positive male character and a reliable female ally in their narrations, she suggests, show that there is a lot of hills to climb when it comes to the attainment gender equality and an equitable justice system for men and women in many African societies. She cites the oppression of married women by their mother in laws in Ba's *So Long a Letter*. The absence of sufficient male and female allies is also evident in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and Jewell* and Ramonu Sanusi's *Le Bistouri des Larmes*. This allyship is supported by Motherism and Womanism, variants of Western Feminism.

The second and third sections of Zulfiqar's book explores Emecheta's interrogation of the treatment of women by tribal authorities and the notion of motherhood. She notes how Emecheta asserts that motherhood should not be what defines African women; an opinion that has been suppressed by African male scholars who have infiltrated and hijacked the African feminist sphere by promoting an idealized and suffering mother as a symbol of true womanhood. She also explores how Adichie and Emecheta demystify the travails that women go through during wars caused by men in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Destination Biafra*, which are remarkably different from the Biafra war narrations of the likes of Chinua Achebe and Ken Saro-Wiwa whose Biafra war narrations are more egocentric and tribal, not paying attention to how the actions of men have perpetuated the suffering of women.

The fourth chapter explores the representation of Islam in Leila Aboulela's fiction, the western media's representation of Muslims as terrorists. Zulfiqar's navigation of the terrain of islamophobia is problematic because of her religion. She becomes sentimental and illogical by quoting from the Quran. This is the only taint to a well-researched book, rich in its scholarly engagement in the African literary sphere both in sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb.

In conclusion, Zulfiqar gives a proper appraisal of African women's writing by engaging in the challenges they face in exerting agency. She adequately explores how colonialism, polygamy, and islamophobia remain limiting factors in the process of the reclamation of identity by African women. She also evaluates how western patriarchy has been mixed with African patriarchy to perpetuate male hegemony in the African literary and social sphere. She proffers solutions and strategies to reclaim women's positions in the African literary field by creating new platforms. This book is significant because it reinforces the identity of African women writers; it serves as an authentic document worthy of consultation in the continued research on various aspects of gender in Africa, especially in the field of resistance of colonial power and the reinforcement of the power of women. It is also worthy of consultation because it highlights the quintessential role of African female writers in their communities despite their inability to wield much force in the African literary canon. It repositions African women as the founders of African literature, and as its most important voice; not out of sheer conceit or a tumultuous compendium, but out of class, superiority, and purpose.

Ademolawa Michael Adedipe, *University of Saskatchewan*