

concisely synthesized in the conclusion. It offers an historical account of Japan's interaction with SSA in which the origins of the dichotomy above are traced back to the inter-war period. It also focuses on the evolution of Japan's trading relations with South Africa and how they changed with the institution of apartheid, as well as on the issue of resource dependency. Furthermore, it investigates Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nigeria, which is found to have contracted from a low level and to have been market- rather than resource-oriented, leading Tukumbi to observe that "the popular idea that Japan was interested primarily in the raw materials in Africa was grossly exaggerated" (p. 133). The central concern is to analyse the degree to which Japan's votes on the apartheid issue in the United Nations General Assembly were influenced by questions pertaining to its economic interests. The author finds Japan sitting on the fence, with a refusal to countenance either outright sanctions against South Africa or violent means to bring down apartheid, permitting trade between the two countries to continue, albeit on a lesser scale. The book analyses the pattern of Japan's aid disbursements to SSA and why, especially during the period 1975-89, Tanzania received such a large share of them. In this context it is argued that Tanzania's favoured status was not directly related to Japan's economic interests in the country. Rather, in view of Japan's weak stance on apartheid, the consequent low popularity among the Afro-Asian group of states and desire to maintain economic ties with South Africa, "it became diplomatically essential, if not strategically crucial, for Japan to cultivate good relations with the most politically significant OAU [Organization of African Unity] member state," namely Tanzania under Julius Nyerere.

All in all, Tukumbi's central argument, that the various dimensions of Japan's diplomatic and economic relations with SSA were driven by economic security considerations, is convincing. Measured against this pragmatic yardstick, Japan's SSA strategy is viewed as successful as well as indicative of an often ignored dynamism in the country's foreign policy. At the same time, the hypocritical dimension of Japan's relationship with the region is properly exposed. Having read Tukumbi's book, the reader will feel satisfyingly enlightened about Japan's relations with sub-Saharan Africa.

Ilunga Tchoma Kitenge, *Institut de Recherche et d'Enseignement en Relations Internationales et Européennes (IRERIE)*

Kimani Njogu and John Middleton (editors). *Media and Identity in Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. xvii, 333 pp.

Since the last quarter of the twentieth century studies on media in Africa have proliferated, furnishing the reading public with books and journal articles on the subject. But the media-landscape in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, is almost always undergoing rapid change. Oftentimes the changes that do occur are little anticipated. The mobile phone craze that has changed the entire globe has changed Africa, and on a more profound scale than any prescient theorist or business mogul would have imagined or conceived at the turn of the century. The use of mobile phones in Africa has significantly dwarfed that of landlines. But questions such as

how and why mobile phones were used as incitement tools in the 2007 post election violence in Kenya are begging for answers. It is therefore heart-warming to encounter any new studies that shed light on the fluid media situation in Africa.

Kimani Njogu and John Middleton's *Media and Identity in Africa* arouses tremendous interest because of its apparent novelty. And yet the lesson we draw is that no text will be new enough for media. The rapidity of change makes that impossible. It is therefore not surprising that the volume does not and could not keep abreast with the impact new-look telephony in Africa, for example.

Media and Identity in Africa is a constellation of diverse contributions on the mutually dependant relationship between media and identity in the Africa. The twenty-four chapters on media and the construction of identity in Africa emanated from papers presented at a conference held at Nairobi in 2004. The essays are divided into three main parts, with Part I dealing with theorizing media, community, and identity in broad terms; Part II, focusing on Africa's encounter with global media such as the internet, books, audiovisual media such as videos and video films, etc; and Part III tending to be more country specific in its treatment of global media. The divisions of the essays into parts seem to be somewhat inexplicable given the general overlap between the parts, although the fact that all contributions address the major theme of media and identity exonerates the editors from charges of arbitrariness and sloppiness.

The essays articulate insights into how media influences democratization and how democratization in term impinges on the media and the profound significance of this interplay between media and democracy on post-independence Africa. In a larger sense, the volume seems to suggest, and rightly so, that media forms are an integral part of the whole vexed and vexing question of Africa's being and becoming. The contributors highlight the use of media, mass and small scale, for information dissemination, propaganda, entertainment, social networking, and any number of at once multiple and contradictory purposes. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's contribution, "The Media in Social Development in Contemporary Africa," is particularly telling in this regard. Zeleza draws attention to both the constructive and destructive impact of media, and like several other contributors in the volume, cites the incitement role that radio played in the 1994 Rwandan genocide as a classic example of destructiveness of media.

The contributions are remarkable in their depth and breadth as they attempt to explain the media situation in Africa and what it means for the concept of identity and identity formation. But what is also remarkable is the broad range of audiences that the text aims to address given the varying degrees of readability and accessibility of the various chapters in the book. On the one hand, for example, there are pieces that are highly rigorous in their analyses and sophisticated in their theorizations while maintaining considerable readability such as Alamin Mazrui's "Language and Media in Africa: Between the Old Empire and the New" and John Kiarie Wa' Njogu's "Representation of Africa in the Western Media: Challenges and Opportunities." On the other hand, there are pieces poised to be beyond the grasp of the non-academic reader, notably V.Y. Mudimbe's "Epilogue: in the Name of Similitude," which is characteristically obscurantist in style and thrust. This is in fact not a critique of *Media and Identity in Africa* as such, but a commendation in that the volume has almost everything for

everyone because of the range of variety in the contributors' disciplinary approach and density of style and language. For a book aimed at meeting the needs of academic and general audiences, *Media in Africa* is an invaluable acquisition.

Ken Walibora Waliaula, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Victor Oguejiofor Okafor (editor). *Nigeria's Stumbling Democracy and its Implications for Africa's Democratic Movement.* Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008. xvi, 190 pp.

In light of the 2011 elections in Nigeria, this is a timely publication. The book examines the flawed Nigerian 2007 elections, the country's recent democratic environment and consolidation, and the progress of democratization on the continent. From this work, students of Nigerian politics will acquire a nuanced understanding of the endemic challenges that Nigeria faces in preparing for the upcoming presidential elections.

The edited volume was compiled, edited, and introduced by Victor Oguejiofor Okafor, a professor of African American Studies at Eastern Michigan University. Contributors include expert analysts and scholars of Nigerian politics based in Nigeria and the United States from the fields of political science, history, and international relations. The authors rely on various sources including online news articles, entries in scholarly journals, interviews, and independent and working papers. Few books are referenced. Since the majority of sources are by Nigerian authors, the book does not reflect the wide range of scholarship on this topic; perhaps this exclusivity limits the publication's scope.

Although the chapters in this work are not grouped into sections, the introduction briefly outlines the topics covered. The contributions can be divided into three thematic categories: Nigeria's 2007 elections, the democratic space/process in the country, and Nigeria's democracy in relation to democratization in Africa. According to Okafor, most authors in this compendium of essays argue that the real dilemma in Nigeria is the lack of commitment to democratic values and institutionalized rule of law by the political elite and not the feasibility of representative democracy. The chapters on the 2007 elections and the country's democratic space best validate his stated goal.

Chapters three, five, and six focus on the 2007 elections. In "Nigeria's Disputed Elections...", Okafor appropriately cites news articles to bring a detailed account of the 2007 elections. He offers an in-depth rundown of the political actors and institutions that contributed to the presidential and gubernatorial electoral debacle. In particular, he criticizes Olusegun Obasanjo, the incumbent president, for his unabashed manipulation of the electoral process.

Building on Okafor's solid foundation, Godwin Onu and Makodi Biereenu-Nnabugwu examine the electoral mishap on the sub-national level in "Dialectics of Patronage Politics..." Their essay provides a fascinating depiction of godfatherism, the patron politics that paralyze Nigeria's political institutions and subvert the democratic process. The coauthors convincingly argue that godfatherism has become institutionalized in Anambra state governance. However, in their eye-opening account of godfatherism and its tumultuous effects on state politics, the authors failed to elucidate a few key points. Nevertheless, readers will appreciate their analysis

of the underlying causes for godfatherism and the policy recommendations to mitigate its hold on Nigeria's political apparatus. Finally, in chapter six Onu reaffirms Okafor's introductory thesis. Yet perhaps he asserts the obvious: Nigeria's electoral irregularities will not be overcome with the introduction of electronic voting alone.

The second proposed category comprised of chapters two, four, seven, and ten, address the nature and consolidation of the democratic progress in Nigeria. "An Overview..." by Gloria Emeagwali falls short of a much needed, substantive examination of Nigeria's political history. Emeagwali does provide an informative biography of the presidential victor, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, as well as an optimistic analysis of his political record. In "Democracy for Sale..." Nkolika Ebele Obianyo offers a persuasive argument: Nigeria's market-oriented economic ideologies and policies have progressively shrunken the country's democratic space. Privatization policies decrease the size of the Nigerian state by selling state resources to elites in the private sector, who in turn finance or "buy" elections for select candidates. As witnessed in the 2007 elections, the democratic preferences of the public take the backseat to this market exchange. Obianyo's essay complements the chapter on godfatherism very nicely, unifying the two categories. Without financial assistance from godfathers, poor candidates could not finance their campaigns or secure party nominations in the last election. Abayomi Ferreira's "The Role of Geographical Zoning..." provides a historical analysis of the federal character principle, which is the distribution of federal, state, and local level resources on the basis of geographic origins in Nigeria. Ferreira reviews the constitutional provisions for the federal character principle and outlines eight consequences of geographic zoning policies on the quality of Nigeria's democracy. However, a few of his observations are not convincing. One could contest that factors other than zoning are the true cause of these observed problems.

Rita Kiki Edozie in chapter ten argues that the 2007 elections reflect the economic and political problems caused by Nigeria's recent development agenda. She compares Nigeria with South Africa and Kenya. Despite, the comparative element of Edozie's piece, Edozie's and Obianyo's essays both discuss the failings of market-orientated democracy. Although, Edozie poses compelling questions about the democratic future of each country, it's a pity that her work does not include more scholarly sources.

Chapters eight, nine, and eleven focus on the democratization process in Africa. However, the pieces are underdeveloped and lead to the book's overall uneven quality. Sylvester Odion-Akhaine and Adeyinka O. Banwo both provide appealing but truncated essays; their works leave the reader wanting a more substantive analysis. The concluding chapter by Sule Bello possesses similar shortcomings.

This compendium of essays will be of interest to both the novice and keen follower of Nigerian politics. The publication is noteworthy for its detailed account and analysis of the 2007 elections. However, it falls short of a rigorous examination of Nigeria's elections on the democratization process in Africa. Perhaps, scholars seeking an in-depth portrayal of Nigeria's faulty general elections will appreciate the book's contribution to the topic as well.

Cynthia C. Ugwuibe, *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)*

Augustine S. O. Okwu. *Igbo Culture and the Christian Missions 1857-1957: Conversion in Theory and Practice*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2010. xi, 329 pp.

Augustine Okwu's *Igbo Culture and the Christian Missions* discusses the role of Christian missions in the southern region of Nigeria, also known as the Igboland from 1857 until the end of the colonial period. Focusing on two main missionary bodies, the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) and the Christian Missionary Society (CMS), the book explores the different missionary methods and strategies and Igbo response. The book's underlying goal is to explain that Christian missionaries sought to completely wipe out the traditions of the Igbo people, resulting in the unsuccessful conversion of the Igbo to Christianity. In discussing the overall Christianization efforts, Okwu explains that the missionaries had a non-transformative influence and that this could be the result of a variety of factors such as the abiding relevance of the indigenous culture, ineffective evangelistic strategies, poor missionary personnel, absence of true missionary spirit, and the lack of understanding of the indigenous culture (p. 306).

Chapters one through three discuss the history of the Igbo, their role in the transatlantic economy, and the early Europeans reaching Igboland, of which the Christian missionaries are the main focus. The fourth through tenth chapters examine in detail the role of missionaries among the Igbo. From the arrival of the first Christian missionaries in 1857 to the end of the foreign Christian missionary domination in 1957, Okwu explains that the sole purpose and the testament of the Igbo political independent existence was the preservation of the people's way of living, customs, and culture; and these were the sole targets of the missionaries and their agents. The Igbos believed that the missionaries tried to eradicate all their beliefs without giving thought to traditional practices that were innocuous to Christianity. For example, the social and religious system that made each head of the family the keeper of the family idols (p. 198) was one of the practices obnoxious to the Roman Catholic faith. Nonetheless, Okwu shows the similarity between the symbol and sculptures of the Virgin Mary and a misunderstanding of Igbo culture on the missionaries' part.

Both the CMS and the RCM saw schools as the means for evangelization, and the Igbo used this resource for their benefit as they were passionate about schooling (including the author himself) for beneficial reasons. The local communities thought that if they sent their children to school it would prepare them for the emerging colonial economy (p. 157). The increase of pupils in the schools was misconstrued by the missionaries as a sign of a departure from the primitive to the civilized way of life. In conclusion, he explains that instead of the Christian missionaries trying to completely eradicate the Igbo traditions, they should have tried to Christianize the African culture.

Okwu used a large number of primary sources including archival materials in Europe, church mission journals, memoirs and biographies of church workers, missionary records, papal encyclicals, and government records in the United Kingdom. He also includes oral traditions, secondary sources, and his own life experience as both a Christian convert and a missionary co-partner in the evangelization enterprise. However, Okwu does not show the type of oral traditions or interviews conducted by him personally. The map (p. xi) does not give a clear picture the Igbo country as fonts are tiny and illegible. For generalized audiences not familiar with the Nigeria, it is difficult to envision the map of Igboland without the bigger

picture of Nigeria as a whole. The author does not give a reason for the time period he chooses to focus on. Since it covers a century, it would have been easier to follow coherently if the chapters were broken into time periods.

In conclusion, *Igbo Culture and the Christian Mission* is a valuable contribution not only to Nigerian history and African history at large, but also to the popular discourse on history of the role of Christianity in Africa. The book is dense and contains all information pertaining to the author's main theme. He also does not fail to show the gender relations at play during the period. It is appropriate for both specific and generalized audiences interested in understanding the role of culture and the overall Christianization efforts in Africa. The book is a required reading for understanding the different traditional practices of the Igbos, the struggle to preserve their culture and customs, and the role and effect of colonialism on the Igbos.

Adaeze Nnamani, *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)*

David Peimer (editor). *Armed Response: Plays from South Africa*. New York: Seagull Books, 2009. xviii, 216 pp.

Editor and playwright David Peimer's selections in *Armed Response: Plays from South Africa* offer an insightful look at theatre in post-apartheid South Africa. Peimer's introduction situates apartheid in his discussion of the different styles and techniques used in resistance and reconciliation theatre. This approach provides new readers of South African drama with valuable examples of both apartheid and post-apartheid theatre productions. Specifically, Peimer focuses on *Woza Albert!* and *The Island*, canonical apartheid-era works, to explain the relationship between older anti-apartheid productions and the anthology's newer selections. Peimer's introduction immerses his readership in township culture, identifying the fundamental styles and approaches that define township theatre.

Relativity: Township Stories (premiered 2005) by Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom and Presley Chweneyagae explores physical violence, both police and domestic, in a township. Set in a community terrorized by a serial killer, dubbed the G-string Strangler, it revolves around a police investigation into the latest victim's life prior to her death. The inquest reveals a complex history of domestic violence that outlines problems of police corruption and sexual abuse in South Africa. The play also looks at the way destitution creates an economy of theft in the townships, showing the relationship between violence and poverty.

Bush Tale (premiered 2006) by Martin Koboekae develops from the accidental meeting between a black laborer, Jan, and a white madam, Marietta, in a remote forest. Marietta comes across Jan fortuitously as she escapes from a family friend on his way to vacation with her at the Beau Brummel Nudist Colony. Because of the small cast and single setting, the play has an easy, playful flow that uses humor to subtly address the political and social problems faced by the characters. Racial division is the prominent issue throughout the performance, but it also highlights the differences between male and female identities in South Africa, and the divides between rural/urban and private/public spaces. This play has a fun and witty style, relying on jokes and racial tension to drive the performance. Koboekae's work does an excellent job

underscoring the social divides in South Africa, suggesting education can help resolve present-day racism.

Xoli Norman's *Hallelujah!* (premiered 2002) depicts one poet's attempt to end violence among the black population in South Africa. The play mixes theatre, poetry, and township jazz to showcase the vibrant township culture for its audiences. Consistent with most of the anthology's other plays, murder and violent theft are at the heart of the performance. Bonga, a poet who has just risen to popularity, uses his fame to condemn the violent rape and murder of his highly religious Seventh Day Adventist neighbors, leading to an explosive and shocking climax.

Reach (premiered 2007) by Lara Foot Newton examines the connection between an elderly English woman and a former servant's black grandson. Set in the rural countryside around Port Alfred, this play looks at South African expectations surrounding the 2010 World Cup. Marion, living alone in a cottage, is frequently and mysteriously visited by Solomon. At first Marion is suspicious of Solomon, but once it becomes clear he is unemployed and lonely Marion accepts him into her quiet life. The play explores race, identity politics, loss, grief, and the divide between rural and urban spaces. The play foregrounds the divergent views between generations in South Africa, positing the World Cup as a potential solution to problems with racism, poverty, and violence for young and old.

The final play, *Armed Response* (premiered 2006) by David Peimer and Martina Griller, contrasts a German tourist's view of violence in South Africa with the public sentiment of her neighbors and friends. The play focuses on organized crime and private security in South Africa, highlighting the problems Anna faces when she decides not to employ private security to protect her house. Vusi, a spokesman from Armed Response, does everything he can to coerce her into signing with the security firm. When Anna's refusal to sign angers Vusi's colleagues and boss, the tension escalates as her life is placed in danger. Anna is not sure who to trust, the management from Armed Response, the police, or Vusi.

This anthology provides a strong foundation for the study of contemporary South African theatre. The selection of plays encapsulates many examples of township culture, such as jazz and poetry, central to the plays in performance. In doing so, the anthology presents an array of different perspectives on violence, identity politics, and theft—exploring each in relation to post-apartheid politics. This is an excellent collection for someone teaching political theatre or introducing new audiences to contemporary South African theatre; its manageable size and concise translations make the anthology accessible to a wide ranging audience. I would highly recommend this text to anyone looking for the newest works of township theatre or anyone studying political or African drama.

J. Coplen Rose, *Wilfrid Laurier University*

Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized: The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880-1960*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010. xiii, 342 pp.

One knows the Kuba well from Professor Vansina's numerous previous historical and anthropological studies of this "kingdom" in the southwestern part of what is now the

Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as from its celebrated standing among the paragons of African art exhibited in museums the world over. Or so one thought. But now we learn about the colonial experience leading up to the situation in which Professor Vansina found himself during his research there in the last years of the Belgian Congo. It is a revealing reconstruction of the realities of the times, from the contacts of the Kuba with Angolan traders in the late nineteenth century, documented in Portuguese records, through the turn-of-the-century reports of self-styled “explorers,” the administrative records and humanitarian exposés of the Leopoldian Congo Independent State, missionary, administrative, and company records of the Belgian period, down to Vansina’s personal research notes, including the contributions of the assistants he employed. To set one’s research in its own historical context, as this book implicitly does, is a courageous—and, one suspects, culminating—statement of intellectual honesty.

The format of the book is straightforward: it is for teaching as much as for scholarly audiences, and so the language is not technical, the apparatus is limited, and the narrative is filled out with what textbook publishers call “sidebars”: short, often very personal, vignettes and documents bringing the arguments to life and offering instructors opportunities to grill historical innocents on the logic that links primary sources to integrated historical arguments.

The book’s title conveys the concept: rather than the often-theoretically driven discussions of abstractions like “colonialism,” or sensationalist condemnations of the well-known cruelties that overwhelmed parts of this region during the colonial period, it is a record of the Kuba experiences (*sic*—my extension of the title’s misleadingly singular “experience”) of encountering and handling Angolan traders, military columns, missionaries of Protestant and Catholic persuasions, their schools, road and railway construction companies, administrative officers, immigrant Luba from the east, tourists and collectors of famed Kuba art, and—finally—a skilled ethnographer and historian. The first half of the book lays out the arrivals of all of these outsiders, the shocks of the diseases and violence they brought, particularly early on, and the pressures of forced cultivation and construction labor that followed, though without melodrama. The Kuba kings, almost uniquely in the Belgian Congo, were accorded a degree of local authority (Vansina calls this relative autonomy “indirect rule”), and they took advantage of it to keep most of the outsiders on the fringes of their domains and to preserve a legitimating presence among the villagers. But the resulting cultural coherence and continuity, for which the Kuba became famed, came at the price of supporting two rulers, the local regime and the Belgians. This sense of the ironies of all history pervades Vansina’s balanced account of “being colonized.”

With the colonial presence thus established, the latter half of the book develops the Kuba experiences of it. “Village Life” in the Kuba kingdom suffered impoverishment similar to that of most of rural Congo, detailed in the concrete terms promised by the title’s emphasis on day-to-day experiences. Administrative demands for the construction of infrastructure, plantation labor (palm oil in this region), a particularly hated system of “expert”-directed cultivation of food crops that had the effect of reducing the nutritional value of what people ate, relocations of residences, all eroded Kuba ways of working together in age-sets and left the generation of the 1950s in circumstances markedly less comfortable than those of their grandparents. Kuba life became more contentious under the relentless pressures. “In Pursuit of Harmony” highlights

the principal Kuba responses to the growing dissolution of their communities and their sense of lost abilities to preserve the proud heritages of their past. But the irony was that the Kuba did not blame the outsiders, who seem to have been tolerated as a bothersome sideshow. They might have hated intrusive agronomists, but they did not abstract “the problem” as a system. Rather they took responsibility for their own sufferings and sought to draw together through restorative cults of a sort that had brought the Kuba through hard times since long before the twentieth century. Over time, local charms blended gradually into local versions of missionary Christianity, in which the Kuba had no difficulty separating numerous elements of spirit familiar from their own cosmology from the irrelevancies of dress or other modern behavior of the European Christians. A thoughtful conclusion emphasizes the multiplicity of differing experiences of Kuba, behind the singularity of the book’s title, emphasizing the costs of preserving the illusion of “tradition” in an isolated royal court to the many villagers in the region defined as a “kingdom,” as well as the more familiar burdens of “being colonized.” The book is as much about the Kuba managing to be themselves as it is about being colonized.

For this reviewer, the most far-reaching implication of Vansina’s emphasis on “experiences,” in all their multiplicity and contradictions, is its demonstration of the autonomy and dignity with which the Kuba peoples bore up under the intrusions of the traders, companies, scientists and technicians, police, and educators, all intent on trying to fix lives that the Kuba did not regard as broken. In epistemological terms, this alternative experience of “being colonized” begins to free African studies from its suffocating subjugation to social-science theorizing that inherently highlights the projects of the colonizers and limits the African actors depicted in terms so selective that they appear to have no opportunity other than to “resist.” Somehow, the politics of nationalism notwithstanding, local communities throughout the continent got on with their lives, as did the Kuba. If African historiography continues to develop toward understanding modernity as people in Africa experience it, rather than as it is often theorized, this careful reconstruction of the diversity and ironies of “being colonized” will join Professor Vansina’s shelf of previous contributions as a paradigm in the field.

Joseph C. Miller, *University of Virginia*

Kerry Ward. *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 340pp.

In the early modern period, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) developed into an “empire” of its own and enjoyed tremendous exclusive prerogatives such as imposing laws, establishing forts, factories, and settlements, exercising trade monopolies, signing treaties, waging conflicts with foreign nations, and inflicting capital punishment under its own jurisdiction in the Indian Ocean region. In the years between 1620 and 1799, the company empire, a colossal enterprise by all standards, established a web of territorial, transport, military, legal, cultural and exchange networks between South Africa and Java (Indonesia).

On the basis of extensive VOC archives and using postcolonial critiques, Kerry Ward shows how these imperial networks mixed, overlapped and intersected geographically and chronologically into a large and complex web; examines the diverse facets, peculiarities,

strengths and instabilities of imperial power; and argues that the networks' sovereignty was indeed effective and enduring, but also fragile and partial. Imperial networks are formed, empowered, broken, reconnected, and ultimately disintegrated.

Networks of Empire is about one of these VOC networks: that of free and forced migration, which places people into categories of slaves, convicts, and political prisoners and intersects with categories of bondage and with other networks made of the slave trade, penal transportation, and political exile. The VOC network of forced migration is based on the extension of Dutch sovereignty, which made up an imperial domain in which the company could impose its laws, run its businesses and make profits. Forced migration was legitimate, and it was the United Provinces that granted that legitimacy to the Dutch East India Company. The VOC put forward its proper legal system to run its imperial networks and impose an imperial order, but in the process of encountering other peoples and subjecting them to that system and order, Company officials had to negotiate cross-cultural concepts of legality and the rule of law to justify their claim to colonial rule.

Ward's book is interesting insofar as it examines the complexities of historical reality and the experiences lived by individuals within these networks and more generally empires. It is full of the lives of ordinary people and is fundamentally concerned with what these people did, thought in relation to, and as part of, the VOC Empire. The book is concerned above all with the peopling of the empire, which did not only involve the one million people who were transported from the United Provinces, but more significantly, the many more free and enslaved indigenous peoples, who were crucial for the Company's maintenance of its imperial networks and nodes.

The ever-growing scale of the Dutch East India Company over the two centuries of its existence was such that different internal layers of sovereignty appeared and were strongly characterised by tensions between the Company's concern with strict discipline to ensure the running of its business and the people (traders, sailors, etc) keen on promoting their own interests. This was one of the many challenges that VOC faced. Desertion, illness, crime, prostitution, piracy, and the diverse forms of illegal behavior, which were responses to the Company's building its empire on the blood, sweat, and tears of these people, were further challenges to the Company. Over time, they destabilized it.

Out of the network of free and forced migration, an Islamic network, according to Ward, grew. It was a network of pivotal importance since it was central to the Company's policy of exile, which was used whenever the political interests of the Company were at stake. People were exiled if they threatened the Company's ideology of social and political hierarchy. This Islamic node reveals both the strengths and limitations of the Company. If people could be physically removed from one colony or settlement to another, their ideas, beliefs, authority and charisma remained, and therefore challenged the Company's strict social hierarchies in its empire. Exile as a tool was not always successful indeed. The sites of sale, exile, and banishment shifted into grounds for conversion and the learning of Islamic laws and culture. The influence of religious scholar-exiles in the spread of Islam at the Cape of Good Hope extended to Java in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Sheik Yussef was one of the Islamic scholar-exiles whose religious influence shook up the Company's authority and its imperial networks. Sheik Yussef and many like him transmitted and transformed Islam practices all over the

region. Today, Sheik Yussef is still revered as a national hero in both South Africa and Indonesia.

Networks of Empire offers a different perspective on the Dutch colonial past. By focusing on the history of forced migration, it does justice to imperial networks that the historiography of Dutch East India Company overlooked. This socio-cultural history provides a new interpretation of the historical narrative of the nations of South Africa and Indonesia by focusing on their shared colonial past, and therefore their common history, a history of mutual encounter.

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