BOOK REVIEWS

Nwando Achebe and Claire Robertson (eds.). 2019. *Holding the World Together: African Women in Changing Perspective.* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press. 384 pp.

Apart from the introduction which sets the intellectual frame for the project, this volume is divided into four parts. The first part—which is made up of two chapters—addresses matters relating to African women's representations and/or misrepresentations. The first chapter by Elizabeth M. Perego provides interesting insights into how modern women authors of African extraction characterize/depict women using the historical-analytical tool. To explain the notable patterns in the ways that African women are depicted, Perego analyizes the works of four gifted African novelists. Chapter two by Cajetan Iheka gives a vivid cinematic representation of the role of African women. According to this author, while the "depictions of Africans in colonial cinema retained the trope of the abnormal or savage African undergirding Baartman's exhibition" (p. 41), the industry now has a positive outlook with respect to the increasing and flourishing role of women.

In part two (religion and politics), Nwando Achebe's chapter three describes the heterogeneous roles of African women in the religious and political realms during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Although there was complementarity of functions in the context of gender-relations, women still assumed different roles on their own as princesses, queens, and female kings (or in the gerontocratic realm as goddesses, prophetesses, and spirit mediums), among others. In chapter four, Kathleen Sheldon uses different case studies to establish that women played pivotal roles in nationalist and/or armed liberation movements across Africa. The fifth chapter by Ousseina Alidou intelligently analyses the evolving role of women in religious fundamentalism in contemporary Africa. The author argues that the major explanatory categories for this trend include women's quest for spiritual, social and economic empowerment. While Alicia Decker and Andrea Arrington-Sirois in chapter six examine the cross-cutting issues around which women organize, Aili Mari Tripp in chapter seven examines women's political participation and representation as well as the major constraints.

In part three (economy and society), as Gracia Clark would want us to accept in chapter eight, despite harmful stereotypes and changes African women have not remained passive as they have made commendable efforts to survive and prosper economically across different human epochs. In chapter nine, Claire Robertson touches on slavery and the experiences of African women. The author argues that "the result is that slavery and slave trafficking are increasing in Africa and the world, with women and girls as main objects, sought for their labour value, not assimilation, to supply a world market" (p. 204). In chapter ten, Josephine Beoku-Betts attempts an analysis of gender disparities in primary and secondary enrolments in sub-Saharan Africa. While the number of girls enrolled has steadily increased in most countries, parity with boys is far from being achieved. In chapter eleven, Teresa Barnes surveys "the complex histories of women and urbanization in Africa" (p. 248). According to the author, urbanization has not only created spaces where the cultural meanings of gender are being

constructed and reconstructed, it has also created more opportunities for women. In chapter twelve, Cassandra Veney explores the nexus between women and diasporan Africa.

In part four (love, marriage, and women's bodies, past and present), Rachel Jean-Baptiste and Emily Burrill's chapter thirteen attempt to establish that marriage, household, and love are core to understanding the histories of women in Africa. In chapter fourteen, Signe Arnfred exposes readers to the contending issues involved in the understanding of gender and sexuality in the African context, particularly through colonial anthropologists' and feminists' theoretical constructions. In chapter fifteen, Henryatta Ballah and December Green demonstrate that violence impedes the general well-being of African women. In this study, the authors reveal that gender-based violence in Africa could either be domestic or war-related. In their words, "African women and girls are not simply objects of abuse but are also active agents who have deployed a series of survival and coping strategies, including becoming combatants themselves" (p. 331). In the last chapter, Karen Flint highlights the health dilemmas confronting women in Africa.

This volume, without a doubt, is a collection of brilliant write-ups on African women's studies from an interdisciplinary perspective. In making their arguments, the contributors present compelling and authoritative evidences cum case studies. I am convinced the book will credibly and outstandingly redefine the changing theoretical field of women's studies in the context of Africa.

Segun Oshewolo**,** *Landmark University (Nigeria)*

Hanna Appel. 2019. *The Licit Life of Capitalism: US Oil in Equatorial Guinea*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 332 pp.

The symbiotic alliance between multinational oil corporations with African authoritarian governments has endured and evolved, even as neoliberal promises to promote transparency and good governance has droned on for decades. This fascinating ethnography of the intertwining of foreign oil companies and the brutal regime of Teodoro Obiang Nguema is a revelation. Valuable research has delineated how the petroleum industry underpins dictatorships in central Africa. However, Appel foregoes simplistic exposés of corruption. Instead, she probes how formal economic liberal structures such as contracts and sub-contracting practices create a space for companies to present themselves—and their personnel even imagine themselves—to be ethically sound and rational agents, thus placing the blame for inequalities and violence entirely on the allegedly irrational and corrupt Equatorial Guinean state. Thus, Appel contends her study is, and yet is not, about Equatorial Guinea, since her subject is the relationship and the spaces created in the entanglement between the oil industry and Equatorial Guinean society and politics.

For an outside observer, it is astounding that expatriate members of the nexus of companies involved in oil exports shared so much information with Appel. Her access with expatriate managers allows her to delve into the intricacies of how managers ensure their operations can continue to appear distant from firm charges of corruption. Managers dynamically adjust to legal innovations designed to supposedly ensure transparency, often imposing minute regulations on African workers in the name of safety, but also as a means of placing blame on

individual workers if these regulations are not followed. Off-shore oil allowed corporate managers to imagine themselves only tangentially connected to Equatorial Guinean society. Yet racial hierarchies dating from the colonial era permeate oil companies as much as they do in Equatorial Guinea itself. Housing on oil compounds reflected a complex ranking system with white US nationals and Europeans on top, Indians, Filipinos, and South Americans in the middle ranks, and Equatorial Guineans as maids and guards. US nationals regularly returned to their home country, while Filipino oil workers had to spend most of the year on site. Managers could blame the prevailing market rates rather than admit they maintained a hierarchy based on hierarchies of race and nationality. Wives of the largely male management particularly stand out in Appel's account, as she depicts their rationalizations of an isolated but pampered lifestyle.

Many of these ostensibly color- and class-neutral corporate practices end up placing the heaviest burdens on Equatorial Guinean workers and absolving top officials and companies from blame. One of the many insights here are how informal practices outside of written norms —like a manager calling a top official to get something done—coexist with a highly-regulated industry whose rules supposedly ensure ethical behavior. This includes global efforts to limit corruption. In chapter 7, Appel dissects adroitly how corporate stakeholders, Equatorial Guinean officials, and members of Equatorial Guinean NGOs bargained with each other and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative [EITI] program to provide global standards against corruption. Ultimately, EITI never seriously took oil companies or the Equatorial Guinean state to task, as various stakeholder carefully deployed terms such as transparency. Likewise, oil companies could claim to be following industry standards against abuses, since no universal, clearly defined corporate ethical standards actually exist for oil companies.

The collusion between the Equatorial Guinean government and foreign oil companies is so malleable it can creatively appropriate potential criticism. Corporate and state representatives bemoan the "resource curse" of oil. State officials claim they are diversifying the national economy through promoting entrepreneurship. Appel considers this fantasy of a national economy by examining expensive conferences organized by the government on developing new industries to expand economic growth. Even as the Equatorial Guinean state presented itself as a promotor of the private sector, actual business practices muddled the line between "private" and "public." At the same time, the admittedly limited and often fraudulent recordkeeping required by the government to maintain this pretense of transparency offered some opportunity for critics to uncover damaging information against the regime.

One criticism of Appel's work regards occasional lapses in tone. I was horrified to read in the preface that the author was told that supposedly there is no equivalent to "thank you" in the Fang language that prevails in the mainland of Rio Muni (p. xi). I speak Fang and this is simply false. Appel expressed the statement in a roundabout way to acknowledge her friends her supported her work, but the phrase left me really uneasy. Was it Africans or expatriates who supplied this information? Had she internalized white lore by expatriates about the supposed ungrateful nature of Africans? I do not believe this to be the case, having read the entire book, but no editor ever should have allowed that unqualified statement in print. Another issue is her discussion of the popular Equatorial Guinean complaints about the relationship between oil, their government, and the dismally poor infrastructure and medical care available to most

people in the country. Appel describes how these constant concerns are somehow an "incantation so ubiquitous that I had to stop noticing them for my own sanity" (p. 138). Was this a joke, a statement of general frustration, or something else? Leaving aside my personal indignation, the fact so many people raise the hope that rule of law would undo the inequities of capitalism suggests ordinary Equatorial Guineans have a faith in liberal values radically at odds with corporate and state versions of these same ideals—good governance, transparency, rule of law. What is remarkable is how many Equatorial Guineans express these aspirations in a similar fashion to people in other central African oil exporting countries like Gabon and the Republic of Congo.

This book deserves a very wide audience. Scholars and activists engaged with the impact of multinational corporations in African countries, neoliberal efforts to control the movement of bodies while endorsing unlimited flows of capital and uneven distributions of blame, and the limits of neoliberal calls for political reform really need to read *The Licit Life of Capitalism*. The study is well-grounded in the appropriate anthropological and historical literature. I think this would be quite effective in upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses, especially if it was placed with other recent ethnographies of foreign company operations in African countries such as Ching Kwan Lee's *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor, and Foreign Investment in Africa* (2018). All in all, this is a major contribution to contemporary research in African studies.

Jeremy Rich, *Marywood University*

Mario Azevedo (ed.). 2019. *Africana Studies: A Survey of Africa and the African Diaspora* (4th edition). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. 743 pp.

Africana Studies: A Survey of Africa and the African Diaspora is a collection of excellent essays divided into five parts with a total of twenty-eight chapters. Part one has two chapters. In chapter one, Mario J. Azevedo describes the state of African studies. This chapter covers important themes such as the historical evolution of African studies, the theoretical schools that shaped its development, the creation of the African Studies Association, and the gamut of issues involved in African studies. Chapter two by Rico D. Chapman focuses on the development of the African American studies. The major issues of interest to the author include the history of African American studies and the interdisciplinary nature of the field among other topics.

In part two, R. Hunt Davis, Jr. in chapter three looks at Africa and the genesis of humankind. The author writes about the evolution of cultures and civilizations, as well as notable early and late African states. Agya Boakye-Boaten's chapter four focuses on transatlantic slavery and the underdevelopment of Africa. The author identifies the major actors of the transatlantic slave trade and explains the connection between the transatlantic slave trade and Africa's underdevelopment. In chapter five, the focus is on Africans in the Diaspora and slavery. Authors Raymond Gavins and Marsha J. Tyson Darling intelligently take the readers through themes such as the new world slave system, resistance, and rebellion, and antislavery and emancipation. Mario J. Azevedo writes in chapter six on European exploration and the conquest of Africa. He takes the readers through the scramble for Africa and African response, colonial policies in Africa, as well as the impact of colonial rule on the continent. In the remaining chapters of part two, Marsha J. Tyson Darling, Lomarsh Roopnarine, Maria Martin,

and Michael Williams examine the quest for equality, the African experience in the Caribbean, African nationalism and the Pan-African movement respectively.

Part three begins with Luis B. Serapiao's chapter eleven on the contemporary African world. The major issues that receive attention include nation-building and economic development, the African Union (AU), Southern Africa, and the Chinese puzzle. In chapter twelve, Msia Kibona Clark looks at the contemporary African diaspora. The author focuses on black migration in the US, Caribbean migration, African migration, and popular culture representations of African and Caribbean people, among others. In chapter thirteen, F. Ugboaja Ohaegbulam examines the relationship between continental Africans and Africans in America. The author does this by focusing on the pre- and post-Garvey emigration schemes, Africa and African American institutions and scholars, and the tensions in African and African American relations.

In part four, Roderic Knight and Kenneth Bilby's chapter fourteen explore music in Africa and the Caribbean. To explain music in Africa, the authors focus on cultural context and genres, musical instruments, singing styles and content, and stylistic features of ensemble performance. The authors also survey Caribbean music, its popular music and links with tradition, and the influence of Caribbean music on the rest of the world. Eddie S. Meadows in chapter fifteen introduces readers to African American music. In chapter sixteen, Sharon Pruitt exposes readers to the traditional African art, pioneers in African American art, and some aspects of Caribbean art. Tanure Ojaide, Trudier Harris, Mario J. Azevedo and Jeffrey Sammons discuss literature in Africa and the Caribbean, African American literature, and contributions in Science, business, films, and sports in chapters seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen respectively.

Mario J. Azevedo and Gwendolyn Spencer Prater focus on the African family and the African American family in chapters twenty and twenty-one of part five respectively. Religion in Africa and the Diaspora constitutes the focus in chapters twenty-two and twenty-three. The roles of women dominate discussions in the next three chapters. In chapter twenty-four, Agnes Ngoma Leslie explains the evolving roles of African women. In chapters twenty-five, by A. Lynn Boyles and Barbara Shaw, and twenty-six, by Marsha Tyson Darling, women of the Caribbean and women in Africa are on the front burner of academic discussions. While Almaz Zewede examines community alliances and indigenous ways in the age of HIV/AIDS in chapter twenty-seven, Jeremias Zunguze debunks the myth of the doctrine of the discovery of Africa in chapter twenty-eight.

This edited volume represents an invaluable intellectual piece. The history of Africa (including Africa in Diaspora) has often been told from different perspectives. However, this book stands out significantly in terms of the narratives, approaches, and theories employed. The book will no doubt be an exceptional addition to the literary collections on Africa. It will also aid classroom teaching and promote a more robust intellectual interaction between instructors and students (particularly graduate students).

Roseline Morenike Oshewolo, *Federal University Lokoja (Nigeria)*

Tsehai Berhane-Selassie (2018). *Ethiopian Warriorhood: Defence, Land and Society 1800-1941*. Suffolk, UK: James Currey. 309 pp.

It is very recently that indigenous thought acquired currency in the scholarly world. Tsehai's current book is pioneering in this regard. The author is an eminent scholar on gender and social history in Ethiopia. Her book is a thoroughly researched contribution in the growing literature of Ethiopian social history. It is truly an insider view carefully drawn from oral testimonies such as heroic recitals and various written accounts of historical importance. The author's objective is to show the origin and multifaceted role of *chewa* (self-trained peasant warriors) in the long history of Ethiopian state and society. The chewa were markers of Ethiopian identity. They were also the one who shouldered the survival of Ethiopian independence for millennia. Such a role was not only limited in military talent and maneuver but also in those distinguished values of humanity. These include: let the law of the people rule, mutual understanding and diplomacy, humility, equity and justice. Tsehai argues the chewa were at the center of checking and balancing the harmonious relations of the monarch and the wider public.

Ethiopian Warriorhood has 10 chapters in addition to the preface, introduction, and conclusion. The first chapter explores the many categories of chewa warriors in Ethiopia. It also charts the change and continuities across time to the twentieth century. Chapter 2 highlights the evolution and role of chewa traditions in ancient and medieval Ethiopia. Chapter 3 looks at the chewa's intervention on land claims and counter claims both by the monarch and the wider public. There were multiple land tenure systems in Ethiopia which belong to either the monarch or the wider public that required knowledge of land administration known as *sirit* to manage it properly. Chapter 4 presents chewa 's responsibility in defending the territorial integrity of the nation and the people. Chapter 5 explores the warrior ethos of Ethiopia. It overviews the social pillars of Ethiopian people. The chapter also highlights the different stages of military training. Gender roles in warriorhood also received due attention. Chapter 6 is about sports and games the public was involved in for the purpose of body building for agility and endurance from which the chewa recruited. Chapter 7 charted the role of chewa warriors in the court and the relationship within the chewa themselves and with those of the masters. Chapter 8 look at the *gibir* (banquet) system and the *zeraf* (heroic recital session) where chewa warriorhood best manifested itself. Chapter 9 examines the Italian colonial experience in Ethiopia in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. The challenge of the new military structure introduced by Emperor Tewodros II against the local innovative chewa tradition is also duly addressed. Despite all the odds, chewa warriors paid all the sacrifices to their motherland in both encounters of the Italians colonial aggrandizement (1896 and 1936-41 respectively). Chapter 10 is about how the chewa warriors managed leadership issues with the absence of the emperor in during the Italian occupation period 1936-1941. The conclusion recommends the revitalization of chewa traditions towards the current strategies to sustain peace and thereby prosperity and national integrity among the people of Ethiopia.

Tsehai throws light on our understanding of "feudal" Ethiopia. Flexibility and participatory merit reigned in the old days of the Ethiopian system. There was no special privilege based on birth. Positions and titles were not inherited. Tsehai dismisses the notion of ethnonationalist origins of the chewa warriorhood in Ethiopia. Although, the introduction of "modernity" since the mid-nineteenth century deterred the continuity of chewa tradition, it

remained at work until 1941. The growth of gradual centralization of power in the hands of emperors dislocated the status and crucial role of the chewa in the state-society relations. For the author this paved the way for despotism and at the same time marginalized the longstanding mutual relations between state and rural society where the chewa originate. Generally, the book is sought after in that it studies an indigenous institution, chewa, that galvanized the Ethiopian state and society for several centuries. The study should truly interest academic scholars, policy makers, students, and education experts alike. However, most chapters except 7 and 8 need reconsideration for redundant ideas with the possibility of merging or revision.

Ebrahim Damtew Alyou, *University of Gondar*

Gwyn Campbell. 2019. *Africa and the Indian Ocean World from Early Times to Circa 1900.* New York: Cambridge University Press. 305 pp.

Gwyn Campbell's book challenges Eurocentric and revisionist African and Asian scholarship by focusing his historical narrative on human-environment interactions in the construction and development of the Indian Ocean World (IOW). His book contains twelve chapters, organized chronologically. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the IOW as comprised of interlocking maritime and terrestrial economies stretching from the Indonesian and China Seas, to the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Suez Isthmus, and the Hadhramaut. He highlights the ways in which environmental factors such as the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO), the Indian Ocean Dipole, the Intertropical Convergence Zones (ITCZ), volcanic activities, and cyclones have influenced regional economic production, exchanges, and population migrations.

Chapters 2 and 3 complement each other in that while the former examines the impact of the Neolithic Revolution in promoting population growth, regular agricultural surpluses, and long distance trade linking Indian Ocean Africa (IOA) and the IOW, the latter observes that exploiting the monsoon winds for trans-oceanic commerce facilitated the development of durable interlocking maritime and land-based economies into the IOW "global economy" from ca. 300 BCE to ca. 300 CE. Over time, major trans-oceanic port cities located along the Indian Ocean Basin developed into major hubs for trade in agricultural and manufactured goods.

Chapter 4 discusses the impact of adverse environmental factors (ca. 300 to ca. 900 CE) such as the ways in which volcanic eruptions and earthquakes have affected global temperatures, crops, and the intensification of drought in the IOW economy. Mass population migrations, followed by devastating pandemics and widespread famine, weakened economic prosperity across the wider IOW global economy. In Chapters 5 and 6, covering the period ca. 850-1250, Campbell asserts that the discernable resurgence of the IOW global economy followed the decline in the El Nino effect, resulting in more plentiful rainfall. This favorable environmental change promoted food production, a population boom, and political stability in tropical and semi-tropical zones. Commercial activity expanded as Indian princes formed joint ventures with merchants; the Chinese innovated steel production, the use of gunpowder, and papermaking; political authorities protected overland trade routes, and South Indians and Persians formed regional merchant associations. The Swahili, Great Zimbabwe, and early Malagasy civilizations emerged and developed interlinked networks based principally on the

gold of Africa's interior. The prosperity of the IOA motivated settlements, as well as the diffusion of religion and technology across the IOW.

Chapters 7 (1300-1830) and 8 (1500-1830) supplement each other by discussing environmental turbulence due to volcanic activity that weakened the monsoon system and undermined economic and political vitality in Egypt, China, and South Asia. The European trading companies arrived during this period of instability in the IOW, but without sufficient financial resources and suffering from high mortality rates due to tropical diseases they failed to gain control over the IOW trade. African merchants prospered and maintained control of hinterland commercial networks. Migrants from the Madagascar interior integrated into the Swahili trading network to form the Sakalava kingdoms.

Chapter 9 observes that European merchants entered into cooperation with indigenous agents, leading to the emergence of an international economy. Indian financiers of the new international economy became major creditors to traders, growing rich and influential throughout the IOW global economy. Chapter 10 discusses the attempts at indigenous modernization during the nineteenth century by Egypt, Imerina, Ethiopia, and Egypt to promote domestic industrialization through a focus on manufacturing armaments and textiles. These attempts at modernization relied on forced and bondage labor, provoking popular domestic revolts that weakened the capacity of the states to resist the imposition of European colonial rule.

Chapters 11 and 12 explore the drive for European colonization of Africa during the l9th century and the eventual collapse of the control of indigenous merchants over the IOW economies. The burgeoning German economy sought expansion and colonies outside of Europe, while Britain secured its interests by taking control of Egypt and opening the door for full colonization of Africa. European subjects benefited directly by supplanting indigenous merchants and expanding the institution of unfree labor to maximize economic productivity. The long-term export of enslaved African labor to the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and the New World depopulated Africa. Later, abolitionist movements in Europe spurred action to terminate the slave trade in the colonies, with Britain taking the lead in forcing slave masters to transition former slaves into wage laborers. The new wage labor system was in reality indentured servitude that persisted for decades. Abolitionist movements soon influenced the idea of the "civilizing mission," which served as a justification for 19th century European imperialism.

Campbell's most important contribution is the book's solid groundings in the dynamism of human-environment interactions. The discussion of IOW economies explores in detail the intersection of regions of interdependence and creativity, while also highlighting the resilience of communities. Campbell's book also analyzes the ways in which European engagement with the IOW economies and subsequent attempts at paramountcy provided justifications for the imposition of colonial domination. This historical narrative is essential reading for developing a more nuanced understanding of the significance of the Indian Ocean World.

C. Adyanga Onek, *Millersville University*

Carli Coetzee. 2019. *Written Under the Skin: Blood and Intergenerational Memory in South Africa*. Suffolk, UK: James Currey/Boydell & Brewer. 176 pp.

Carli Coetzee's *Written Under the Skin* is a compelling and innovative work that builds on the myriad research which focus on history and memory in South Africa. The book establishes a newer and a more nuanced dimension of both reading and rethinking memory in South Africa by traversing historic (apartheid and post-apartheid), literary, and visual narratives in order to exemplify how blood can be read as a site of memory and a tool for social activism. This attempt to look beyond the skin is a significant import in studying a society whose history, for the most part, has been overwhelmingly constructed in relation to skin color. The book is divided into two parts which contain seven chapters that interrogate historically broad but intricately and thematically focused aspects of social construction and relations in South Africa. By arguing that "intergenerational conversations and collaborations do not only result in such vertical transmission from elders to younger ones, but that the gains and transfers are instead distributed up and down the bloodlines in a mutually interactive generation and regeneration of knowledge" (p. ix), the book looks to the forms of representations by the present younger generation—identified especially as the #Fallists—to proffer a redefinition of how the past is narrated, and subsequently, it looks to the future to make a claim on how this redefinition will shape further remembering.

One of the core concepts employed in *Written Under the Skin* is the emphasis on "multidirectional" memory. This concept that was proposed by Michael Rothberg in *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, is used in *Written Under the Skin* as an "insight… useful to help us understand the conflicts produced, voiced and staged in South Africa, through which the younger generation has been drawing attention to the existing and persistent unresolved conflicts and divisions running through the society" (p. 6). Fittingly, in a book that emphasizes the multi-directionality of memory, the breadth of cultural representations used to articulate the concept in the South African context are also multi-directional and multi-perspectival. Almost every chapter of the book weaves together multiple forms of cultural representation from history, literature, and visual culture to present an insightful analysis that departs from the repeated tropes of "transformation, emergence, entanglement and reconciliation" (p. ix), often used to interrogate South Africa.

The first part of the book focuses on emblematic figures and moments in South Africa's history. Three of the four chapters in this part of the book construct the prison cells of Nelson Mandela, Eugene de Kock, and Ruth First as sites of memory and spaces which can be revisited "in a search for old traces and overlooked signs of blood" (p. 12). Coetzee demonstrates this search for the overlooked signs of blood by reading the constructions and re-constructions of Mandela, especially by the younger generation, as an indication of an entry into what she calls the "bloodless time" (p. 19). Her view that "[R]e-entering the [Mandela] cell… offers a clean and bloodless entry into the timeless" (p. 23) is fundamental in guiding against any fixity which can trouble the attempts at understanding and representing a Mandela figure that is fitting for the reality and anxieties of the present. Therefore, the idea of a bloodless time works as an activist attempt to dislodge the position that the memory and understandings about Mandela are enshrined in a certain time period whose realities are almost unrelatable to the generation of the #Fallists.

The second part of the book focuses on the various cultural and activist works of the younger generation of South Africans with which they inscribe themselves as integral in the making of memory in South Africa. In the three chapters of this part of the book, Coetzee carefully emphasizes the centrality of reading blood in order to link seemingly disparate forms of activist engagement undertaken through the symbolic implications of dirt and cleansing, literary writings, and artworks. It is in this part that the book most crystallizes, in my opinion, what can be considered its most profound contribution to the scholarship on South Africa, and that of memory studies in Africa generally: the significance of reading blood in the interplay of memory and activism.

Memory activism studies how memory and remembering translate as an imperative to pursue social and political change through the construction and dissemination of cultural, social, or national knowledge. Effectively, *Written Under Skin* shows how reading blood simultaneously shows both the continuity and change in the articulation and making of memory as a social praxis in South Africa. This enlightening perspective to studying multidirectional memory and memory activism should, no doubt, invigorate further research in cultural and memory studies not only in South Africa, but in the whole of Africa.

Theophilus Okunlola, *Mississippi State University*

Finn Fuglestad. 2018. *Slave Traders by Invitation: West Africa's Slave Coast in the Precolonial Era*. New York: Oxford University Press. 500 pp.

In a commandingly researched book that successfully integrates the political, social and economic history of the west African slave coast, Fuglestad argues that the Slave Coast was an epicenter of the slave trade with special reference to the towns of Ouidah and Offra, which were central to the trade in the precolonial era. He contends that this area exported a majority of enslaved Africans while the western zone known as the peripheral played a marginal role. The author shows how this area was very vital due to its significant material enrichment and how both Europeans and locals sustained themselves in the trade. The book could have depended on the broad literature on slave chronicles, as a genre, from the Atlantic world. Inside such exacting accounts, a keynote that repeats is the role played by the locals of the Slave Coast which is quite evident and undeniable in the trade. The heart of the book links these developments to how the locals attracted Europeans to trade in slaves even when their (Europeans) interests were in gold trade. As the author shows how this trade was facilitated by locals and the circumstances that led to the slave trade, he divides the book into three parts. The first section discusses the structures and trends. Here, Fuglestad gives an overview of the Slave Coast, its economic, political, and social structures, the data base, and the slave trade. The second part details a chronological overview from the early days to the 1720s. This portion focuses on the side of both the Europeans and Africans, the polities of Allada and Dahomey, recounting the slave trade further west, and giving an overview from the 1680s to the 1720s. The final part that incorporates the narratives from the 1720s to 1850/51 examines the dramatic and decisive 1720 and its aftermath, the Tegbesu era, and the abolition of the slave trade and slavery.

The events in the book are very organized and chronological. In addition to its quality, one striking feature is that it is straightforward and easy to comprehend. The author argues that irrespective of the contradiction that the locals did not have knowledge about sailing, which contributed to guarantee, "in a sense, the success of the Slave Trade," he further contends that once the invitation to the trade in slaves was broached to the Europeans, there was never a withdrawal. Coupled with the lack of navigational skills of the locals of the area under consideration by the author was the engagement of the canoemen of the Gold Coast drawn into the trade by recruitment. He considered the extreme conditions under which the slave trade was conducted on the Slave Coast.

The author postulates that under such circumstances, for any kind of trade to have occurred on a substantial scale between Africans and Europeans, there was a resilient grit on the side of the former to overwhelm the environmental obstruction which sheltered them against the latter, that is, a sturdy fortitude to enter into commerce with the Europeans and to uphold the contact. This leads to his conclusion that that "the Europeans could not and would not have got anywhere without the very active collaboration of the locals, without having been invited ashore so as to speak" (p. 4). Fuglestad traces the slave trade from some 30km further east, at Offra in the kingdom of Allada before it finally got to Ouidah, which later became an epicenter of trade. The author details how the Europeans responded to the invitation and how the area considered by Fuglestad was used as a source of enslaved Africans. An interesting reason espoused by the author as to why enslaved Africans were taken from the Slave Coast, was due to the fact they lacked sailing skills such that in the event of a successful slave rebellion, the captives would not be able to sail the ship back to their homeland. And "it was in a sense safe to fetch slaves in Africa particularly those on the Slave Coast," because the region's populace lacked knowledge necessary to sail a ship if a successful on-board revolt or to pursue a ships so as to unfetter the slaves. Once embarked on the trans-Atlantic voyage, the slaves "were absolutely alone in the world" (p. 12).

Detail is given to what happened to the captives when they came to the purview of the Europeans before they set sail across the ocean. The author refers to this period as the "waiting and loading period," during which, he postulates, there was a high death rate among the captives. He also suggests that the loss of life during that crossing was due in large part precisely to the conditions endured by the slaves during the waiting and loading time. Fuglestad, like other historians, argues that the period was a very long-lasting stage and it was the stage during which a terrible number of individuals lives were lost, not just as a result of the physical conditions, but also due to what some sources refer to as the local "ill-usages" and "ill conducts which were certainly deadly, whatever they may have consisted of exactly" (p. 13).

Fuglestad points out the "epistemological and philosophical-ethical challenges at hand' (p. 13) and shows how he investigated them in a multi-dimensional way. He thus admonishes historians to observe the best practices in such sensitive topic areas and opens the door for more researchers to do further investigations on the Slave Coast to add to knowledge of the era and the region. However, he sounds somewhat apologetic and tries to exonerate Europe's involvement in the slave trade. Although he is careful, Fuglestad interprets the events of the era to favor the early European traders of the time. The book fails to give a detailed account of how the Europeans negotiated with the locals to have them trading together. His analysis begs the

question, in the face of all the environmental and security threats why did the Europeans still stay to do trade with the locals?

He agrees that the "active collaboration of the locals wasn't enough." Somehow some people would have to be able to go through the surf both ways. And because it was a daunting task for the Europeans to use their own small boats, which were unsuitable for navigating the coastal surf, coupled with the locals lack of maritime tradition, the question was where to get people with expertise. The recruits who came were the Ga and Fante of Ghana (Gold Coast) and the Kru of Liberia. This thus begs the question how these people also invited the Europeans to engage in the slave trade. Fuglestad however has the strong belief that "what is certain is that they had to be, and became in fact, accomplished athletes, and especially excellent swimmers and divers…. that then is the short answer" (p. 6). The author thus, has no information as to how the Fante consented to the recruitment. This, therefore, implies that the same way the Europeans got the Fante canoemen involved in the trade was not much different from how they had the locals of the Slave Coast to do slave businesses. There is no doubt that Africans were involved in the trade. To refer to the trade to have started by Africans inviting Europeans into it, is very problematic, misleading and on a course to offload the blame on Africans.

Granted that it is true the canoemen were occasionally paid to get rid of some Europeans then it is also highly likely that after all, the locals did not invite the Europeans into the slave trade but rather the European bought or found their own way in. Fuglestad implied that the ongoing slave trade in the area invited the Europeans to participate in the trade since it was gold that attracted the Europeans to the Gold Coast and not slaves. Although the above assertion is true to some extent, it is unjustifiable to argue that the local rather invited the Europeans to trade in slaves.

Emmanuel Saboro, *University of Cape Coast*

Michael A. Gomez. 2018. *African Dominion: A New History of Empire in Early and Medieval West Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 520 pp.

Michael A. Gomez, currently Silver Professor of History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University, has published several well-regarded books about African history, including *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (1998), *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (2005), *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (2005), and *Diasporic Africa: A Reader* (2006).

In *African Dominion*, he begins by lamenting the lack of attention Africa receives in early modern and medieval world history. Histories of global developments, he observes, "continue to ignore Africa's contributions, not merely as the presumed site of human origins, but as a full participant in its cultural, technological, and political innovations" (p. 370). The book addresses this imbalance by offering a sweeping account of hundreds of years of history in the Savannah and Sahel regions. Gomez focuses, in particular, on how groups of people such as merchants, scholars, and pilgrims spread ideas as well as goods. He explores how the rise and growth of Islam played a salient role in the region's history. He scrutinizes the rise and fall of imperial Mali and Songhay. In sum, he offers "both an account and a critique of West African empire

and attendant social and cultural transformations, a tale of immense potential undermined by regrettable decisions and inflexibility of critical conventions" (p. 5).

Due to the length of this review, it is impossible to do justice to the volume. Nevertheless, readers will encounter many intriguing and provocative arguments. Using recent archaeological evidence, for example, Gomez chides practitioners of "big history" for ignoring Africa. Gao, he contends, "was critical to the formation of West African civilization and culture, from the earliest times, as instrumental as ancient Ghana" (p. 18). He explores the rise and importance of Islam in West Africa, not to mention human trafficking and the gold trade, and illuminates the development of ideas about race. In addition, although Islam's role in imperial Mali's beginning was limited, it grew stronger and ushered in "an era of cosmopolitanism never before witnessed in the region" (p. 91). Mali adopted a successful cultural approach because leaders embraced Islam's universality and eschewed its forceful imposition. This allowed them to enshrine "mutual respect between practitioners of Islam and ancestral religions, while laying the foundations for an efflorescence of urban Islamic culture and learning" (p. 165). Mali, West Africa's greatest and most iconic empire, eventually waned, due to disputes over succession and an overly large territory that leaders could not successfully administer. Gomez is careful to note that the reorientation of power in West Africa began decades before the arrival of the Portuguese. Songhay, although in some ways similar to Mali, nevertheless "forged a model of state power never before witnessed" (p. 169) in the Middle Niger. However, Songhay eventually collapsed, and Gomez notes the important role enslaved people—officials and soldiers—played in the collapse.

One of the most impressive aspects of this book is Gomez's engagement with sources. He has clearly mastered the secondary literature and he also employs an impressive number of primary sources including archaeological evidence, oral sources, and Arabic documents. Thus, *African Dominion* is not just a new sweeping synthesis of West African history, it is also an extended discussion of sources and the historical method, and a demand that scholars take Africa seriously when they write world history. In sum, through innovative use of sources and decades of experiences researching and writing African history, Gomez provides "a wholly new interpretation of West Africa's early and medieval history, facilitating its relocation from the periphery to the center of world history" (p. 7). This book will undoubtedly become the standard work on the subject and has already won two major prizes—the Martin A. Klein Prize in African History from the American Historical Association and the ASA Book Prize (Herskovits Prize) from the African Studies Association. Anyone interested in the subject must read it and grapple with the arguments Gomez advances.

Evan C. Rothera, *University of Arkansas–Fort Smith*

James S. Guseh and Emmanuel O. Oritsejafor. 2019. *Governance and Democracy in Africa: Regional and Continental Perspectives.* London: Lexington Books. 130 pp.

This book attempts to test, on the soil of Africa, the assertion that democratic countries are more likely to have faster economic growth than undemocratic countries. This intriguing book is structured into seven major chapters. Chapter 1, ''Introduction to Democratic Governance,'' argues that democratic capitalism dominated the entire world following the end of the Cold

War, and it stimulated the overall economic growth and improved the wellbeing of humans. Then, the authors move onto the ups and downs of the democratization process in Africa that would be traced back to the 1960s anti-colonial movements. Unfortunately, the democratic movements have been quashed by the post-colonial authoritarian leaders. Despite the recurrent stumbling blocks, political freedoms and elections have increased due to the collaborative efforts made by Africans and the international community especially following the abandonment of the sacrosanct principle of non-interference. This chapter closes by putting forth a challenge to democratic capitalism that a politically repressive country can achieve economic growth as long as it liberalizes the market.

Chapter 2 defines the basic concepts of governance, good governance, democracy, political freedom, and government size, which are at the core of the entire discussion of the book. By doing so, the authors provide a conceptual framework for their subsequent analysis. Most importantly, political economy is indicated as a guiding analytical framework for their entire work.

Democratic governance across the five sub-regions of the continent is the focus of chapter 3. Accordingly, it discusses the challenging transitions to democratic governance in West Africa amid the intermittent conflicts and instabilities in the region. The authors blame the failure of ECOWAS to properly understand the root causes of the conflicts, insecurities, and instabilities as a continued challenge to the attainment of democracy and development. The politically volatile East Africa is also characterized by an abysmal record of political freedom as no country is free. This is attributable to the recurrent ''political instability, authoritarianism, violent conflicts, and corruption'' (p. 21). This chapter also states that North Africa experienced a lack of political freedom and administrative malpractices that caused the 2011 Arab Spring, which engulfed the North African and Middle Eastern countries, and the ensuing toppling of authoritarian leaders. However, the revolutions could not create a coherent government body in some of them, let alone a democratic one. Southern Africa is the most peaceful and democratic region compared to other sub-regions of the continent as it hosts ''the top ten scoring countries in SSA'' (p. 26). The improvement is being manifested even in Zimbabwe, where there has been a domineering rule for decades. In Central Africa, only one country was free by 2015, Sao Tome and Principe. The political turmoil the countries have been enmeshed in have hindered democratization, the authors adduced, *inter alia*, the recurring removal of leaders in the Central African Republic via coups. In general, this chapter attempts to show the African countries' swift swinging between democracy and authoritarianism in a comparative form.

Chapter 4 examines the role of democratic governance for the stimulation of economic growth by taking South Africa and Ghana as targets. The authors showed South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994 after long years of white domination and Ghana's transition to electoral democracy, especially following the 2000 election, after the fluctuation of leaders through consecutive coups and counter coups. With this regard, the chapter proceeds to empirical evidence that proved the claim that democratic governance increases the economic performance of countries rightly in South Africa and wrongly in Ghana.

The fifth chapter deals with government size, political freedom, and economic growth in Nigeria. Nigeria has undergone military rule for the bulk of its post-independence period, and the 2006 election and most importantly the 2015 election which marks a historic moment in the

country's transition to a democratically elected rule. However, the new civilian rulers could not eliminate deeply rooted corruption and mounting security threats to democracy and economic development. Having discussed this, the chapter moves onto the empirical evidence that confirmed the country has achieved better economic growth when it is ''free'' or ''partly free'' than ''not free." The evidence also underscored that an increase in government size negatively impacted the country's economy, especially when it is ''not free.'' Moreover, the openness of the economy also has a positive impact on the country's economy, notably when it is ''free.'' Hence, the case of Nigeria assures the claim that democratic capitalism promotes economic growth.

Chapter discusses the post-independence African development challenges and the establishment of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to eradicate these predicaments via free trade between the US and sub-Saharan African countries (SSA). This chapter also reveals that though the preferential access to the US market enabled these countries to maintain a favorable trade balance, it has no contribution to democratizing them. The positive economic implication of AGOA, however, is being challenged by "the rule of origin" that requires SSA countries to import locally unavailable inputs from the US.

The concluding chapter (chapter 7) assesses the post-independence continent-wide initiatives intended to promote democratic governance and economic growth. Accordingly, various institutional and legal frameworks namely, the OAU, the AU, Monrovia Plan, the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), among others, are examined. Owing to these initiatives, signs of progress have been observed though slow and entangled in persisting challenges.

Overall, the book has immense contributions to the body of knowledge in the area. It has concisely presented the political economy of post-independence African countries. It is commendable in analyzing the "democracy-development" nexus and in pointing out the persisting development and governance challenges that African countries are embroiled in. Moreover, it appeals to further researches on the subject. In spite of this, some minor flaws are noted: (1) inconsistency in using abbreviations; (2) the need for further proofreading which has caused minor errors on some parts of the book—most importantly the numerical mismatches on the discussion made right under table 6.1 on page 75, not to mention other errors in years, amount of money, and words; (3) the book could have been much better had it employed the political economy theories instead of relying solely on the concept itself (political economy); and (4) it seems less clear the authors' recommendation to lift African countries from the governance and development quagmire they are in. However, these minor defects by no means depreciate the very insightful contribution of the book. It is recommendable to everyone having the curiosity about African governance systems.

Endalcachew Bayeh, *Bahir Dar University (Ethiopia)*

Mary Harper. 2019. *Everything You Have Told Me Is True: The Many Faces of Al Shabaab*. London: Hurst and Co. Publishers. 250 pp.

The crisis in Somalia and its leading protagonists, particularly Al Shabaab, have been high on the academic publishing agenda and under constant scrutiny for many years. This makes

publishing a new book about this Somali Jihadi organization a significant challenge: the author must avoid repeating previous works while making original contributions to discourse on the topic. In her second book, Mary Harper has skillfully avoided these pitfalls, providing a fresh and unique perspective on Al Shabaab. Her outstanding work on this violent extremist group is based on a two-pronged approach: a demonstration of the complexity of Al Shabaab followed by an examination of the group's influence on the daily life of individual Somalis.

While many chapters and scholars simply refer to the group as a "terrorist" or "Jihadi" organization, Harper shows how complicated it is to determine exactly what Al Shabaab is, why Somali Jihadists have been able to put down such deep roots in Somali society, and why coping with this violent extremist movement in the Horn of Africa is so challenging. Harper offers readers a glimpse of the many faces of Al Shabaab and the complexity of the truths about this Jihadi organization. As Harper underlines, "(T)he information I have received about life under Al Shabaab is highly contradictory. At times Al Shabaab says one thing and people living in areas it controls say the opposite. Sometimes people living in one area controlled by the group say something different from those in another. Some women have described being brutalized and humiliated by the Islamists, while others have said they are treated with respect" (pp. 88-89). It is therefore no accident that, depending on the source of information, Al Shabaab appears in reports and interviews as a cruel Jihadi terrorist organization (p. 89); a national liberation army defending Somalis and the Ummah against foreign crusaders (pp. 17, 20); a shadow government that provides communities with cheap and reliable basic services (p 17); or a mafia-like group that collects protection money from the business community and raises funds by offering targeted assassination services to politicians and businessmen (pp. 115, 154).

Through all these examples, the book brilliantly demonstrates how Al Shabaab became an integral part of daily life in Somalia, not only in terms of politics and security but also in terms of economic, social, and cultural activities. As the Somalis quoted by Harper put it, "Al Shabaab is everywhere and you never know who is Al Shabaab…[They] do not fall from the sky. They know us and we know them. They are our cousins, brothers, aunts and uncles" (p. 4). The group has a profound influence not only on the lives of government employees, soldiers, and foreign peacekeepers and contractors but also on the lives of ordinary Somalis, from marriage to business and from jurisdiction to relationships with other clans and the Federal Government.

The second aim of Harper's book is to analyze Jihadi influence on ordinary Somalis. As she states, "Al Shabaab is known to the outside world mainly through its acts of violence. (…) But less is known about its impact on individuals and families, and it is this aspect of Al Shabaab that the book aims to explore. This includes the impact on those who join it, those who live in areas it controls, and those whose lives are affected simply because they live in or come from a country where it has a presence" (pp. 4-5). To achieve that goal, Harper draws on three decades of experience and meetings inside and outside Somalia, backed by hundreds—if not thousands—of interviews and conversations with diplomats, experts, military and security officers, journalists, businessmen, refugees, Somalis and foreigners, and Al Shabaab members.

Readers will also find transcripts of phone calls and text messages from Jihadists who regularly contact Harper to share the results of their latest attacks. Sometimes these exchanges lead to utterly surreal conversations, like when Harper's Al Shabaab contact argued that they were her real friends and tried to convert her to Islam. "You might think you have a lot of

Somali friends, but they are not your real friends. Your true friends would save you from any problem, including that of hellfire. (…) I am very disappointed in your so-called Somali friends because they are not thinking about your life in the hereafter" (p. 6). This conversation clearly demonstrates how Jihadists' logic turns Islam upside down, creating a confused and brutal ideology.

Harper has successfully achieved her aim. *Everything You Have Told Me is True* is an essential read for everyone, scholars and lay readers alike, who wants to better understand the workings of Al Shabaab and the everyday lives of ordinary Somalis who live under its rule, or at least its influence, in South-Central Somalia. This volume is also a tribute and an homage to those Somalis, who refuse to give up their struggle and their belief in a better Somalia, a dream for which they are ready to live and die in the shadow of one of the world's most sophisticated Jihadi movements, Al Shabaab.

Viktor Marsai, *National University of Public Service—Budapest*

Jessica Johnson and George Hamandishe Karekwaivanane (eds.). 2018. *Pursuing Justice in Africa: Competing Imaginaries and Contested Practices*. Athens: Ohio University Press. 342 pp.

Jessica Johnson and George H. Karekwaivanane's *Pursuing Justice in Africa* start from the proposition that "justice is inextricably contextual" (p. 2). They argue that justice is a cultural construction and it can be negotiated by sociocontextual feelings of justice or relations within a community (p. 291). Through different examples from Africa, the authors assert that African communities have shown that "justice exists on a plane with hope." They highlighted that the concept of justice existed in Africa, but it was understood differently within African society and in most cases, practiced in ways that did not disrupt the functioning of communities.

This collection is illustrative of the growth of new sociolegal Africanist scholars who are building a professional career stretching from debunking the universalization of the justice system in Africa to the use of rich empirical studies that engage in the intense debates and diversified views of the nature, language, and perceptions of justice in Africa. Johnson and Karekwaivanane have wrestled with one of the most controversial areas of study in Africa which was predominantly influenced by Western measures of what justice means to everyone, regardless of location, nationality, race, ethnicity or gender. This volume presents an Africanist view of justice within the global debates on human rights and transitional justice.

The book consists of twelve essays that are separated by three different themes with each theme consisting of four essays. The first part of the volume presents chapters that focus on morality, religion, and the local languages of justice. The analysis of the local languages of justice sets an opening for a better-nuanced understanding of how individuals in Africa conceive of justice similar to notions of equality, fairness, and upright behavior. The concepts of religion and morality also help understand how individuals or community quest for justice were guided by these ideas. This section is very engaging and opens up the reader's mind to a better understanding of the African context. For Felicitas Becker and Benson Mulemi, morality is crucial. Becker argues that sermons in the Muslim community portray the pursuit of justice as a question of forbearance, compassion, generosity, patience, and obedience towards God and

his law (p. 14). Benson Mulemi combines human and professional moral obligation to claim that the Kenyan government has a moral duty to provide healthcare to the poor. Duncan Scott also views religion as important in lessening injustice and inequality. He asserts that relational ethics like *ubuntu* can provide a means for pursuing justice from the bottom up.

The second part focuses on gender justice where it engages with justice in the field of gender, marital relations, and domesticity. One outstanding essay is by Alan Msosa about LGBTQ+ rights in Malawi. He contends that the concept of human rights lacks legitimacy in Malawi because it does not fully translate into local terminology and meanings (p. 133). The alternative, as Msosa suggest can be *chilungano* because it consists of local meaning and legitimacy. The essay showed the significance of understanding and using indigenous concepts of justice rather than using alien ones. The chapters also showed the importance of focusing on the specificities of people's lives and concerns even if they do not converge neatly with international assumptions of justice. The third and last part of the book focuses on resource injustice and the nexus between conflict and justice.

The strength of this volume is that it uses empirical cases with ordinary people as central subjects to present their "aspirations, divergent practices, and articulations of international and vernacular idioms of justice" (p. 3). Although the approach challenges meta-narratives, it seems to promote binary accounts of the West versus African or international versus local. The book contributes to African historiography through empirical evidence and interdisciplinary approaches that challenge universalized justice. All the chapters contribute to our understanding of what justice means to different African actors in particular places and times. This volume is highly recommendable to sociolegal historians, graduate students who focus on resource conflicts, gender studies, religion, and more in African studies. The volume cuts across themes and different time periods.

Susan Ziki, *Kent State University*

Kwasi Konadu. 2019. *Our Own Way in this Part of the World: Biography of an African Community, Culture, and Nation*. Durham: Duke University Press. 313 pp.

A history of everyday life and its transformations in twentieth century Ghana remains to be written. How did people on the ground perceive, negotiate, and navigate their societal transitions from pre-colonial settings through colonial occupation to an independent state? How can we narrate their histories? Drawing on more than fifteen years of archival and empirical research, Kwasi Konadu tackles these and other questions in his people's history—what he calls a "communography" (p. 8)—of twentieth century Takyiman, a market town in central Ghana. Writing a biography of Kofi Dɔnkɔ (ca. 1913–1995), one of the town's spiritualist-healers, Konadu uses "traditional" conceptions and practices of healing as a lens on local culture and history. Following his main protagonist, Konadu traces major societal changes and demonstrates how these impacted on people's lives.

Offering a close reading of one of Kofi Dɔnkɔ's invocational libation texts, Konadu first portrays the "spiritual culture" (p. 19) running through people's lives. As he expounds, people in Takyiman lived with a multitude of spiritual entities—*inter alia* deities (*abosom*), ancestors, and witches—whom they perceived as representatives of a multidimensional creative force and

interacted with via their spiritualist-healers. Subjected to these spiritual entities, people were depending on and protected by them. So was Kofi Dɔnkɔ, whose parents confided him to the deity Asubɔnten Kwabena whose *ɔbosomfoɔ* (medium) he was to become after an extensive training. Throughout his life as a spiritualist-healer, Kofi Dɔnkɔ found himself exposed to and partaking in major societal changes. Under colonial occupation, cocoa and other cash-crops significantly altered the local economy, "traditional" rule was reconceived by the colonial administration on its own terms, migrants moved into the region, diseases spread, and infrastructural transformations changed the world people found themselves in. This resulted in social tensions, struggles over land, and bitter conflicts that fundamentally altered the social fabric. People lived in uncertain times. According to Konadu, these processes were redirected but not changed by independent Ghana's political elites who proclaimed indigenous values whilst they, in fact, undermined them and their "traditional" institutions. As a spiritualist-healer, Kofi Dɔnkɔ had to deal with the outfall of these changes and their impacts on people's lives. Throughout these changing times, he represented "traditional" humanistic and transcendental values as he sought to heal his clients and community. Nonetheless, he also adapted to the changing times he found himself in, as he incorporated biomedical techniques and ideas into his healing practices. Accordingly, Kofi Dɔnkɔ's life history serves Konadu as a prism through which he writes the fragmented and composite history of Takyiman's transforming community throughout the twentieth century.

The book offers a compelling history of people and their community in twentieth century Ghana. Konadu has gathered an impressive archive, based on which he succeeds to capture societal changes and dynamics in their lived refractions and complexities. As he narrates the biography of Kofi Dɔnkɔ, Konadu sheds some light on how this spiritualist-healer negotiated and navigated his way through these uncertain times. Thereby, Konadu makes an important contribution to an everyday and social history of twentieth century Ghana, but he does not locate his work within this wider literature. As he aims to contribute to the nascent everyday history of twentieth century Ghana and Africa, this omission is somewhat disappointing. Furthermore, the records of Kofi Dɔnkɔ's life show considerable gaps which Konadu fills with idealizing inferences from other sources and the secondary literature. This leaves certain episodes of Kofi Dɔnkɔ's life and aspects of his persona rather woodcut-like than vivid. Given the sources Konadu can draw on, we learn much about but only little of Kofi Dɔnkɔ, so that his personality and take on things remain rather opaque. Nonetheless, Konadu offers a fascinating account of indigenous medicine in a changing context by following this practitioner and his activities. Yet, while healing others was certainly a central and important aspect of Kofi Dɔnkɔ's works and life, the "spiritual" aspects of his activities remain largely unexplored. How did he negotiate and reconceive these? As the reader does not learn much about this, Kofi Dɔnkɔ's "spiritual culture" (p. 19) or "ontological world" (p. 13) appear as surprisingly static and ahistorical which is further aggravated by the unfortunate romanticism with which Konadu tends to paint Kofi Dɔnkɔ and his "traditional" community. Kofi Dɔnkɔ evidently healed many people and thereby helped his community, but I would have liked to learn more about the contradictions, ambiguities, and struggles they faced as they passed through uncertain and changing times of which Konadu offers a comprehensive and detailed account.

Benedikt Pontzen, *Independent Scholar—Berlin*

'BioDun J. Ogundayo and Julius O.Adekunle (eds.). 2019. *African Sacred Spaces: Culture, History and Change*. New York: Lexington Books. 261 pp.

The book comprises three sections thematically mapped out with a total twelve chapters by different scholars on various perspectives as espoused within the scope of the discourse on the richness, diversities, complexities, and culture of sacred spaces in Africa and the Diaspora. The three sections, with a total of eleven chapters by scholars from different fields of study and contexts, are thematically arranged: "Historical Perspectives," comprising of five chapters; "Cross-cultural, Environmentalist Perspectives," which has three chapters; and "Symbolic Representations and Understandings," with four chapters.

Kevin A. Young used an historiographical approach in his "Ambiguous Conquest in the Sixteenth–century Spanish Atlantic World," focusing on the contributions of the Moroccan black slave Esteban de Dorantes. The author chronicled the contributions of diverse people to the imperial expansionist agenda spanning centuries. Chapter two has Julius Adekunle pointedly unmasking the historical and associated cultural tapestry of hallowing royal burial grounds (Ogbo Oba) in Igboho, Oyo State, Nigeria. Kingship among the Yoruba is highly revered and imputed as sacred and the sacredness of kings also includes their death, funeral and the graveyard where they are buried. Donald Omagu explores the topic "Funeral Rites and Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty" in chapter three, which provides an overview of the cultural norms in relation to death and funeral rites of Bekwarra, Cross River State, Nigeria. The chapter provides insight into the coping mechanism of family members and their recovery after the demise of a loved one.

Emmanuel Mbah and Atumi Ntoh in chapter four examine "Sacred Spaces and Ritual Performances in Ejaghamland Cameroon," which is a border area inhabited by a Bantu ethnic group between southern part of Cameron and Nigeria. The authors rightly argue that ritual idiosyncrasies in African traditional belief system are reflective of the socio-cultural nuances prevalent in a named context. Chapter five, by Mustapha Gwadabe and Muhammed Kyari, provides a detailed study on "*Masjid*: Muslim Sacred Space in Nigerian Islam." The authors posit that one of the most important pillars of Islam is the practice of praying five times a day in a *masjid* (mosque). The chapter traces the history of Islam with a particular focus on the Nigerian *masjid*, including the architectural design of mosques and changing Islamic practices due to modernity.

The second section begins with chapter six, which focuses on "The Metaphysics of Space in Yoruba Traditional Religion" through the lens of *Ifa* geomancy and its peculiar practices. The author, Biodun Ogundayo, noted that, *Ifa* geomancy offers the opportunity for the redefinition of African space as a metaphysical and sacred concept. Likewise, I*fa* offers a holistic perspective with respect to environment and nature due to its literary corpus in relation to earth, land, and the heavens. Utilizing phenomenological and indigenous hermeneutics in Chapter seven ("Sacred Spaces: Mountains in Yoruba Spirituality"), Olujide Gbadegesin examines the motivations of African Independent Churches or Aladura Churches (Prayer People) and indigenous religious traditions that go to the mountain top for prayers. In chapter eight, Saheed Amusa examines "Traditional Modernity: The Dynamics of the Management of Osun Sacred Groves in Osogbo, Nigeria." The sacredness and inviolability of African groves is central to the continued tradition of Osun Osogbo even during the colonial era, although with modernity, the

sacredness of these spaces is gradually being violated through tourism, infrastructural developments, and economic growth.

Sustainability was the focus of Fortune Sibanda in her empirical chapter "African Sacred Groves and Sustainability: Reflections on Zimbabwe's Chirinda Forest and Guhune Mountain." in Zimbabwe. The author made use of theory of spatiality as her theoretical framework. The chapter explores the nexus between spatiality and spirituality through the lens of the Ndau worldview. In Chapter ten, the focus of Haakayoo N. Zoggie was the unravelling of African tradition in the publications of two Latin American authors –Manuel Zapata Olivella and Cralos Guillermo Wilson. The thrust of the chapter, entitled "Space, Art, and Religion in *Changó, el gran putas*," is the exploration of identity and space narrative in the Afro-Hispanic Diaspora. In the eleventh chapter, Mukhtar Bunza and Adamu Kotorkoshi explored the topic "Islam and Ancient Sacred Places in Hausaland," which according to the authors, were important for its ancient religion and culture. The authors gave an overview of various ritual sites and ritual practices of some notable shrines, but Islamization of the region has abated the ritual practices in those contexts. The concluding chapter, "Sacred Space and Sacred Time on an African University Campus" by Oluwasegun Peter Aluko, focuses on Obafemi Awolowo University, which has more religious groups than available sacred spaces to accommodate them.

African Sacred Spaces: Culture, History, and Change offers an interdisciplinary perspective on the functional relationship between "space, geography and imagined in relation to African Spirituality." It is highly commended to scholars and students of religions.

Babatunde A. Adedibu, *Redeemer's University (Nigeria)*

Francis Onditi, Gilad Ben-nun, Christina D' Alessandro, and Zach Levey (eds). 2019. *Contemporary Africa and the Foreseeable World Order*. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Publishing Group. 436 pp.

Many essays, books, and studies covering the continent of Africa focus on the past, yet editors Francis Onditi, Gilad Ben-nun, Cristina D'Alessandro, and Zach Levey organize a forward-looking anthology analyzing important political, geopolitical, ethical, theoretical, and practical issues facing the continent while avoiding simplistic afro-pessimism and afro-optimism dichotomies. The volume contains three parts: "African States and Actions Toward a Normative Agenda," "Geopolitics and Globalism," and "Africa's Innovative Strategies Toward Foreseeable Foreign Policies."

The best essays take a clear-eyed view of the challenges facing countries on the continent, while applying careful analysis regarding solutions and opportunities. Tom Syring explores the continent's "Strained Relationship with Constitutionalism," defining constitutionalism by quoting Waluchow as the idea "government can and should be legally limited in its powers, and that its authority or legitimacy depends on its observing these limitations" (p. 153). He conducts a series of mini-case studies, finding constitutions may give "the impression of epitomizing human rights protection and modern division of power," yet fail to translate those ideals into practice (p. 160). Syring contributes to a rich literature on political institutions, occasionally echoing Douglass North, John Wallis, and Barry Weingast (*Violence and Social*

Orders) and Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson (*The Narrow Corridor*) in finding constitutions by themselves are "no panacea for resolving conflict" or good governance (p. 154).

Ken Oluoch describes Kenya's difficult situation in hosting refugees and examines it through lenses of international law and normative power. Oluoch analyzes their shortcomings in abiding by international refugee law, but contextualizes his criticism by recognizing their tense security situation, the lack of effective international assistance and the "magnitude of the refugee problem in Africa and the fatigue that it imposes" (p. 328). The nuanced take provides understanding situated within political realism, without excusing violations of refugees' rights.

Other essays contain innovative arguments but could improve by addressing opposing ideas. Wesley Mwatwara and Ushehwedu Kufakurinani examine the relationship between China and Zimbabwe as representative of the continent, arguing the relationship continues a neo-colonial pattern of exploitation and economic dependency. While well-argued in many areas, claims that China "export[s] excess labor to Africa" and Chinese laborers work for lower wages than their African counterparts require qualification (p. 188). A 2017 McKinsey report (*Dance of the Lions and Dragons*) surveyed over one thousand Chinese-owned businesses in Africa finding 89 percent of the workers were local and Chinese labor "is becoming less price competitive with Africa." Mwatwara and Kufakurinani are not necessarily incorrect in describing challenges facing the Sino-African relationship, but the data hints at greater complexity.

Tim Murithi argues for "dismantling" of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the United Nations (UN) system "due to its inability to address contemporary crises," for the creation of new international institutions based on principles of "freedom, solidarity, justice, and reconciliation," and critiques a form of political realism as "an ideology that appeals to the baser instincts of human beings" and "has within it the seeds of humanity's demise…" (pp. 39, 41, 48, 51). Further, he believes Africa should lead the process of remaking the global order by "draw[ing] upon its historical experiences as a freedom-seeking continent…" (p. 40). Murithi's chapter effectively critiques the UNSC and UN, highlighting Africa's marginalization in decisions even though "60 percent of the issues" discussed by the security council involve the continent (p. 46). He then describes the practical mechanisms within the UN charter to develop new institutions and alter the international system.

Murithi's critique of realism, however, is too broad. While he specifically counters Kissinger's work, he also claims realism was the driver behind NATO's expansion and a factor in the "renewal of tensions between the west and Russia" (p. 42). However, the neo-realist Stephen Walt (*The Hell of Good Intentions*) also criticizes NATO expansion for provoking Russia yet views the military body's enlargement as a form of liberal hegemony, not realism. Further, John Mearsheimer notes in *The Great Delusion* (p. 221) that "many realists actually believe that if states acted according to balance-of-power logic, there would be hardly any wars between the great powers" and "the structure of the international system usually punishes aggressors..." War is not the automatic tool of realist thinkers. Murithi identifies "a central tenet of realism is that primary actors in the international system, nation-states, are first and foremost self-interested rational actors…" but does not identify other assumptions of neorealism, such the concept of anarchy as a structural feature of the international system (p. 41). In the paradigm, an anarchic world order is what drives states to self-help or self-interested behavior and needs to

be addressed if the worldview is to be dismissed (for example Mearsheimer's "The False Promise of International Institutions"). A more accurate engagement with realism could significantly strengthen his points.

Overall, this collection features many strong chapters addressing issues with which the continent and world will soon grapple. Critiques notwithstanding, the essays advance important arguments that could shape future discourse.

Michael Holmes, *Independent Scholar—Vienna, VA*

Elisha P. Renne. 2018. *Veils, Turbans, and Islamic Reform in Northern Nigeria*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 251 pp.

Trading has for long been a widely accepted culture among the Muslims in northern Nigeria and for many centuries, men, women and even children have engaged in all sorts of trading activities. These categories also work as cotton growers, spinners, weavers, dyers, cloth beaters, tailors, draftsmen, and embroiderers. All these were later facilitated by the nineteenth century reform that led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate by Uthman Danfodio (p. 1). This made northern Nigeria not only a center for Islamic practice but also a center of politics, religion, and economic activity. Therefore, Elisha P. Renne argues in this book that material distinction, religious ideology, political, and economic contexts are "important for understanding how people in northern Nigeria continue to seek a proper Islamic way of being in the world …" (p. 2).

The culture of dress pattern differentiates people on the street in northern Nigeria and one can easily recognize the position and class of a person on the society through the dress they wear: scholars, traders, royalty, men and women. Consequently, the establishment of textile industries even before Nigerian independence became a welcome development in the north (p. 3). Again, textile production assumed another importance in the society intimately linked with Islam through Qur'anic verses that prescribed covering the body (p. 4). Popular urban textile production centers in northern Nigeria include Kano, Zaria, Bida, and Ilorin as well as other smaller towns such as Kura and Zarewa, which also provided avenues of occupation opportunities for young Muslim men (p. 21). This could be linked to the nineteenth century trading experience in trans-Saharan and other trade networks with the Sokoto Caliphate. Traders traveled in caravans often on foot, with donkeys, horses, and camels to buy and sale goods including textiles within and outside the region (p. 32).

The author examined Ilorin as part of the Sokoto Caliphate in its position as a connector between the northern and southern Nigerian Muslims and a trading center. Muslims traded in embroidered robes between Kano, Zaria, Bida, and Ilorin during the nineteenth century, which presented the central importance of Ilorin in this context (p. 52). Textile trade in hand-woven robes have been a significant means of Muslim scholarship for scholars and students during the nineteenth century and Ilorin played an important role. For example, different types of clothes were produced by Ilorin hand-weavers that used to be of high demand during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as *Etu* (Yoruba), or *Saki* (Hausa) (p. 53). Ahmadu Bello (Sardauna of Sokoto) was one of the leaders who have shown great enthusiasm for the wearing of turbans

(*rawani*) and embroidered robes (*babban riga*) produced in the region that are important for a Muslim identity in northern Nigeria (p. 74).

The author examines the covering of the face, head, and body among Muslims in northern Nigeria as "material expression of piety, status, and class, which reflects processes of cultural negotiation" between Muslim men and women (p. 99). Muslim women wear veils and turbans depending on their status in society. For example, the wives of kings and scholars veil their faces by leaving only a narrow gap not to be seen by other men on the street (p. 97). Increased Muslim interaction with the Middle East from 1960 onward especially with the exposure of going to Mecca for *hajj* brought a considerable shift in the use of imported veils from the Arab world. While the last part of the 1970s witnessed a change in Muslim women's use of veils particularly with the introduction of *hijab* by the Izala, some locally made, and others imported from the Middle East, China and Europe. This shows that the use of veils and what constitute it has "been continually reassessed, renegotiate, revised, and replaced …" (p. 103). At first, hijab was odd but later, it became popular especially among women attending *Islamiyya* classes. However, by the late 1990s, the use of *hijab* had become a general Muslim women identity in the north. Presently, hijab has become a common dress for even secondary school girls and for Muslim students studying nursing or medicine in tertiary institutions in northern Nigeria (p. 115). Despite this development, not all Muslim women wear hijab; some prefer to dress in modest but in more stylish/fashionable manner with *gyale* or veil. This is particularly so among young women and elites, including governor's wives and first ladies. From 2008 onward, fashion hijab tends to become more popular among young unmarried girls and this "changing preferences in hijab styles reflect the shifting social and religious identities of women" in northern Nigeria. Wearing hijab today is no longer an Izala identity but generally the identity of being a modest Muslim woman/girl (p. 118). Hijab has therefore taken different forms in its evolution in the north.

Elisha Renne traced the history of textile mills to the cooperation between Ahmadu Bello and the British textile manufacturing leading to the establishment of the first modern textile mill in Kaduna in November 1957 and later five others were established before Bello's death in 1966. The textile mill began production using locally grown cotton. This development not only improved the economy in northern Nigeria but also increased rural migration for young people seeking employment opportunities. It also developed Kaduna into an attractive city leading to the expansion of both western and Islamic studies particularly with the establishment of departments of Industrial Design, Textile Technology, and Islamic Studies at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria (p. 155). The decline of textile manufacturing followed the political and economic instability in Nigeria. The "succession of political leaders in the 1980s, from President Shehu Shagari (1979-1983) to General Muhammadu Buhari (1983-1985) to General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993)—three heads of state in ten years—contributed to disjuncture in industrial policies" (p. 171). Despite the closure of the textile mills in northern Nigeria, Muslims women continue to wear imported *hijabs* and textiles (*atamfa*) from overseas. The effort of Bello to sustain local production of textile and improve the economy in northern Nigeria failed with the collapse of the textile mills (p. 177). Unfortunately, the author did not give adequate attention to the editing of Hausa words. For instance, Hausa city states was translated as *Hausawa Bakwai* (p. 19) instead of *Hausa Bakwai*, Christians as *Nasarawa* (p. 49) instead of *Nasara*,

Islamiyya Matan Aure (p. 113) instead of *Islamiyyar Matar Aure*, *gwagwaro* (p. 115) instead of *gwaggwaro*, and so forth.

Dauda Abubakar, *University of Jos*

Stephen Smith. 2019. *The Scramble for Europe: Young Africa on its Way to the Old Continent*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 197 pp.

Stephen Smith's book focuses on one of the touchy subjects in recent times: migration. In particular, Smith is concerned with the influx of Africans into Europe. The major purpose of the book is to "endeavour to assess Africa's importance as a reservoir of migrants, and as far as possible to predict both the magnitude and timing of this human flow from Africa to Europe" (p. 4). He predicted that under certain conditions, more than 100 million Africans are likely to cross the Mediterranean Sea over the next two generations.

Smith pointed out that, though Africa (especially Sub-Saharan Africa) is relatively poor, currently, half of the continent's population has access to 4G telephony or the internet and "a growing number of Africans are in the global information loop and can muster the resources to seek their fortune elsewhere" (p. 7). He compared the migratory move by Africans to Europe with the influx of Mexicans to the US in the 1970s. Smith cited a UN study published in 2000, which projected that the European Union will need to welcome almost 50 million immigrants by 2050 as a result of demographic decline and the challenges of a rapidly ageing population. He, however, noted that, with the dramatic influx of migrants in 2015, Europe is not prepared for numbers of this magnitude.

Thus, in what can be described as a book of demography or a history book, Smith expressed fear that Europe is about to be overrun by Africans! He wrote: "Young Africa will rush towards the Old Continent in an inversion of Europe's 'Scramble for Africa' at the end of the nineteenth century." While Africa had only about 150 million inhabitants between the two World Wars, its population rose to 300 million by 1960—the UN's "Year of Africa," when seventeen former colonies on the continent became independent—and doubled again by the end of the Cold War in 1989, with the population of Africa reaching one billion by 2010. By 2050, Africa's population is expected to reach 2.5 billion, two-thirds of whom will be less than thirty years old. By comparison, the European Union has about 510 million inhabitants presently, with a projection of about 450 million Europeans in another thirty-five years.

Smith reasoned that the solution to Africa's demographic challenge is a lowering of its fertility rate, noting that the use of modern methods of birth control on the continent is always less than 15 percent among women of child-bearing age. He accused the former colonial authorities and African governments after independence of not engaging in demographic governance. And also, in what he considers a paradox, he states that the countries of the North subsidize the countries of the South with development aid so that the poor can live a better life and, invariably, stay where they are. So, to Smith, these rich countries shoot themselves in the foot, as "development aid subsidizes migration" (p. 107).

The author concludes the book with some possible scenarios for the future. First is the "EurAfrica" scenario, in which African migrants are given a warm welcome to Europe with the hope of their providing the Old Continent with a younger, more diverse and more dynamic

population. The second scenario is "Fortress Europe," which involves securing Europe's border with a view to having a firm grip on the process of asylum. He, however, cautioned that "any attempt to stem Africa's 'scramble for Europe' through security measures alone is destined to fail" (p. 171). A third scenario is what he called "Mafia drift," in which he links human trafficking to be a cause of migration and the likelihood of human smugglers joining forces or starting a war with organized criminals in Europe. Another scenario is "The Return of the Protectorate" by which Europe could form pacts with some African leaders to stop their people from migrating by all means necessary and turn a blind eye to the consequences. The last scenario, "Bric-a-brac Politics," will be a somewhat combination of all the scenarios.

The book, made up of five chapters, ends on a sour note, as Smith tried to imagine how different Africa will be if all the energy its youth expend in migrating were turned inward. Thus, the central message of the book is: Africans should stay away from Europe and develop their continent! However, coming from someone like Stephen Smith who spent a considerable part of his working years in Africa and enjoyed its hospitality, it is a hard message. Overall, *The Scramble for Europe* is a captivating and rich piece, though some of the claims of the author appears exaggerated.

Olubukola S. Adesina, *University of Ibadan*

Funmi Soetan and Bola Akanji (eds.). 2019. *Through the Gender Lens: A Century of Social and Political Development in Nigeria*. London: Lexington Books. 360 pp.

Anthologies such as those edited by Ajayi and Ayantayo in 2015 (*Women in Development*), Amtaika in 2017 (*Culture, Democracy and Development in Africa*), and Sotunsa and Yacob-Haliso in 2018 (*Gender, Culture and Development in Africa*), have deliberated on gender relations in pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial Africa. Their quest has been to elucidate as well as address certain pertinent issues that have since the colonial era frustrated the emergence of a more gender-equitable society in 21st century Africa. The majority of such anthologies have concluded that gender relations in colonial and post-colonial Africa appeared skewed in favor of the male sex and such obnoxious structures have left women in many disadvantaged positions thereby creating a more difficult atmosphere for African development. It is within the foregoing milieu that Funmi Soetan and Bola Akanji in their new anthology situate the trajectory of Nigeria's gender relations over a century in their bid to explore the dynamics of gender mainstreaming and its effect on the social and political development of Nigeria. *Through the Gender Lens* has twelve chapters, a conclusion, index page, and notes about each of the contributors. As the editors aver, this anthology "explored some of the cause and effect dynamics of the gender-differentiated metrics…to assess the effects of the changing structures of policies, politics, socio-cultural norms, and service delivery mechanisms on the lives of women and men" (p. 12).

The editors began by presenting a well-detailed empirical analysis of gender inequality in the sociopolitical development of Nigeria. Very importantly, their positions are critical to the understanding of women's disadvantaged lived experiences in both colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. Beyond the social circle, they showed how economic dynamism brought a new twist to

gender relations in colonial Nigeria, which is very similar to the position Korieh took in 2010 (*The Land Has Changed*). More striking is their grounded argument that women are yet to enjoy the dividends of various international instruments as established for the entrenchment of women in better positions globally. Moreover, Bola Akanji et al. took a new dimension to show how state formations have impacted gender arrangements in a comparative discourse. Succinctly, the bases of arguments here is hinged on Latin American countries, which based on the plethora of evidences and confirmed by studies, had witnessed a consistent paradigm shifts on how the "State has been an active participant in creating the gender order" (p. 21); and "by the authority of the Church, a patriarchal character of colonial society was codified," which eventually fell "as the power of the market and private property allowed mestizas and coloreds to acquire social mobility or whitening' through wealth creation" (p. 23). However, while trying to show certain similarities and differences between Latin American societies and Nigeria in terms of gender and state formation, the goal became quite blurred as the chapter dwelled more on Latin America and undertook another lengthy exploration of African gender histories, before focusing on Nigeria, which was supposedly the primary focus. The chapter, however, did compartmentalize women's advancement from pre-colonial and colonial societies to civilian and military eras, noting that military regimes appeared more favorable in terms of women's development.

Further, the question of gender and poor healthcare, and its linkage to women's subservient position in Africa, and Nigeria, in particular, is no longer in doubt, since women are more exposed to a plethora of health challenges, which invariably place them in a very disadvantaged position. Despite various pieces of legislation and conventions to address these issues, it would appear that in Nigeria, especially in rural locales, women themselves are to be blamed for their travails. Pointedly, what Helen Aderemi did with chapter four of *Through the Gender Lens* is quite interesting as she traces the evolution of entrepreneurship and how this became a major source of survival for women in Nigerian patriarchal societies, most especially during both colonial and post-colonial eras. As a core strand in the social history, the concept of western education has since the colonial period until very recently remained a subtle but effective means in the subjugation of women as "educational and training opportunities initiated by governments in Nigeria, including those introduced by the colonial system of government, have limited the educational and training available to women" (p. 108). Worse still, in as much as such a trend continues to persist in Nigeria, women, most especially in a rural setting would be the most hit in terms of skewed gender relations.

Dixon Torimiro's contribution stands out, as he addresses a critical aspect of societal development—that which deals with the youth-development nexus. Noting how gender inequalities have affected agricultural goals, Torimori advocated that youths' gender relations be set straight, as to aid avoid challenges in future agricultural explorations. But one major factor inhibiting gender equity remains poor participation of women in the Nigeria political circle, as such poor representations mean women have little chance of effecting positive changes for themselves, which ultimately leaves them at the mercy of their male counterparts. The last three chapters prove quite germane since they deal with how culture could help enhance gender relations, women's fight for social justice, and resisting structural violence respectively.

The idea that women have not been proactive in agitating for better conditions in both social and political terrains were empirically debunked.

Through the Gender Lens does have a few shortcomings. There is, for instance, an over-tenacity regarding the idea of gender equality. Critical studies, however, have shown that the idea of gender equality might be utopian, for a state of equality does not guarantee a state of fairness and justice; however, gender equity does. Overall, though, the book presents an in-depth analytical exploration of one hundred years of gender relations in a developing society. Furthermore, it virtually touches the social and political structure of Nigeria through the employment of historical and multidisciplinary approaches with massive statistical and theoretical frameworks. Therefore, I highly recommend *Through the Gender Lens* to scholars of gender studies, social and political historians, as well as everyone interested in grasping a better understanding of how gender relations are skewed so as to be able to address such anomalies.

Patrick Chukwudike Okpalaeke, *University of Uyo*

Heather D. Switzer. 2018. *When the Light is Fire: Maasai Schoolgirls in Contemporary Kenya*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press. 248 pp.

Heather Switzer illuminates the experiences and daily lives of Maasai schoolgirls by conducting over one hundred interviews in Keekonyokie Central Location, Ngong Division, and Kajiado District regions in Kenya. Switzer situates her ethnographic work within a neoliberal critique of Western discourses in which African girls are envisioned as helpless, passive victims of female genital cutting, arranged marriages, and other gender-related forms of oppression. In doing so she troubles and complicates African girlhood narratives where Maasai schoolgirls "continually produce, disrupt, modify, negotiate meanings about themselves and participate in the construction of the social worlds they inhabit" (p. 22). Although Maasai are often typecast as refusing—even hating—education, Maasai schoolgirls express a particular knowledge about their intersectional identities and conjure hopes and dreams for their futures.

Switzer makes an important contribution to the broader discourse on girls' education elucidating what she calls "the schoolgirl effect," a pervasive idea that schooling will empower individual girls to be engineers of social and developmental change. Switzer places Maasai schoolgirl narratives within the context of a larger global critique on neoliberal discourses commodifying girls' education and girls' bodies as natural resources serving as economic productivity. She demonstrates the ways that "girl-effects logic" has permeated global and local consciousness and highlights its inherent contradictions. As conceptualized globally, "girl-effect logic" positions girls as active, empowered, and transformative agents of change when in actuality, girls are often minor players in a patriarchal economic system in which they have limited control: e.g. if/when to attend school or whom/when to marry and begin childrearing.

Grounded in gendered development paradigms derived in the 1960s, the "Girls in Development" (GID) paradigm equates female education with empowerment, and empowerment with economic growth. Equally, it places the blame on schoolgirls for not achieving desired developmental outcomes, a narrative internalized and often reproduced by schoolgirls themselves. Switzer contends that without a critical examination of the multifarious histories that precede them and omnipresent effects of capitalism and the global knowledge

economy that marginalizes them, Maasai schoolgirls will continue to be victims of the widespread projects of neoliberalism which promote personal responsibility, hard work, and individual efforts. Ultimately, Switzer shows how the production, performance, embodiment, and negotiation of schoolgirlhood exemplifies tension and cohesion with the past/present/future and being/becoming for Maasai girls and Maasai communities.

Drawing from queer theory, Switzer looks to several feminist bodies of literature to trace the emergence of schoolgirlhood as a social category and embodied experience. She also acknowledges the scholarly traditions in girlhood studies that prioritize white and Western narratives of girlhood, and likewise carefully considers how methodological decisions impact participant narratives and consequently, her findings. She argues that the literature perpetually limits narratives geographically, ethnically, linguistically, and socio-culturally, and thus is incomplete and insufficient to provide a comprehensive framework with which to understand Maasai schoolgirls' experiences. To this end, she uses scavenger methodologies in attempts to provide a much-needed interdisciplinary space for Maasai schoolgirls virtually invisible in the literature. Nevertheless, we observe the absence of African epistemologies, theories, philosophies, or methodologies in her efforts. Switzer's usage of scavenger methodologies very notably neglects decades of the Black feminist thought and theorizing that centers the stories, experiences, and herstories of Black women and girls, across the African diaspora. Certainty, there is a dearth of studies on Kenyan girls, specifically those within the broader contexts of international education, feminist and post-colonial studies, however, the literature does indeed provide sound resources for a fairly broad picture of girlhood experiences in diverse cultural contexts across Africa. *Methodologies for Mapping a Southern African Girlhood in the Age of AIDS* (Molestsane et al., 2008), for example, is recognized as the first book in the area of girlhood studies from a distinct African girl viewpoint. A year later, in a special edition of *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* (2009), authors illuminated the diverse experiences of African girls by confronting issues of safety, security, sexuality, access and education. While Switzer's ethnographic study attempts to give space to the narratives and stories of Maasai schoolgirls, the absence of African sensibilities in her research likewise demonstrates the perpetuation of westernized research on Black bodies foregrounded by a privileged position of White, western, elite womanhood.

In conclusion, Switzer argues that while global trends necessitate development in girls' education, this goal remains practically unfulfilled in practice. Girls, specifically those from impoverished regions and remote ethnic groups continue to negotiate the historical contexts of colonial education, traditional cultural mores, and the pervasive impacts of modernization, post-colonialism, and neoliberal projects. Ultimately, Switzer crafts and substantiates the emergence of schoolgirlhood as a social category through rich descriptions and narrative accounts, illuminating the complexities and contradictions embodied in Maasai schoolgirl identities. Yet, a lack of attention to ethnographic methodology renders this ethnography a rich reading of Switzer's findings with no ethnographic roadmap to guide the reader through Switzer's decisions around translation and steps towards interview/observation analysis. Nonetheless, this book would be a great read for classes on international development, comparative education, African studies, girlhood studies, and ethnographic research.

Amber M. Neal and Janie R. Copple, *University of Georgia*

Rudolph T. Ware III, Zachary V. Wright, and Amir Syed. 2018. *Jihad of the Pen: The Sufi Literature of West Africa*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press. 316 pp.

Jihad of the Pen: The Sufi Literature of West Africa is a nineteenth and twentieth century West African ethnographic study of Islāmic/Qur'ānic philosophy and Taṣawwuf (Sufism) metaphysics. The Islāmic historians Rudolph T. Ware III, Zachery V. Wright, and Amir Syed incorporate into the book via classical Arabic-English manuscript translations four West African Islāmic philosopher-scholars—Sufi-Shaykh 'Uthmān bin Fūdī (d. 1817, Nigeria), Sufi-Shaykh 'Umar al-Futi Tal (d. 1864, Mali), Sufi-Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba Mbacké (d. 1927, Senegal) and Sufi-Shaykh Ibrāhīm bin 'Abdallah Niasse (d. 1975, Senegal)—who seek to enrich their devotion as Muslims to Allāh and The Prophet Muhammad through teachings from The Holy Qur'ān, the Sunnah and Ḥadīth, and panegyric/prophetic praise poetry.

Wright's introduction develops a theoretical foundation and functional understanding for researchers of West African Islāmic mysticism, formally known as Taṣawwuf and commonly as Sufism. The book delves into religious resistance to British and French colonialism, and provides insight into West African Islāmic culture and etiquette as mirrored from the perspective of Islāmic jurisprudence, the Sunnah and Ḥadīth. The consistent theme within the book analyses how the four West African Sufi-Shaykhs applies Sufi/Islāmic beliefs combined with religious discipline and introspection as forward mobility for a Muslim's personal relationship with Allāh. Wright specifies: "These four saints represent four successive generations in which affiliation to a Sufi order became an integral component of most Muslim identities in West Africa. Certainly, each responded to different historical circumstances—particularly in relation to European colonial conquest. But their teachings collectively achieved a common goal: the further inscription and spread of Islamic learning despite the various historical challenges of enslavement, revolution, colonial occupation, and postcolonial balkanization. Each scholar considered here adapted his understanding of the Prophet Muhammad's example to his own environment" (p. 6).

"Part 1: Shaykh 'Uthmān bin Fūdī," consists of three books written by Sufi-Shaykh 'Uthmān bin Fūdī between 1774-1787 including *The Roots of the Religion*, *The Science of Behavior* (both translated by A'isha Abdurrahman Bewley), and *The Book of Distinction* (translated by Muhammad Shareef). The translator's analysis of Fūdī's writings demonstrates his sincere dedication to Islām and the oneness of God (Allāh), and how he incorporates Sufism metaphysics into daily life for shaping personal character. Both translators reveal Sufi-Shaykh 'Uthmān bin Fūdī as a Fulani-Sufi mystic, Sufi philosopher-scholar, and revolutionary reformer of his generation. As a jihadi, Fūdī also exhibits his contempt for existing system of governance, which advances his philosophy of sovereignty for a new Muslim state in 1808 in the region of today's northern Nigeria.

"Part 2: Shaykh 'Umar al-Futi Tal," translated by Syed, consists of Sufi-Shaykh 'Umar al-Futi Tal's prophetic praise poetry for The Prophet Muhammad, his thoughts regarding Sharia (Islāmic Law), and recounts his traveling to Mecca in 1826 to perform the Hajj. Amir Syed illustrates Tal's West African Sufi order contributions, his mastery of the Arabic language and of Islāmic/Qur'ānic knowledge. Syed also attempts to show Tal's impartiality to worldly possessions, and the purification of the soul by remembrance of Allāh through spiritual retreat. Interestingly, therein exists within Tal's poems clear indications that he believed a life of

complication bounds and redirects a Muslim's attention from Allāh. Tal cleverly infuses Islāmic traditions to help cultivate seekers of knowledge in Sufism, piety and spirituality. At once a Tukulor Empire leader, a Sufi philosopher-scholar, and a jihadi, Tal refines himself into a prime example for rejecting regional political mischief and French imperialism.

"Part 3: Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba Mbacké," translated by Ware, consists of Mbacké's poetry as a life centered on vivid prayers, resistance top French colonialism, and panegyric/prophetic praise poetry for The Prophet Muhammad. Mbacké candidly applies his use of classical Arabic linguistics as an emotionally charged method of communication to express his deepest and dearest admiration for his mother (Maryam) and Sufi mysticism. His poems are at times esoterically abstract and bequeaths subtle thoughts regarding his homecoming to Jannah (The Paradise Garden). Ware's translation of Mbacké's surviving writings also shows progressions as a young composer of poems to a charismatic philosopher of Sufism. Post reading his three poems—The Valiant One (*al-Sindid*), Pathways of Paradise (*Masalik al-Jinan*) and Gifts of the Benefactor in Praise of the Intercessor (*Mawahib al-nafi' fi mada'ih al-shafi'*)—I believe his lifetime of Qur'ānic study and holy war waged against the French colonial power led to his desire to exclusively concentrate on Sufism, the Sunnah and Ḥadīth. Becoming comfortable with his mortality, via prayers to Allāh, he yearns to be placed among the most sincere Muslims within Paradise (Heaven). In reference to Pathways of Paradise (*Masalik al-Jinan*), Mbacké remarks, "For prayers surely bring great rewards, benefiting the dead in their graves as well as the living." (p. 139).

"Part 4: Shaykh Ibrāhīm bin 'Abdallah Niasse," translated by Wright, provides a litany of Niasse's Islāmic/Qur'ānic philosophies and reflective self-discipline. Niasse seems to make the path of Sufism plain throughout his writings void of over-complication for seekers of the knowledge. Like the previously mentioned Sufi-Shaykh philosopher-scholars, his poems are esoteric in thought and abstract in approach. However, Niasse seeks to make the science of Sufism intellectually digestible without losing disciples of the Senegalese al-Tijāniyyah Sufi order. Niasse expresses, although the path of righteousness is narrow, spiritual mastery is attainable via The Removal of Confusion (*Kashif al-ilbas*). Niasse further qualifies his philosophy of Sufism by affirming, "Some of them do other things depending on their ways, which are very many indeed, to the extent it has been said that the paths (*turuq*) to God are as many as the breaths of all the created beings." (p. 192). Wright presents Sufi-Shaykh Ibrāhīm bin 'Abdallah Niasse as a Sufi philosopher-scholar who heavily gleaned from the life of The Prophet Muhammad via the Sunnah and Ḥadīth for spiritual inspiration and guidance. Additionally, Niasse assimilated words of wisdom from The Prophet Muhammad as a conduit for religious behavior as a Muslim.

In conclusion, each author's approach in *Jihad of the Pen* seeks academically to dismiss common misunderstandings of West African Islāmic thought for Western understanding. The translations of each Sufi-Shaykh's philosophies and prophetic praise poems, although occasionally dense, read superbly and illuminate their Islāmic knowledge of Qur'ānic exegesis. Although Sufi-Shaykh 'Uthmān bin Fūdī, Sufi-Shaykh 'Umar al-Futi Tal, Sufi-Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba Mbacké, and Sufi-Shaykh Ibrāhīm bin 'Abdallah Niasse zealously devoted themselves to a spiritual life of Sufism, each one appears to not fear death as expressed throughout their poems. Contrariwise, each conveys effervescent messages of supreme appreciation for life,

particularly as they enter elderhood. Moreover, each Sufi-Shaykh explores Islāmic jurisprudence and the Sunnah and Ḥadīth to guide themselves and various West African Sufi orders of their generation into paths of discipline, self-actualization, and spirituality. Above all, each author's classical Arabic-English translations of each Sufi-Shaykh's manuscripts encourages supplementary study of West African Sufism and challenges contemporary misconceptions of Islāmic thought with a delicate touch. University students enrolled in schools of divinity (seminary) and or enquiring minds with interests in historical and modern-day West African Sufism/Islāmic philosophy ought to find *Jihad of the Pen: The Sufi Literature of West Africa* to be indeed a captivating read.

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Jan Zahorik. 2019. *Inequalities and Conflicts in Modern and Contemporary African History: A Comparative Perspective*. New York and London: Lexington Books. 159 pp.

Jan Zahorik utilizes multiple case studies of inequalities to demonstrate that contemporary African political, economic, and social conflicts can be properly understood by placing them within their historical, cultural, and global contexts. Zahorik elevates ethno-nationalism as the central determinant informing the prevalence of political conflicts and separatist movements in modern and contemporary Africa. This approach dissociates from sweeping scholarly generalizations that tend to project contemporary African conflicts as wholly reflective of the residual consequences of colonial legacy. Although cognizant of the role played by colonialism in inventing ethnic identities, Zahorik illuminates Africa's complex and differential experiences. Principally, the paradox of the prevalence of political violence and ethnic tensions in countries that had no contact with colonialism, such as Ethiopia, prompts a re-evaluation of modern and contemporary African conflicts.

This monograph consists of three main sections. The first section addresses the nature of colonialism and growth of nationalist movements. Zahorik explores the role of colonialism in the creation of arbitrary borders that disregarded the indigenous people's social and cultural environments. For instance, the Bakongo people were sub-divided between French Congo, Belgium Congo, Gabon, and Angola; and the same arbitrariness holds true for the division of Somali ethnic groups. This has often led to the rise of secessionist movements in post-colonial Africa. To add complexity, Ethiopia, which does not fit into the bracket of post-colonial states, has also experienced the growth of separatist movements.

For Zahorik, the formation of nationalist parties and choice of leadership across Africa drew on ethnic mobilization. Zahorik uses the case studies of Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya where ethnic fragmentation militated against the formation of collective national identities and consensus. Thus, political and social conflicts in African countries such as Eritrea, Somaliland, and Western Sahara were catalyzed primarily by the unequal distribution of wealth and political exclusion. In essence, ethno-nationalism has become a highly politicized category appropriated by excluded groups to voice their concerns and forming the seedbed for the recurrence of conflicts in contemporary Africa.

Apart from the larger movement for national independence in Africa, the continent has concurrently witnessed the rise of micro-level forms of ethno-nationalism driven by cumulative

experiences of oppression, economic decline, and marginalization. Zahorik contends that African nationalists appropriated the ideas of socialism, Marxism, and nationalism that sought to find an alternative to capitalism in the eras of decolonization and the Cold War. Nevertheless, this appropriation does not imply conformity across Africa. This gives credence to Zahorik's search for answers to the pervasiveness of identity politics and the politicization of ethnicity in countries with no colonial experience.

The second section expands on the variables shaping the nature of social relations and ethnic statuses in contemporary Africa. These revolve around the crisis of citizenship, regional imbalances, ethnic favoritism, and uneven distribution of natural resources. Additionally, Zahorik factors in the role of global interests in compounding the pervasiveness of resource conflicts in regions endowed with abundant natural resources, such as the oil rich Niger Delta.

The final section zeroes in on Ethiopia where the struggle for land and wealth has increasingly become politicized, a situation which replicates itself across the African continent. Despite the economic abundance of resources in the Ethiopian region of Oromia, the area has experienced continuous political marginalization, and this breeds ethno-centrist nationalism. Principally, the political conflicts in Ethiopia represent "unresolved historical resentments, inequalities in terms of socio-economic development, political exclusion, ethnic favoritism, and but not least global context" (p.126). With Ethiopia as a centralized state and land ownership vested in the hands of the state, tensions have intensified as the indigenous communities face continuous displacement and disinheritance of their local resources to pave way for market-oriented projects. To hold Ethiopia together, Zahorik proposes decentralization and inclusivist policies based on ethnic federalism by devolving autonomy and ownership of resources to groups living on the margins of the state.

In terms of sources, Zahorik drew findings and perspectives upon secondary data from cognate disciplines such as political science, development studies, and anthropology. Nevertheless, the inclusion of more oral narratives could have given this seminal work an experiential impression by capturing the thoughts and emotions of the ethno-nationalists. Overall, by going beyond colonial historiography, Jan Zahorik's synthetic monograph makes a valuable contribution to the literature on ethno-nationalist conflicts bedeviling modern and contemporary Africa.

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