# Transforming African and African-American Sociopolitical and Educational Realities: Possibilities Or Pipe Dreams?

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*Apartheid No More*. Reitumetse Obakeng Mabokela and Kimberly Lenease King, eds. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 2001. 173 pp.

*When Race Becomes Real*. Bernestine Singley, ed. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2002. 335 pp.

*Education in a Globalized World: The Connectivity of Economic Power, Technology, and Knowledge*. Nelly P. Stromquist. Lanham, Md: Roman & Littlefield, 2002. 240 pp.

During recent periods the African continent has been visible on the American radar screen via the media presentations of President George W. Bush's trip to the continent, the allocation of $15 billion for the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the alleged and later proven false reports of Iraq's plans to purchase uranium from Niger, and unfortunately, the bloody civil conflicts in Congo, Liberia, Burundi, and Rwanda. Simultaneously, in the United States African immigrants and African-Americans are debating means to influence American corporate and foreign policy toward Africa. The media presentations and the discussions among groups highlight issues for debate within the scholarly and public policy communities regarding some fundamental phenomena affecting Africa and African-Americans *and* the positing of salient sociopolitical and educational policies to address the challenges.

In the three volumes by Mabokela and King, Singley, and Stromquist, we can comprehend the interconnectivity among individual, institutional, and global challenges as altered and/or new factors manifest themselves in contemporary milieus. The volumes provide foundations for exploring poignant questions: Although universities in the new South Africa have become open to all students, what are the subtle means that impede the progress of African students and faculty? How do national financial resource allocations alter the effectiveness of social and educational institutions when the machinations of political realities continually appear? Does the effect of racism in America lessen or increase the ability of African-Americans and European-Americans to fully comprehend ethnic and racial conflicts on the African continent? To what extent do the pervasive effects of globalization and its various manifestations necessitate that we posit new models to examine on-going and emerging problems of economic power, technology, and new knowledge? In essence, can meaningful sociopolitical and institutional transformations occur so that the individual and collective lives of people will be enhanced?

Too often there is a tendency among sophisticated lay audiences to view education as merely teacher education and pedagogy. Mabokela's and King's volume, *Apartheid No More*, quickly moves beyond that perspective and instead attempts to portray the nexus between the elimination of political apartheid in South Africa and Namibia *and* apartheid's extant remnants in universities. In *Apartheid No More*, scholars representing the fields of sociology, intercultural studies, history, philosophy, and educational policy studies and higher education explicate and analyze the post-1948 elections that were pivotal in

enacting several repressive laws of apartheid.[1] The contributors to the volume examine these laws in the light of the laws and measures of the 1990s and beyond which were designed to eliminate apartheid. All chapters in the volume maintain that sociopolitical and economic forces are integrally linked to educational policies and programs, the psychological reactions of university students in intergroup and interracial relations, and subtle lingering measures that prevent the recruitment and retention of black African faculty.

The authors examine the necessity for and means of structural and policy transformation by discussing the historically marginalized positions of black universities which was comparable to the peripheral positions of other societal institutions such as hospitals, social welfare agencies, and labor organizations. Although whites comprised well under 30% of the population, ten historically white universities were created between 1829 and the 1960s compared to only five for black, colored, and Indian students.

Sociocultural and linguistic features were visible in six of the Afrikaans-language universities and four of the English-medium sites. Similar divisions existed for Indians (University of Durban, Westville), University of Western Cape (for Colored students), University of North (for Sotho-Venda-Tsongan-speaking individuals), the University of Zululand (for Zulu-speakers), and the University of Fort Hare (the oldest Black university designed for Xhosa-speaking Africans). Historical sociolinguistic divisions or cleavages were used to separate groups which lessened the possibilities for creating inter-group solidarity. The languages of instruction, the social studies curriculum, and the composition of the faculty also limited cross-cultural interactions. The Extension of University Act (1959), in some regards, had a similar effect at the university level as the Bantu Education Act had had for primary and secondary education. Both established and/or further solidified postsecondary education along ethnic lines. The nexus between sociopolitical and public educational policies, thus again, becomes evident. Due to politically-charged enactments by the South African Parliament, the segregated universities provided only substandard instruction.

Prior to the 1990s, the national government established and then justified differential university funding formulas based upon the number of student matriculants, the percentage of students who were successful in their academic studies (certainly influenced by their level of preparation in segregated secondary institutions), enrollments in scientific fields in contrast to the humanities, and graduate student enrollment. Hence, as Mabokela and King portray, the University of Cape Town (an English-medium white site) garnered 71% of its budget from the government compared to 46% by the University of the Western Cape (an English-speaking Colored university situated in the same metropolitan area). The repercussions of these policies are discussed in case studies, which highlight inadequate infrastructures, different academic credentials for white, black, Colored, and Indian faculty, and limited instructional and curricular material.

The case studies in *Apartheid No More* also discuss contemporary issues that have emerged since the early 1990s with the advent of democratic government. Anne Austin, for example, in her chapter "Transformation through Negotiation," discusses the University of Port Elizabeth Strategic Master Plan, which stated that "negotiated transformation is a process in which the systemic features of the institutions are modified...which include structural, cultural, and interactional dimensions," (pp. 5-7). Equally important for universities are the cultural transformations, which refer to the ideals, ideologies, knowledge, and values for the university and their transmission to graduates who, in turn, can effect transformations in their careers *and* in provincial and national policymaking.

Doria Daniel's chapter, "Crossing the Divide: Black Academics at the Rand Afrikaans University" discusses transformation in terms of reorientation of individuals and groups. Rodney K. Hopson's chapter, "Higher Education Transformation in Namibia" offers insight on the impediments to

transforming the nature of higher education due to the lingering roles of "of cultural hegemony [as] the process where ruling classes are able to exert general predominance over subordinate classes," (pp. 124-125). Collectively, the constructs offered by Austin, Daniel, and Hopson provide perspectives of transformation after apartheid. The challenging task then becomes one of combining the various elements of transformation into concrete policies and programs that reflect the new post-apartheid constitutional provisions. The new South African constitution stipulates non-racial and non-sexist conditions and requires affirmative action. The question remains: How will postsecondary institutions implement such comprehensive transformation?

Mabokela's chapter, "Selective Inclusion" portrays how faculty at the University of Stellenbosch struggle with language since Afrikaans is not adequately understood by many blacks to enable them to participate fully in university life. In essence, a transformation in language policy is necessary to incorporate non-racial policies in universities. In "Oh Sorry, I'm a Racist: Black Student Experiences at the University of Witwatersrand," Rochelle Woods describes how sometimes the questions of black students are dismissed or ridiculed by white faculty, how white students avoid blacks outside formal classroom interactions, and how perceptions exists that white students (and some faculty) are afraid or feel intimidated by blacks. In one instance, a white male student sent an e-mail to a student asking her if she would like to talk. The woman student replied that she is black whereupon the white male replied, "Oh, sorry, I'm a racist," (p. 101). Such interpersonal attitudes portray blacks in transformational processes.

Professionals and faculty at the postsecondary level are aware of government and university plans to initiate affirmative action so that more blacks and women will be represented in the faculty and professional ranks. Identifying promising undergraduate and graduate students and young faculty is one method of "growing one's own" to join the professional ranks. However, Daniels points out that when such promising blacks or women join the professional cadre, many report that white faculty still believe they were appointed simply because of affirmative action and not because of their academic qualifications and experiences. Several chapters conclude that limited progress is being made in the transformation process due to such individual attitudes. However, there is irony at play because many historically white institutions now have a majority black student body which itself is a major indicator of positive social and educational transformation.

While Mabokela's and King's volume contained a few chapters concentrating on individual experiences with and perceptions of racism, Bernestine Singley has assembled an impressive array of scholars and professionals ranging from a twelve-year old to an eighty-year old former executive editor of the *USA Today* newspaper. The twenty plus essays is comparable to reading a biography or novel. *When Race Becomes Real* articulates the many manifestations of racism in the United States in range of disciplines (including communication and journalism, economics, engineering, sociology, psychology, history, and literature). The essays are organized into three main sections: Genesis, Fear and Longing, and Exodus.

Within the Genesis section, world-renowned journalists, Leonard Pitts, Jr., John Seigenthaler, Sr., and Jim Schutze write from their personal and professional perspectives. In an appropriately titled essay, Pitts argues that it is the constant forms of racism that makes blacks and other American minorities "Crazy Sometimes." Jim Schutze explains how, as a European-American six-year old, he burglarized the church collection boxes along with African-American first-graders. His misadventures, however, were viewed vastly different from his African-American peers who were sanctioned. John Seigenthaler, Sr. recounts his early life in the American south during the first third of the 20th century. He recalls how laws, customs, and white preference meant that his hometown was racially partitioned just like South Africa.

How journalists and other professionals move beyond the experiences of what Woods refers to as "everyday racism," in the Mabokela and King volume, is the constant challenge.

Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient and child psychiatrist, Robert Coles, recalls his first conscious remembrances of racism as a six-year old in the Boston metropolitan area. Additional chapters in the Genesis section portray how African-American and white teenagers struggle with racism in their personal lives. In some instances, it is not vastly different from thoughts voiced by South African university students. "Talking White," written by Kimberly Springer narrates how other African American youth and even her father sometimes ridicule her for "talking white," as if she were relinquishing some of her cultural and psychological identity to succeed. From another perspective, Lucy Gibson, in "It all Started with My Parents" describes her extreme discomfort as her father continually voiced derogatory comments toward African-Americans and sometimes women. In essence, while individual psychological proclivity may have existed, structural sociopolitical conditions reinforced her father's individual perceptions and actions. In all the essays within the Genesis section, we observe the constant interplay between individual perspectives and sociocultural structures, laws, and norms.

In the Fear and Longing section, some of the essays are written by academicians and scholars who encounter racism within the halls of Ivy League institutions, on the lecture circuit, and within various social institutions. For example, in "To Make Them Stand in Fear," historian David Bradley examines lynchings in the 1800s and first half of the 1900s and raises the penetrating question of whether lynchings still occur today. A lynching, according to Bradley, is a murder committed by a conspiracy of private citizens, with malice and expectations of impunity. Bradley maintains that lynching is a form of terrorism to instill fear and intimidation in blacks so they would not compete with European Americans in economic, social, or political spheres. Notably, he asserts that while the violent lynchings of a century ago are not often observable (a notable exception was the brutal vehicular dragging and dismemberment of an African American man in Jasper, Texas in 1998), newer forms of intimidation are occurring. Contemporary racial profiling, not uncommon for African-American and other minorities, often leads to use of unnecessary physical force and arrests by police.

In Singley's final section titled Exodus, essays by Beverly Daniel Tatum, Noel Ignatiev, and Michael Patrick MacDonald warrant attention as they address "white privilege" and civil rights in Boston, Ireland, and South Africa. Tatum and Ignatiev's essays explicate the social construction of white privilege. Individuals of primarily European descent have particular rights, liberties, and entitlements based upon their physical appearance of being white. As psychologist Tatum observes in "Choosing to Be Black – The Ultimate White Privilege?" often ongoing sociocultural life means that European-Americans do not have to think about their being white and the benefits it accrues. While social class may be salient factors for European-Americans in the United States, there are privileges (regardless of social strata)– based upon being visibly white --such as not being the victims of racial profiling, or assumptions that a student selection is based on merit. Such conditions are not generic to African-Americans. Subsequently, Ignatiev's "One Summer Evening" recounts why and how he began publishing *Race Traitor*, a journal premised upon the idea that "treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity," (295). The overarching goal of the journal is to help society understand that the white race is a peculiar social formation and continues based upon ongoing conformity to social institutions and behavior patterns that perpetuate white privileges.

In an intriguing essay, "All Souls: Civil Rights from Southie to Soweto and Back," MacDonald discusses his impoverished white background in South Boston where 85% of the residents were welfare recipients and 73% were headed by single women. Despite their disadvantaged backgrounds, these residents were the most resistant to school integration via busing in the 1970s and 1980s. As an adult,

MacDonald traveled to Northern Ireland, where he was exposed to an area known as Soweto because the residents maintained that they were treated like blacks in Soweto, South Africa.

The final book in this review, Nelly P. Stromquist's volume, *Education in a Globalized World: The Connectivity of Economic Power, Technology, and Knowledge*, delineates revised sociopolitical and economic paradigms for comprehending global phenomena especially as they affect minorities in the United States and people of Africa and other developing nations. A senior professor of international development, Stromquist seeks to move beyond existing paradigms associated with dependency, neocolonialism, and post-modern theories. The volume begins with the premise that globalization compels a multidisciplinary examination.

To elaborate on the effects of globalization, Stromquist cites economic statistics from the United States and other settings affected by an international labor market where each year about 500,000 Americans are displaced by imports and about one-third of these will be re-employed with no substantial decrease in lifetime earning. About 33% will experience severe reductions. However, labor conditions and compensation in developing nations means meager existence, including malnourishment, in the very countries, which export goods to the United States and other North or developed nations. Further income distribution levels are widening, rather than narrowing, with increased globalization. So, ratio discrepancies between developed and developing nations rose from 30 to one in 1960, 60 to one in the early 1990s, and then 71 to one by the late 1990s.

Globalization is a multidimensional and multilevel phenomenon initiated by industrialized countries and pursued via formal and informal structures. Stromquist further posits that the G-8 countries have set in motion and sustain economic conditions (including international trade, labor, and intellectual property rights) that affect all sectors of individual societies and international relations. Furthermore, the influences or roles of transnational corporations (TNCs) and the media are critical to the process. The media, according to Stromquist, convey messages and symbols about business products and commodities that promote economic exchanges. She explains how the interactive effect of TNCs and the media are perpetuating "new knowledge" which is created by collaborations between TNCs and universities. The new knowledge is usually not developed in emerging nations of Africa and elsewhere. Indeed, the dissolution or eradication of indigenous knowledge common to African ethnic groups prevents the maintenance of their positive sociocultural practices and modes of learning. Simultaneously, in developed countries, knowledge creation (in a range of fields) is protected by western intellectual property law. To what extent should knowledge production and intellectual property be available to all, and under what conditions, with new forms of dissemination via the internet and other technological modes? After all, if indigenous knowledge is dissolved and African universities are not integrally involved in the intellectual property equation, then African citizens are not equal beneficiaries of globalization.

Herein lies the crux of Stromquist's arguments regarding globalization: there is a convergence, rather than a divergence, of economic, sociocultural, political, and educational accruals to northern nations. Even when there are some benefits for developing nations, it is usually to select societal sectors and in most cases, globalization has deleterious effects on minorities including African-Americans. For example, when technological positions are transferred overseas –-instead of preparing black and Hispanic Americans for such positions-–they are often transferred to select Asian nations and are acquired by individuals who have spent time or undertaken training in western nations (Auchard, 2003).

Identifying the means to transform these structural economic and sociocultural conditions within developed nations so that globalization reaps benefits for all, especially in African and developing nations is a daunting endeavor. For Stromquist, non-government organizations (NGOs) can lead the resistance to the status quo. Although they vary in their altruistic goals, Stromquist maintains that the majority of NGOs pursue the public's good by seeking the social inclusion of marginalized people and drawing

attention to harmful market patterns and government structural policies which are not beneficial. In her final analysis, she suggests that resistance to adverse effects of globalization (such as labor displacement, low salaries, mean work conditions, and environmental degradation) must take into account the interconnected components of economic power, technology, and new knowledge. In addition, individuals, labor unions, women's organizations, university students and faculty, and the United Nations should buttress resistance.

Together, the three volumes provide a comprehensive framework for reshaping the future. The three books advocate the alteration or creation of intellectual and disciplinary paradigms that can help professionals in the social sciences, humanities, technology, and sciences address pressing global and domestic issues, so that alternative sociopolitical, cultural and educational policies are posited and implemented. As this successfully occurs, various public educational and social entities will benefit.

In conclusion, we should note the salient piece by the late Nobel Laureate Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, who, over 60 sixty years ago, maintained that universities are part of the public good and must prepare students and faculty to address concrete problems and pose solutions.[2] In conjunction with other active groups and organizations, universities can create multidisciplinary intellectual knowledge that can assist in promoting positive sociopolitical and cultural transformation.

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**NOTES**

1. Notable among such laws are the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949); the Population Registration Act (1950) requiring a pass which limited physical mobility; the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1950) obligating specific residential locales for the races; and the Bantu Education Act (1953) which restricted the types and levels of educational access and attainment. Hence the rights of Black and Colored people were severely curtailed by solidifying public and educational policies of apartheid throughout South Africa and the former South West Africa, now Namibia.

2. Bunche, 1940.

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*Issues in the Contemporary Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa: The Dynamics of Struggle and Resistance*. Graham Harrison. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2002. 208 pp.


In this book, Harrison grapples with the tendency of analysts to homogenize African realities, "make grand generalizations about an 'African malaise' or even a dark continent", and approach Africa as a singular and diseased entity, rather than an amalgam of cultures and entities with diverse experiences, apparent problems and innate promises (p. 14). Owing to this practice, Africans have become passive, helpless and incompetent beings who are subsisting in a violent and poverty-laden milieu, and essentially are unable to wrest themselves from those presumably responsible for their dire conditions.

Harrison's political-economy approach is dynamic and informed by struggle. He rejects a structural approach, which does not imbue Africans with agency and which ignores (or dismisses) Africans' novel resistance to and transformation of myriad sources of oppression. He highlights the inauspicious legacies of colonialism, which resulted in corruption, authoritarianism and extra-economic coercion, and which engendered "contradictions between accumulation and political power…as factions fought over patronage, and states extracted such high rent from their citizenry that peasants, traders and others bypassed the state altogether" (pp. 9-10). Harrison concretizes the notion of struggle within the context of the tenuous interplay between 'peasants' and the state, and discards the idea that 'peasants' are primitive, "isolated or backward, [and far removed] from the intrinsic dynamism of modernity" (p. 25).

In the second chapter, Harrison maintains that "the most rewarding pathway in analyzing peasant politics is to concentrate on the ongoing dynamics of interaction between peasants and other social groups, and pay attention to the ongoing battles within peasant society concerning the control of wealth, capital and power" (p. 40). Nevertheless, we are cautioned not to idealize peasants as 'virtuous' individuals engaged in a just war with 'vicious' states, as the former routinely "avoid[ed] and bypass[ed] the state, subvert[ed] the effects and purpose of state action, captured the state at the local level and selectively engag[ed] with it where it [wa]s advantageous to do so" (p.48).

Thereafter, Harrison describes how resistance featured in the "politics of debt and social struggle", democratization and the formation of new political identities. He focuses on the contours of the debt crisis vis-à-vis the state and civil society organizations (CSOs), and analyses the negative effects of the structural adjustment program (SAP) on wage laborers and the vulnerable, its divergent impacts on the peasantry and others, and CSOs' vociferous reactions to this reality.

For its part, the struggle for democratization stemmed from the unrelenting demand for economic justice that typified the SAP debate, which not only radicalized many African CSOs but precipitated clamors for political liberalization. Furthermore, international financial institutions (IFIs) and other donors, by tying their aid to improved governance, created openings in erstwhile-closed regimes. Consequently, the typical debt-ridden African regime found itself caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place, and was forced to adopt 'democratic' policies that favored "multipartyism, new constitutions, watchdog agencies [and] articulation [of] some form of moral repentance for their previously undemocratic ways" (p. 79). It is the extent and repercussions of this putative shift in political attitudes that the author takes as his starting point in this section of the text. Probing the extent to which democratization [has] "been implemented in [an] undemocratic fashion through concentrations of power", Harrison describes if and how the state embarked upon political liberalization, and the responses of various stakeholders to this development (p. 78). Overall, Harrison believes that a holistic discussion of

identity, class and struggle demonstrates their inter-relatedness, reveals how they undergird liberation, and exposes the fact that Africans possess the innate wherewithal to challenge hostile structures. The sixth chapter develops these themes in the Mozambican, Nigerian and Burkinabe contexts.

In describing 'African struggle', the author ignores the global emergence of radical movements and terrorism. Secondly, although Harrison rightly critiques the problematic manner in which Africa was created and is treated in contemporary discourses, he partitions Africa into three regions: North Africa, 'sub-Saharan' Africa and South Africa; the latter supposedly is exceptional, despite the fact that Algeria also connotes deprivation, liberation, struggle and resistance *par excellence.* Nonetheless, the author does not adhere to his artificial division for too long, as he frequently references examples from North Africa and South Africa to buttress his assertions. This confusion is all the more peculiar given the author's insightful comments regarding analysts' tendency to scrutinize the Continent through parochial lenses and select the worst scenarios as embodiments of the 'African' experience.

Thirdly, the author's concern with 'peasants', their resistance to the state or withdrawal into symbolic enclaves is neither fully developed nor original. Although one could take issue with Africa's 'peasantization', which overlooks its urbanization, and the constant interchange between rural, peri-urban and urban areas, to 'freeze' small-scale farmers in a milieu where broad generalizations could be made concerning their supposed ignorance of SAP perhaps is more stifling than the forces that reportedly impede their advancement.

Even though Harrison presents a fairly informed account of 'peasant' life, with all its contradictions, the obsession with the 'rural' seems outdated. His assertion that African Studies should commence with the peasantry is, at the very least, misguided because of the presence of a large number of the urban poor and landless, whose conditions vis-à-vis their 'peasant' brethren are more precarious. Additionally, urban organizations are more threatening to governments because they often can undertake violent actions commensurate with their vitriolic rhetoric. As such, if one were seriously interested in understanding struggle and resistance, one would not always begin with the increasingly shrinking number of citizens residing in rural areas, who arguably are better off than the urban poor. Whilst Harrison suggests that only a few scholars emphasize the centrality of struggle, it is, has been and always will be at the heart of political, economic and societal realities in Africa and elsewhere.

Generally, we are treated to a largely superficial account of the 'peasant' experience: We are somewhat enlightened concerning the nuances of the 'peasantry' argument but learn very little regarding how they have manifested themselves within the three countries under review, which are, oddly enough, banished to the sixth chapter. We also scarcely, if ever, comprehend the far-reaching manner in which 'peasants' reacted to and were affected by seminal economic and political developments. Conversely, Harrison's prototypical African state seems emasculated, devoid of any measurable agency, and unable to circumvent, ignore or undermine contentious IFI policies. In the final analysis, the text's core purpose appears muddled, and the treatment of democratization and other important variables is impeded by an excessively normative stance.

In closing, the Harrison volume is lucid, compact and should prove useful to undergraduate students and others with a limited knowledge of African economic, political and social realities. The 'further reading' section at the end of the first six chapters also is very helpful. Yet, the work would have been strengthened by field research in rural areas to ascertain what 'peasants' know regarding democratization, SAP, struggle and liberation, rather than the author's preference to speak on their behalf.

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*Performing Africa*. Paulla Ebron. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002. 272 pp.

*Performing Africa* is an intriguing ethnography that explores *jali* performers and performances within the small West African nation of the Gambia and in the United States. *Jali* are hereditary groups of Mandinka-speaking praise singers (griots in French), consisting of both men and women, whose songs not only provide an oral history of the region, but also affect the public reputations of their patrons. This ethnography is based on more than a year of field and archival research with *jali* from all over the Gambia, from urban, suburban, and rural settings. Ebron writes in a self-reflexive, accessible, and engaging manner, illuminating her position not only as an ethnographer from the United States, but also as a woman of the African Diaspora on the African continent.

Ebron is very interested in the circulation and production of ideas of "Africa." The major themes of the book are performance, representation, and cultural commodities. These are utilized as the central analytic frames in *Performing Africa*, examining the ways in which concepts of Africa are produced through performance, the performance of Africa becomes its representation, and performances of Africa are circulated as commodities.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section looks at the idea of representation and performance. Here, Ebron notes that most studies of representation are based on written texts, and thus directs her study to fill the gap by looking at performance, embodied and oral, as representation. She also seeks to extend studies of performance, which are often criticized as being too local and even individual in perspective. Ebron makes a valuable contribution in both of these areas. In chapter one Ebron examines the ways in which the category of "African music" was created, defined as communal and rhythmic, and placed in opposition to that of individualistic, complex, Western music. "African music" became a category signifying difference, which in turn represents Africa as a whole. Chapter two looks at several performance events of *jali*, both in the Gambia and the United States, as ways to access conceptions of Africa that are performed by the *jali* as well as audience members.

The second section of the book looks at the role of *jali* in national history, their "personalistic economy," and their individual performances during interviewing sessions. Chapter three examines *jali* and the contestations and negotiations surrounding a government-sponsored oral history as part of nation-building in post-independence Gambia. Chapter four explores the importance of interpersonal communication in the patron-client relationship as the basis of *jali* livelihood, as well as the performatives of *jali* in creating public power for their patrons with their spoken words. Ebron recounts the performance of self by individual *jali* in chapter five based on her interview encounters.

The third section of the book moves to the sphere of tourism in which *jali*, although present and performing, are not the only Gambians involved. Chapter six examines the sexual tourism of Western women traveling to the Gambia to find young, male partners. This is a situation in which ideas of gender are reconfigured, so that Gambian men are "feminized" based on the power and status of these Western travelers. Chapter seven focuses on African-Americans going to the Gambia as "pilgrims" returning on a homeland tour (sponsored by McDonald's interestingly enough), and explores their imagined Africa and the cultural misunderstandings and miscommunications that occur. Many of the issues raised in this chapter are similar to those discussed by Edward Bruner in his article on the conflicting interpretations

and meanings of Elmina Castle in Ghana between Ghanaians and the people of the African Diaspora visiting there (Bruner 1996).

An overarching goal of the book is to directly confront the challenge presented to anthropologists to examine the local, while still tying it in to larger national and global issues and perspectives. Ebron draws upon the ideas of global flow of Arjun Appadurai (1996), and does an excellent job of showing connections between *jali*, Gambia, and the broader world. For example, in chapter four, Ebron demonstrates that *jali* make interpersonal connections locally, on the national level, and abroad as a way to secure opportunities for performances, generating income for themselves at many levels. Similarly, in the third chapter Ebron examines the place of post-independence Gambia on the world stage, the role that the oral histories of the *jali* played in solidifying its status as a nation with its own history apart from the colonial past, and the significance of development funding to support such projects. Moreover, in her discussion of sexual tourism involving Western women in Gambia, Ebron explores the motivations, aspirations, and power differentials in these relationships, reexamining "a critical, transnational aspect of the social construction of gender" (170). Although Ebron includes a global perspective at most points, a slight drawback of the book is the loss of the "local," in that there is not much sense of any particular locale as the setting of the ethnography, as it is an amalgam of many different places. However, in an age in which multi-sited ethnography is becoming more common, Ebron's work fits in well.

*Performing Africa* is a well written ethnography that presents many challenging questions that will be of interest to Africanists, anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, and scholars of both cultural and performance studies alike.

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*The African State: Reconsiderations*. Abdi Ismail Samatar and Ahmed I. Samatar, eds. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002. 286 pp.

This collection of essays on the state in Africa is an important contribution to political science on Africa, despite several conceptual weaknesses discussed below. Comprised of an introduction followed by seven case studies – South Africa, Ghana, Libya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia – it captures the wide gamut of state experiences in Africa, and will doubtless be a useful addition to undergraduate curricula and library holdings.

Many of the chapters provide strong historical accounts of the experiences of state formation, sometimes coupled with critiques of earlier attempts to examine the state. This works better in some cases than others. Raufu Mustapha's historical examination of the Nigerian state usefully identifies 'critical constitutive elements' that have shaped the Nigerian state under successive regimes, seeing continuity as much as change (169). Kidane Megistaeb's Ethiopian case study, in contrast, analyzes the efforts and failures of early state-building projects, before focussing on the post-1991 'ethnic federalism'. Mengistaeb provides readers with an excellent, critical account of contemporary Ethiopian state-building. Similarly, Eboe Hutchful deftly links together the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial state formation experiences of Ghana. His inclusion of gender, class and youth as variables affecting and being affected by the state is an ideal model for the study of other states.

Other contributions, however, seem lacking in analytical focus. Ahmed Samatar's study of Somalia is near poetic in its reflections on the diasporic community, and countless peace conferences. Yet, the chapter's potentially most interesting discussions – the state-building experiences in Somaliland, and Puntland, and peace efforts in the South – give too little detail for those unversed in post-1991 Somali politics. The author is perhaps rightly sceptical about these efforts, but glosses over them with little empirical detail. Despite some interesting introductory points, Ahmad Sikainga largely rehashes a standard account of early Sudanese state formation, with surprisingly little reference to primary or secondary sources. Similarly, while Ali Abdulatif Ahmida's account of the origins of the modern Libyan state is informative and analytical, the 1980s and 1990s are scarcely described. Indeed, even Mengistaeb's most useful and critical analysis of the post 1991 state-reforms in Ethiopia might be better substantiated by the inclusion of interviews or on-the-ground observation.

Few of these contributions succeed in describing how society views the state or present much in the way of new research – the best emphasize the need for new perspectives. Perhaps this relative empirical poverty is a problem inherent to the topic – how does one 'research' the state? Moreover the authors do not provide much in the way of innovative methodology or case studies of particular aspects of the state. In contrast to much of the literature on South Africa, Yvonne Muthien and Gregory Houston attempt to link state and society-centered approaches, but the final result is heavy on policy prescription, and reveals little about the experience of living under the 'new' South African state.

The vagueness of the state in these contributions seems to be a function of the over-broad definitions and conceptualization of the state advanced in the introductory essay. The authors suggest that "the state might be conceptualized as a concatenation of four frames: leader, regime, administration, and commonwealth" (7). As a student, this writer was taught to differentiate clearly between the regime "rules, principles, norms and modes of interaction;" the state "the organization of people and resources and the establishment of policy outlines…institutions of power"; and the government "the specific

occupants of public office" (Chazan et al., *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, 1992,39). Going back to this classic African politics textbook, I am struck by the continued good sense of their analysis "state, regime and government may or may not overlap empirically. In concept, however, they are quite distinct" (Chazan et al., 39). However, the authors in *The African State* do not engage with these issues. Their conceptual framework presumes a conceptual as well as empirical overlap between leader (government), regime, and state. Even if this can be justified analytically, it leads to confusion over what we mean by 'the state'.

A further significant weakness of the study is that no reference is made to the substantial political science and sociological literature on state-formation. In addition to well-known European studies, there is an extensive literature on the Middle East, Latin America, and also on South Africa, all of which might have been useful in this work. Another body of literature that might have been drawn on, or at least critiqued, is the newly expanding IR-related literature on states and state-systems in Africa.

The contributions therefore suffer from an overly broad definition of the state, a failure to engage with existing literature on the state, and a lack of descriptive detail. Put together, these criticisms suggest that the collection's weakness is more theoretical than empirical. But it also suggests that a stronger theoretical base might lead to more interesting empirical research. Here then is the first step of an important research agenda: to 'bring the state back in' without replicating European-centric theories, or relying too heavily on their assumptions; to build a new theoretical framework for studying the state in Africa, starting from a firm empirical basis.

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*Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart: A Casebook*. Isidore Okpewho,ed. Oxford: University Press, 2003. 275 pp.

The novel, *Things Fall Apart,* is central not only in African literature, but also in postcolonial literary and cultural discourses. The reason, according to Isidore Okpewho, is precisely "because it inaugurated a long and continuing tradition of inquiry into the problematic relations between the West and the nations of the Third World" (p.3). This justifies his new collection of essays, some of which are more than two decades old. In a splendid introduction, he poses a crucial question, which is perhaps more relevant to our age than it could have been for the people of Umuofia: What fell apart (p.36)? The essays explore this question using different approaches.

The first two essays establish the ethnographic and the lingua-politico backdrop against which the novel can be understood. In his essay, Achebe does not deny the "importance of the world language which history has forced down our throats" (60). And since Africans have found themselves in that framework, they have to make the best out of it. The result has, at best, a hybrid spirit, a postcolonial-postmodernist identity that exists in Homi Bhabha's renowned "fissures."

Exploring the "egalitarian and democratic" nature of the Igbo society, Clement Okafor highlights the importance of "destiny" in Igbo cosmology. The Igbo, nevertheless, believe in the human agency and "that hard work results in a better life" (68-71). Are we then better equipped to understand Okonkwo's motivation?

Okonkwo's character is a conundrum. What kinds of motivations were behind his actions? Why, in Goodness' name, did he kill the boy who called him father? Damian Opata sees nothing wrong in Okonkwo's killing of Ikemefuna. In his essay, he executes a tightly knit inner-textual analysis of the story to expose the cultural forces that prompted Okonkwo to act the way he did. "If Okonkwo is to be held guilty of any offense," he concludes, "it is not that of killing Ikemefuna (i.e., carrying out the wish of the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves) but that of taking an uncanny pride in his action" (93). Okonkwo therefore merely obeyed the law, and, if there is any problem it is to be sought in the system.

But Harold Scheub does not seem to find any problem with the system. Hence he believes that Okonkwo failed alone. Through analysis of Okonkwo's character (which might find interesting corollaries in some African nations), Scheub concludes that there is no evidence of destruction of Igbo society; Okonkwo merely grabbed those elements in his society that will guarantee his prestige and ascendancy.

Perhaps neither Okonkwo nor his society fell apart, as Neil ten Kortenaar would argue. In his strictly structuralist take on the novel, he systematically deconstructs, the layers of the story to arrive at how Achebe strove to create a "non-existent" African history, which is the problem with the story (132). Obviously you cannot use fiction to establish an area of non-fiction. That attempt would reduce the characters in the fiction to representative roles (139). Ten Kortenaar does not dismiss Africa in a Hegelian fashion; he rather believes that Achebe has achieved one thing: he inspired Africans to make history.

Clayton G. Mackenzie rereads the novel in a somewhat reader-response way and establishes that Christianity is responsible for weakening the bonds of the society, while Rhonda Cobham, interested in showing how the feminine was ignored, makes use of Jauss' *Rezeptionsästhetik* – loosely understood as the history of reception – to draw attention to the fact that "Okonkwo and his creator are concerned with the construction of a […] masculine, identity (169). Biodun Jeyifo would even conclude that this identity

was what fell apart in the world of Umuofia. He highlights that the very point when things began to fall apart was when Okonkwo ignored "the mother's creative role in the formation of his personhood, his sensibility" (185).

Bu-Buakei Jabbi is more interested in the poetics of the novel than in its perceived ethno-cultural importance. For him, the recurrent use of a primal element, fire, underscores Achebe's central theme of the inevitability of change, and how one man who refused to be changed "fell apart." Also considering the novel as a literary text, Ato Quayson revisits the different ways it has been interpreted, noting that many critics were like hawks that would never appreciate the beauty of hens' dances. Art is based on a skillful manipulation of reality as the novel has just done, thus every critique should pay attention both to the reality being manipulated and the technique used (232).

Isidore Okpewho has been particularly successful in the careful selection of these essays which make the novel as relevant as it ever has been. What is most satisfying is not only the high quality of most of the essays, but also their overall arrangement so that they seem to be in dialogue with one another. This creates a logical thread throughout the book, and it makes for an engaging read.

For this writer, the casebook would have lost nothing in beauty and logic if Achebe's input had been left out. But one can understand the relevance of the interview at the end. College teachers and their students would love it. Otherwise the rest of the book throws a heavy task to scholars who are prepared not only to continue with the dialogue between the West and the Third World, but also to grapple with the existential challenges of the African continent. In regard to Okpewho's question of what fell apart, the answer might even re-echo Achebe's ideas expressed in his other book, *The Trouble With Nigeria*. There is no trouble with Nigerians; there are, however, quite a lot of troubles with opportunistic leaders who hide behind their ethnic groups to exploit the "rest of us," and lead us to war. Okpewho's question, I am sure, will define the new generation of African scholars.

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*Rethinking AIDS Prevention: Learning from Successes in Developing Countries.*
Edward C. Green, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003. 374 pp.


In *Rethinking AIDS Prevention*, Edward Green controversially calls for a paradigm shift away from donor myopia concerning condoms in favor of a focus on Primary Behavior Change (PBC), which includes fidelity, partner reduction, and delay of sexual debut. Although it isn't an entirely new argument, Green presents excellent evidence of the inadequacies of condom campaigns in Africa and successes of PBC in developing countries around the world.

Condoms, though certainly appropriate only for high-risk groups such as commercial sex workers and truck drivers, are unfortunately touted as the only realistic prevention for mainstream society even though they are exogenous, inconsistently used, and less than 100% effective. Green argues that PBC is actually a better method of disease prevention for most Africans. The goal here is behavior change, which runs much deeper than simply turning society on to condoms and/or drugs, two technological solutions that may in fact actually increase risky behavior. Studies have shown that by delaying sexual debut of young adults, their lifetime number of partners greatly decreases. Therefore, a wider range of programs that focus on PBC yet still incorporate condoms when appropriate, are desperately needed.

If the evidence presented by Green is accurate, then why is so much international aid being dumped into these ill-suited programs? His answer is that donors overlook it, ignore it, or do not want to believe it. Some of the problems include biased surveys that focus on condom usage at the cost of questions on other forms of AIDS prevention; the ease of monitoring condom usage compared to the difficulty of measuring PBC; and programs that are based on western post-sexual revolution ideology. This last excuse means that "those who work in public health are loathe to appear to make value judgments about sexual behavior. Therefore they are more comfortable promoting condoms and treating STDs than advocating having fewer partners" (62). The pre-AIDS American sexual revolution instigated free love and the desire to avoid sexual judgments. This openness was reflected in policy decisions affecting a continent that had not undergone the same revolution. In the race to avoid association with the religious right, donors missed the fact that socio-cultural variables are just as important as medical. The only way to turn this 20-year oversight around is to overcome biases against partner reduction and abstinence and actually listen to Africans because they, like many Americans, are indeed choosing Abstinence and Being Faithful over Condoms (ABC). Green argues that PBC in Africa is cheaper than anti-retrovirals and can be achieved for less than US$ 1.80 per person. He presents a compelling argument for both the health behavior specialist and the layperson in search of an alternative take on the behavioral potential to overcome high rates of HIV transmission. He mixes academic research with international articles and profiles in order to present a colorful, informative account of a topic too many other authors paint in redundant shades. The point is that programs must reprioritize and expand further than the promotion of condoms, and although the argument is certainly persuasive, it does require minor work.

To begin with, Green ties in several case studies (Zambia, Senegal, Thailand, Jamaica) but focuses mainly on Uganda's success with PBC programs, which is attributed to the government's 'zero grazing' campaign in the 1980s. By the time the donors entered and insisted on condom promotion, infection rates were already declining. USAID and the World Bank supported much of President Museveni's approach, so Uganda has had more PBC than other countries. Education began in the late 1980s and the government advocated female empowerment, media usage, and the mobilization of religious leaders. It also promoted

open discussion of the disease and allied with NGOs, political leaders, teachers, and traditional healers. The 1990s brought to Uganda much of what occurs in the rest of Africa: condom marketing, decentralization, salaried workers, and special programs for high-risk persons.

This part of his analysis is not problematic. But there is a difficulty in measuring which variables had the most influence, and it is entirely possible that Uganda's success is due not to the message, but the messengers and their quick response. The government coordinated quickly to avoid ambiguity, it promoted stigma-free discussion and created alliances, and there was an autonomous, non-sectarian women's movement. These combined factors are virtually invisible elsewhere on the continent, even now. Other countries instead offer confusing and overlapping messages. Politicians are unconcerned with the disease, equal rights laws that are not enforced, and competition between AIDS-prevention organizations is prevalent. We cannot know if decreased rates would have followed anything other than a PBC message, but the possibility must be kept in consideration, especially since some people *are* using condoms.

Green too briefly touches on the role of interpersonal communication and the use of discussion forums even though these are activities that target tailored messages to each region. Outside studies show that behavior change stemming from local developmental theatre is difficult to measure, yet small scale, personal drama of this sort can be more effective than mass media, which overlooks particularities. Often included in this form of education are Life Skills programs that teach women how to negotiate. Uganda's implementation of these was effective, yet South African school programs (such as that of the organization DramAide), although successful in doses, seem not to have permeated enough of society to stop the infection rate from climbing.

Governments should certainly take note of *Rethinking AIDS Prevention* because the role of poverty here is two-fold. The HIV infection rate is driven by affluent men; those with "cash, car and [a] cellphone" who attract more partners (313). But female poverty leads to transactional sex since women are subordinates due to economic dependence and traditions of male dominance. Governments must make a stronger effort to affect change through employment opportunities for women and the enforcement of rape and marriage laws, otherwise women are stuck in a situation where saying no is at best financially unsound, and at worst, deadly.

More research is certainly needed into the PBC hypothesis, but it's on the right track thus far. Green is currently advising the Bush administration, which brings up the curious question of whether or not there is any real danger of placing the end goal above the intentions (which occurs when programs refuse or are banned from discussing truthfully all possible routes of prevention). It may be a difficult pill for many in AIDS work to swallow, but in this case the end must justify the means. Too much money has been spent recklessly in pursuit of something that simply does not work. But Green notes that the condom and anti-retroviral companies stand to lose a chunk of money if PBC takes precedence over condoms, and it follows that if the international patent rights battle is any indication, these companies will not relinquish this control without a fight. This has, sadly, become the norm in the field of AIDS policy in Africa today.

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*Smugglers, Secessionists, and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier*. Paul Nugent. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002. 302 pp.

Scholars interested in the economic, political, and social consequences of contemporary Africa's juridical borders have produced a number of influential volumes in the field of African studies and related disciplines. Variance in these works' research methodology, geographical focus, scope of inquiry, and theoretical vantage has inspired a vibrant and often contentious cross-disciplinary discourse. With *Smugglers, Secessionists, and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier*, Paul Nugent offers a carefully researched and intellectually stimulating contribution to this exchange.

Eschewing a continental survey, Nugent's monograph centers on a peculiar sliver of land once sandwiched between the British Gold Coast Colony and French Colonial Dahomey. He offers three attributes of the region that make the case suitable fodder for broader comparative borderlands theory testing and refinement. First, the Ghana-Togo border bears the fingerprint of not one or two, but three European colonial actors (Britain, France, and Germany). Second, it lacks a convenient geological barrier and therefore required intense negotiation. Lastly, the border is fairly typical of the continent in that it dissects several ethnic and cultural groups.

Nugent's investigation of the Ghana-Togo borderlands is divided into three roughly equal sections. The first section focuses on the construction of the Ghana-Togo border and covers a period chronologically prior to the other two sections. Detached from the rest of the book, the three chapters that comprise this section can be read as a history of the borderlands from the end of World War I through the beginning of World War II. Here Nugent demonstrates a vast knowledge gained through long hours in British and Ghanaian archives and offers a quite thorough reading of the borderlands' history. Taken as part of the larger text, this section sets the stage for subsequent sections. Colonial and African efforts to shape the border are examined first individually and then collectively with an exploration of the relationship between the Customs Preventive Service (CPS) and local smugglers.

Whereas the first section of Nugent's work focuses primarily on the socio-economic impact of the colonial border separating the Gold Coast Colony from the French to the east, the second section turns to an examination of the region's identity politics from its division through Ghanaian independence. After arguing that Christian conversions, migration, and British chieftaincy policy fostered incentives for a greater Ewe identity in Chapter 4, Nugent contends that together these factors were incapable of producing a solid ethno-political bloc. In the trans-Volta region, Nugent asserts, "the project of forging an ethnic consciousness was laborious, discontinuous and above all contested" (p. 146). This portion of Nugent's text is complemented by his work on Central Togo minorities and their Ewe neighbors which appears in his co-edited project titled *Ethnicity in Ghana*. Chapter 5 builds on the conclusions of Chapter 4 to demonstrate how calls for Ewe solidarity fared in the deliberations regarding Togoland's political fate.

Section three of *Smugglers, Secessionists, and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier* pushes Nugent's analysis into Ghana's independence period. He first explores the relatively successful efforts of the Convention People's Party (CPP) to "uproot" what they viewed as potentially dangerous *Ablode* (freedom) constituencies. These efforts, Nugent argues, though they did not completely silence discussion of Togoland reunification, correspond positively with a dramatic reduction in irredentist sentiments and movements. In his final numbered chapter, Nugent revisits the issue of cross-border smuggling which he

addressed most explicitly in Chapter 3. Smugglers working across the Ghana-Togo border, Nugent maintains, not only have formed a powerful invested interest around the international border, but have exposed the differences between Ghanaians and Togolese to locals. This finding contradicts theories that depict unlawful hinterlands as direct challenges to national consciousnesses.

From the abovementioned analysis, Nugent culls four critiques of what he classifies as "the conventional wisdom about African boundaries" (p. 5). First, though European colonizers maintained a more than healthy influence with regard to the demarcation of the Ghana-Togo border, pre-colonial precedents were taken into consideration far more often than some scholars would suggest. Second, once in place the border created strong local interests whose proponents sought to maintain the status quo. Third, for the most part national identification proved far more valuable than cross-border ethnic identifications. Fourth, rather than disengaging from the state as many would predict, border communities along the Ghana-Togo border have actively sought to shape and utilize the state. To determine their theoretical robustness, these critiques require further testing by scholars interested in the Ghana-Togo border, distinct African borderlands, and/or political boundaries in general. *Smugglers, Secessionists, and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier* is a monograph compelling enough to warrant these supplementary investigations.

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*Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau.*
Adekeye Adebajo. Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002. 192 pp.


In this occasional paper for the International Peace Academy, Adekeye Adebajo takes a look at the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the attempts to build peace in the internal conflicts of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. His aim is to come to an evaluation of the military interventions in the said three cases and the ECOWAS security system in general. Adebajo, who is the director of the Africa program at the IPA and a renowned specialist in West African politics, personally interviewed some of the key figures in the events detailed in the book and even managed to get access to some hitherto unpublished government documents from various nations.

He starts his analysis with a chapter on the political development of West Africa since independence. According to his view the events in this region can only be understood with regard to the development of the relations between the francophone bloc of nations (Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal, Guinea), their former metropolis France, and Nigeria, the regional economic and military powerhouse. The conflict or convergence of interests of these key players shaped the political landscape of West Africa and influenced the way ECOWAS was formed and subsequently acted. Far from fulfilling the hopes of West Africans, Adebajo concludes, the political leaders of the region failed to create strong democracies and vibrant economies. These failures took on tragic proportions in the cases of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau.

The first case study of the present book deals with the civil war that ravaged Liberia from 1990 to 1997 and has recently flared up again. Adebajo gives a concise overview of the course of the war and its major events before analysing in more detail why no fewer than twelve consecutive peace agreements failed. He explains that peace in the end could only be achieved for three reasons: (a) Charles Taylor, the leading warlord of Liberia, had been weakened by his enemies, which made him more amenable to peace overtures, (b) Taylor and the Nigerian president Obasanjo achieved a rapprochement that made a negotiated solution of the conflict possible, and (c) ECOWAS gave up its efforts to strengthen the role of civil society in post-war Liberia and caved in to the demands of the warlords. Adebajo concludes this chapter with a glum outlook for the future of Liberia. The fighting between the new rebel organisation LURD and Taylor's government forces leaves the country devastated and drives thousands of Liberians from their homes. According to Adebajo, Taylor's failure to perform the change from warlord to statesman is the main reason for this new escalation.

In the second case study, Adebajo analyzes the conflict in Sierra Leone. He sees the roots of this conflict in the misrule of Siaka Stevens and Joseph Momoh which created an atmosphere of unrest and upheaval. In March 1991 Foday Sankoh, with the help of Liberian warlord Charles Taylor, launched an insurrection that sparked a decade-long war. As was the case in Liberia ECOWAS tried to pacify the situation by sending a peacekeeping force. Understaffed and poorly equipped, the ECOMOG (ECOWAS Cease Fire Monitoring Group) forces attempted to restore law and order in Sierra Leone. Only in 1999 when Nigeria, the main contributor to ECOMOG, threatened to withdraw its forces completely, did the UN react. The UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was created and political pressure on Taylor and other parties to the conflict intensified. Eventually a peace deal was struck that again favoured warlords over civil society. Adebajo comes to the conclusion that the ECOMOG forces were hampered by internal dissent in ECOWAS. Their effectiveness was further reduced by a shortage of military material and funding.

The civil war that raged in Guinea-Bissau between 1998 and 1999 is the third case study of the book. Since this conflict is little known outside the region, Adebajo relates in some detail the

background of this war and the flow of events. He explains that the trigger for this civil war can be found in the personal conflict between President Vieira and General Mane. When Vieira tried to push Mane out of office, the General used his command over the armed forces to instigate a coup against the President. Senegal and Guinea intervened ostensibly to keep the peace, but also with their own political agendas in mind. ECOWAS members later declared their approval of the intervention, but hesitated to give the mission financial or logistical support. The UN once more showed little interest in West Africa and reacted with forming the UN Peacebuilding Support Office for Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) that with only eighteen employees was decidedly understaffed. Although a successful attack of Mane's forces ended the civil war and led to new elections, Adebajo gives a bleak prospect for Guinea-Bissau's future. The new President Yala has inherited an economically and structurally weak country that is ridden with internal strife. External help is hardly to be expected. Furthermore, Yala has embarked on a dangerous course of awarding high offices only to his ethnic group.

In the last part of the book Adebajo tries to draw some lessons from the past interventions of ECOWAS. He evaluates the reform of the ECOWAS security mechanism and discusses the idea of a West African rapid reaction force. His main doubt concerning the effectiveness of such a force deals with the notorious shortage of money and supplies. Nonetheless, Adebajo sees the attempts of the ECOWAS to install a security mechanism in its own subregion as an important step in the development of West African nations. The moves to integrate West African economies and to create stabilizing security institutions might lead to more healthy economies and more vibrant democracies.

Adebajo's book is a detailed and interesting study of the interventions of ECOWAS into the civil wars in its subregion. The author very skilfully combines a narrative of major events with an in-depth analysis of problems, causes and possible solutions. *Building Peace in West Africa* is a highly recommendable read for all students of African politics.

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*The Skull Beneath the Skin: Africa After the Cold War*. Mark Huband. Boulder, CO.: Westview Press. 2001. 408 pp.

Mark Huband, a British journalist, offers a detailed, if tendentious, account of Western contributions to the current African predicament. The author intends to illuminate the role of Western Cold War foreign policy toward Africa during and after the Cold War as the main cause of the relative durability of dictatorships across the continent.

Huband divides the book into four parts. In Part I, entitled "Empty Promises," he elucidates the United States' Cold War role in propping up corrupt dictatorships in Zaire and Liberia, and in aiding UNITA, an Angolan insurgent group. The core of his argument is that the United States overestimated the Soviet Union's stake in each of these countries, causing US officials to make erroneous assumptions about the nature of different political groups in Africa. Therefore, he reasons, the United States' Cold War policy in these nations actually amounted to destructive meddling and support of ruthless tyrants and insurgents of no actual strategic value.

In Part II, "Time of the Soldier," Huband argues that the military regimes that survived and succeeded in this Cold War politics purposefully factionalized ethnic groups as a political tool in Burundi, (then) Zaire, Nigeria, and Liberia. This has contributed to those countries' current struggles with transitions to democracy. In Part III, "Blood of the Ancestors," Huband delves deeper into these strategies to show how political leaders in Rwanda, (then) Zaire, and Kenya reinvented 'tradition' to exacerbate ethnic rivalries in order to divide groups whose unity likely would have threatened the incumbent rulers. Huband explains that the source of ethnic rivalry, including that between Hutus and Tutsis in Burundi and Rwanda, springs more from these political strategies than from deep-rooted indigenous conflict. That is, for Huband, relations among pre-colonial ethnic groups tended to be less contentious than those manipulated by the European colonial powers and post-colonial African rulers.

In Part IV, entitled "New World, Old Order," Huband's analysis uncovers interesting questions about whether the end of the Cold War could foster the end of Western 'meddling' in Africa, whether the West is in fact interested in a policy that will benefit Africans, and what should be done about failing states. This is the most useful but also the most limited aspect of the book. In this analysis of the West's post-Cold War policy, Huband largely limits his focus to the behavior of countries like the United States and France and multilateral organizations like the United Nations. Based on the post-Cold War policy of these formal actors, Huband offers a cautiously optimistic forecast for 21st century Africa. More importantly, however, he fails to take into account new forces whose influence in post-Cold War Africa is pervasive: international financial institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and transnational firms.

IFI conditional loans typically demand political and economic liberalization. But previous research has found that aid flows from IFIs to regimes, as in the Cold War politics that Huband describes in the first part of the book, do not depend on levels of corruption or human rights abuses. Thus one has reason to question whether or not conditional loans will yield meaningful reform. Moreover, trade liberalization has not meant that predatory transnational firms cease dealing with corrupt African rulers who oligarchically control resources and commerce while formal state institutions collapse. In fact, case studies show that Liberia's Charles Taylor used partnerships with transnational firms to assert authority in Liberia and West Africa in lieu of functional institutions. Huband could also have shown in his case study

of Zaire in Part I how Mobutu Sese Seko's relations with foreign firms in Zaire even then stood in as a proxy for actually developing state institutions and instead produced conditions that were a threat to already-fragile African regimes.

Huband's prescription for African politics is two-fold: first, he suggests that Africa needs to become free from foreign influence. Second, he suggests that continued democratization and democratic consolidation are necessary to promote political pluralism. Both notions are idealistic, yet flawed. In spite of the tentative withdrawal of official foreign government forces from Africa after the Cold War, economic globalization and foreign firms show no sign of abandoning the continent. More problematic for Huband is the fact that the increasing integration of African states into the global economic system further decentralizes foreign forces that affect African domestic policy. This makes it still more difficult to know precisely at whom blame ought to be levied. The blanket recommendation of democratization and democratic consolidation is wishful, but also reckless if applied to countries with long histories of instability, institutional weakness, and simmering ethnic conflict. In fact, elections in places like Congo-Brazzaville and Cote d'Ivoire have played significant roles in generating violence and increased state weakness and instability, even as they help promote reform in countries like Kenya that already are relatively stable.

*The Skull Beneath the Skin* offers neither an innovative theoretical framework nor a rigorously tested one. Problematically, Huband's sample of cases is not random; he carefully selected cases in which Western policy fostered detrimental effects on the continent. Useful for comparative purposes would be a section highlighting cases on the post-Cold War fates of African states that were Cold War clients of the Soviet Union. The journalistic aspect of Huband's account of the West's role in Africa's post-Cold War stakes, however, is successful in its descriptive nature. Academics may find this unsatisfying, but those interested in an accessible text about Africa's ills will find it useful.

Overall, Mark Huband's *The Skull Beneath the Skin* offers a well-compiled set of cases illustrating the consequences of foreign intervention on Africa. Students of African politics, international relations, and those with a general interest in Africa will find this to be a useful book. Indeed, Huband's careful account of events and circumstances witnessed on the ground during ten years of study and living on the continent is valuable to better understanding the realities Africans face today. Future research should build on Huband's work by investigating globalization's marginalization of Africa and ordinary Africans in the global economic order.

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*The Last Emerging Market: From Asian Tigers to African Lions? The Ghana File.*
Nathaniel H. Bowditch. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1999. 201 pp.


Nathaniel H. Bowditch, a self-described "public entrepreneur", went to Thailand as a Peace Corps Volunteer in 1966 and subsequently worked in Malaysia and Sri Lanka, as well as New England, in a variety of economic and community development positions (p. xiv). In 1990, he went to Ghana as a United Nations project advisor. He writes that "none of [my previous experiences] prepared me for Ghana" (p. xiii). Nevertheless, he predicts that "an 'African Miracle' will become *the* global economic story in the first decades of the next millennium" (p. xv). This book is a successful attempt "to penetrate Ghana's deceptively complex culture and, in so doing, to entertain, inform, and raise some of the issues, questions, opportunities, and dilemmas that must be faced by Ghana and a world increasingly ready – perhaps even eager – for the emergence of Africa" (p. xii).

Part One is about Ghanaian culture, the significance of money within it. For Ghanaian businesspersons, "religion, family, and the rest of life all intermingle with the business" (p. 151). Bowditch shows how behavior regarding time and money that might appear to Westerners to be unethical or irresponsible can be viewed in a more favorable light from the perspective of the traditional cultures of what is now Ghana. Ghanaians frequently "borrow" money from *obroni* (Caucasians), without considering themselves obligated to repay the "loans." But this is in a culture where people who have more money than they need traditionally share with those who have less than they need: "I also came to understand that I, as a relatively well-to-do father, shouldn't necessarily ask for the money even though it was a loan, because I didn't really need it" (pp. 47-48). Failure to prepare business plans can be explained by an environment of great uncertainty, in which what is needed is cunning or cleverness in dealing with whatever situations arise: "In an uncertain world, planning doesn't seem to work well because there are just too many unknown and unforeseen, moment-to-moment contingencies to plan for" (p. 58). And many cases of what Westerners call bribery or corruption differ little from gift-giving in traditional Ghanaian cultures.

After working in several administrative positions, Bowditch extended his time in Ghana with a research grant "to study Ghanaian culture and traditional West African business practices vis-à-vis Ghanaian business development and management practices" (p. xiv). He interviewed fifty-three Ghanaian and *obroni* business owners, managers, and economic-development professionals and discusses these interviews in Part Two. Part Three includes citations of a wide range of sources – "perspectives and perceptions of individuals with little or no relationship to Ghana" – followed by Bowditch's own conclusions, with numerous comparisons between "Asian tigers" and "African lions" (p. 160).

Bowditch's thesis is that "today's young lion cubs (Ghana, Uganda, Namibia, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, and many more) are just like their tiger-cub predecessors of twenty-five to thirty years ago" (p. 171). But, though there exists the potential for rapid economic growth in sub-Saharan African, there is much work to be done if the lion cubs are to follow in the tigers' footsteps: "Africans are clearly watching and lusting after the prosperity that has emerged in Asia. However, they seem more interested in finding an easy way to get there than in learning from the tough decisions and hard work demonstrated in Asia" (p. 179).

A more important question than Bowditch's – whether African nations can attain the economic prosperity of the Asian tigers – is whether they can do so without destroying the non-material wealth of

their own traditional cultures. Bowditch uses the Western categories of "capitalism" and "socialism" in analyzing Ghanaian business culture and how it needs to change. As he sees it, the challenge is for African nations to participate in the "global free-enterprise system" or "worldwide capitalism" (pp. 126, 173). In contrast, there is "the family-based African socialism that governs traditional family and village life" (p. 95). He states that "African socialism" is "not a political movement but a sociological phenomenon" and writes of "the challenges to capital accumulation by a fierce African, family-based socialist tradition" (p. 152, 181). But traditional African cultures do not fit into the categories of the contemporary West. The fact that the family is important has nothing to do with state ownership of the means of production. Both capitalism and socialism, as well as all compromises between them, are incompatible with traditional African cultures, because they are materialistic.

Bowditch writes of "a one-world philosophy, called *free-enterprise democracy*", and maintains that "Ghana will have to develop both a competitive national economy *and* a free-enterprise management culture" (pp. xvii, 70). The challenge for Ghana and other African nations, however, is to develop a philosophy of business management that will enable them to increase productivity and reduce poverty without destroying the traditional family and religious faith. Such a philosophy of management must be rooted in neither Adam Smith nor Karl Marx, but in traditional African philosophy.

While not distinguishing African from Western philosophical traditions, Bowditch does provide insightful suggestions concerning what a theory of business management appropriate for Ghana and other African nations might look like. Because the family is so important, "every responsible and respected business in Ghana will have to care for the life, village, and families in its orbit" (p. 160). Religious faith is also inseparable from business: "Divinities simply cannot be ignored when undertaking anything of importance in one's life, and business is no exception" (p. 165). What Ghana needs is a theory of business management, unlike anything the contemporary West can offer, consistent with these truths. Although Bowditch's book is written primarily for business and development practitioners, it contains citations of scholarly works and insights that could be incorporated into a philosophical theory of Ghanaian or African business management.


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*Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*. Kevin C. Dunn & Timothy M. Shaw (eds). New York: Palgrave Publishers Ltd, 2001, 242 pp.


Editors Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw boldly step forward to challenge established international relations theories and the ways in which IR theories are formulated. After reviewing the fundamental elements of core IR models, including neorealism, neoliberalism, and structuralism, Dunn reminds readers that Africa has conventionally remained absent from traditional theory-making. In other words, in terms of political analysis, Africa has become marginalized. Dunn then insists that to the contrary, African(ist) issues are central to understanding today's international relations, although not necessarily along the parameters of "old-school" Western IR theory.

*Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory* focuses on the concepts of security, power, states, nations, and sovereignty to underline the holes in current methods of analysis. The articles included within this compilation are organized into three parts: Part I begins by dismantling traditional IR theory; Part II emphasizes the absence of African(ist) content in leading IR analyses; Part III outlines policy implications based on the preceding material.

For readers relatively unfamiliar with the conventions of international relations theory, Dunn and Shaw include writings that provide historical background to the Westphalian System, and on the beginnings of IR as a political science. For readers who are well-versed in IR theory, this book offers a fascinatingly unconventional examination of Africa as a unique region characterized by a similarly unique role in IR studies. The articles in this volume combine overviews of colonial and post-colonial dynamics in Africa with strongly supported suggestions for a revised IR theory that takes these dynamics into due consideration. The contents of each individual article seem united by a theme that highlights the distinctiveness of African institutions. The articles identify as an important concept the idea that Africa cannot, and must not, be held to a universal standard of moral authority. Although sovereignty encompasses many diverse forms, a Western interpretation of sovereignty and statehood has come to dominate others interpretations. Not only do several articles bring to question the [Western] perception of African states, but they also question the basic importance of the state (or lack thereof) as an African institution. After overturning several well-established theories on issues of sovereignty and statehood, a number of the authors present possible alternatives to IR theorizing, such as a broadening of social knowledge, or a reevaluation of the very concept of statehood.

This book does not merely dare to suspect the gospel of IR traditionalists, but it goes further to question popularly studied trends, such as liberalism and globalism. Without discounting these trends entirely, the authors find, and try to fill, the loopholes within such approaches to IR analysis. The authors point out areas in which others may have failed to acknowledge Africa as an essential diversifying contributor to major IR questions. Rather than seeking to make room for African(ist) analysis in existing theories, Dunn and Shaw emphasize the need to revise theories altogether. Africa, being a singular representative of myriad non-Western conventions, brings to light the gaping holes in IR studies to date.

Far from being an empty treatise on the flaws on IR theory, *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory* suggests policy implications built on a strong foundation of evidence and analysis. James Jude Hentz proposes regionalism as a revised approach to foreign relations toward Africa. Timothy M. Shaw provides a checklist for policy makers, including the expansion and diversification of peace building efforts.

This book is ideal for those seeking an explanation for Africa's unique position in the world, and for IR theorists wishing to find an enlightened reconsideration of the conventions in their field. The authors/editors invoke frustration with regards to the marginalization of Africa, while simultaneously generating urgency for the need to tackle the flaws of IR theory and to create an appreciation for Africa there within. In their commentary, the editors brush the line of didacticism, but do not cross it. The articles in this volume communicate a general tone of regret and exigency, but in the process do not completely attack the validity of the theories they criticize. Dunn and Shaw clearly acknowledge the need to offer varied perspectives from a wide source of authors, and to include historical, theoretical, and political views. The occasional inclusion of primary sources facilitates balance between an objective presentation of facts and events, and a potentially subjective author/editor interpretation of the issues.

*Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory* achieves its goal of problematizing conventions. However, it also goes beyond, venturing into possible solutions for theory revision. In stressing future implications, this book demands the attentive consideration of Africanists; as source of historical example, as a model for regional and global trends, and as a superlatively influential factor in IR studies. This text ought to be revisited, so as to gauge the progress of policies and attitudes toward Africa in the future.

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*Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*. Paul Landau and Deborah Kaspin, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. 380 pp.

Instructors teaching about African history and society have long wrestled with the stereotypical images of Africa engrained in the heads of their students. This collection of essays, originally presented at a conference at Yale in 1997, offer a number of creative ways to analyze and read images constructed by Africans and Europeans about one another. Gravesites, comic books, anti-colonial cartoons, photography, and wily ethnographic performers are among the subjects covered. This well-written book manages to evade many of the pitfalls of conference compilations and contains information that would be quite useful for those teaching graduate and upper-level undergraduates.

The introduction by Paul Landau is a thoughtful and often daring overview of images in and of Africa. He rightfully notes the chaotic evolution of the series of images of Africa developed by a wide range of travelers, writers, advertisers, and governments based in Europe. Photographs of "native types" allowed governments and foreigners to construct and classify labels, ethnic or otherwise, on Africans while eliminating the individual context of photographic subjects themselves. Thankfully he goes much further by noting how indigenous artists and audiences created their own visual commentary on the colonial experience and appropriated imported pictures and genres for their own ends. One of the most fruitful areas Landau opens up is the complicated ways representations were made, read, and altered in a colonial context. The author notes, "Every unit of meaning, and not just every image, is a public crossroads of histories of interpretation" (16). The rest of the essays pursue the idea of images as a meeting point where widely different and even contradictory social meanings might be placed into visual representations crafted by or of Africans.

In a collection as rich as this one, it is hard to choose certain contributions to highlight. Robert Gordon's essay on Bushmen and film is a fascinating examination of how Africans might manipulate their role of providing stereotypical images of "authentic" Africa for European mass consumption. Governments exaggerated the possible ramifications of film-viewing on African audiences. Some Bushmen themselves, faced with an increasingly harsh set of impositions from the South African government, gleaned both merchandise and cultural influences from the long train of visiting filmmakers while self-consciously performing the "wild" and "primitive" representations that documentary makers wished to capture even though these practices had increasingly vanished in their everyday lives. Tourist culture, far from keeping Bushmen forever pinned in a timeless ethnographic present that only existed in the minds of Europeans, allowed them to comment and gain influence on their contemporary marginal position.

Paul Ben-Amos Girshick offers a look at a group of nineteenth-century artists in the pre-colonial state of Benin (Nigeria) that overturned many of conventions of art to comment on local political and social tensions. *Omada*, young male servants to the king, produced works that parodied royal art and criticized the ominous shadow of increasing British power in the region. *Omada* were placed in a position where they were marginal figures as individuals yet intimately close to the center of power. They could act as 'gatekeepers' who could open or close access to the king to individuals far more respectable than the *omada* themselves. Kings in *omada* art might appear as secondary rather than dominant figures, and Europeans often appear as drunk and oafish buffoons in ways that highlight local views about their

unattractiveness. This piece is a valuable antidote to readers who might expect unchanging and monolithic traditions in royal art.

Eric Gable compares a Portuguese official's obsessive documentation of female scarification among Manjaco people in Guinea-Bissau with Manjaco statues of Europeans. African chiefs decided to innovate an old tradition of abstractly-formed statutes with a much more realist set of statues of Portuguese administrators and traders. Both trends articulate cultural concerns during the 1940s and 1950s when state power expanded in the region. Administrators sought out a supposedly vanishing authentic Manjaco culture by photographing women whilst damning men in European dress as "bad copies" just as they tried to prop up chiefs as "traditional" leaders. At the same time, chiefs and their families sought out individual artists known for carving posts in honor of a man's ascent to adult responsibilities. Young men needed to master colonial technologies of power and influence, Gable contends, that were embodied in the statues. The construction of tradition thus influenced indigenous and foreign visual representations in the region.

Other pieces in this collection deserve far more attention than space available in this review. Hudita Nura Mustafa explores relationships Dakar people make between the trapping of modernity and global circulation with individual selfhood and group identity through photographs. Nancy Rose Hunt takes a characteristically cultural turn with her genealogy of Congolese comic strips and images of the Belgian icon of Tintin. Mission-educated Africans, settlers, Catholic priests, and others produced comic art that could reveal rivalries between ethnic identities, brute caricatures of Africans, or more recent pieces that parody teachers and officials.

All in all, every selection here provokes thought and deserves a reading – a rarity for this sort of publication. The authors and editors are to be commended for the book's excellent design and its cohesiveness.

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*Africa and the West: A Documentary History from the Slave Trade to Independence*. William H. Worger, Nancy L. Clark and Edward A Alpers, eds. Phoenix, Arizona: Oryx Press, 2001. 429 pp.

This hefty book really is a documentary history, rather than simply a collection of documents. The editors' comments are very minimal. The selection and organization of the documents, however, is so effective that the book provides a wonderful introduction into Africa's intersection with Europe through the words of the people who lived through it. From the era of the slave trade to the establishment of the new South Africa, Africa and the West portrays Africa as a real place full of complex and interesting people and institutions, and it emphasizes that the "Western" intersection with Africa was more than just an impact and response. People experienced, observed, critiqued, thought, planned, plotted, and dreamed.

The book's first section, "Africa in the Era of the Slave Trade," includes narratives of enslavement by Venture Smith, Olaudah Equiano, Ali Eisami and Chisi Ndjurisiye Sichayajunga. These are counterposed against documents showing what European church and state leaders thought they were doing, and vivid reports by Alexander Falconbridge and Mungo Park, Europeans observing the realities of trade in Africa. The section also incorporates documents on South Africa, instead of separating its history into a separate section, and a discussion on East African Muslim perspectives on slavery.

The next section, "From Abolition to Conquest," makes the emphasis on dialogue and conversation even more clear, as it includes exchanges over treaties with Asante and between the missionary George Champion and the Zulu king Dingaan. This section also brilliantly illustrates the problems of conquest in the British Secretary of State for the Colonies' instructions to the Niger commissioners in 1941 (pp. 133-6) and a fill-in-the-blank sample treaty for use with "African Chiefs" (pp. 137-8). The final sets of documents in the section, "voices of imperialism" and "voices of resistance" provide documents—including photos and political cartoons—that will enliven any discussion about the logic of conquest. Likewise, Edward Blyden's inaugural address as president of Liberia College provides a vivid illustration of how 19th century diaspora Africans longed for an experimental program of research, study, and development that would connect Africa's past to its present and allow Africans to "regenerate a continent" (p. 194) ravaged by the slave trade and slavery.

The editors continue to follow this pattern in the book's other sections on colonialism (and its critics) and "The Contradictions of Post-Colonial Independence." They draw heavily on Ghana and South Africa, and preferentially depict British-dominated regions. But throughout the collection, vivid documents challenge any oversimplifications students might make about colonialism, its opponents, and its end. Furthermore, documents provide insight into more than just elite politics, as they include excerpts from Casement's "Evidence of Colonial atrocities in the Belgian Congo" (pp. 239-40) and a 1909 school exam from Togo that testifies powerfully to colonial initiatives to re-shape children's minds (pp. 249-50).

For those who teach using documents, finding accessible and relevant documents that cover the range of African history has been getting gradually easier. While some classic collections of documents from specific locations (such as D.A. Low's Mind of Buganda  or Anthony Kirk-Greene's Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, 1966-1970) are out of print, new collections have recently proliferated, including more manageable works from the University of Wisconsin's African Studies series, new editions of explorers' narratives,  and excellent collections of colonial documents such as the PRO's British Documents on the

End of Empire series. This particular volume, like most document collections, is too expensive for students to buy as a textbook. But it would be a valuable addition to a library collections, particularly in libraries with limited Africana materials. The volume would also be good for public libraries, or secondary school libraries, as it would provide a text-based introduction to part of African history that might well stir student interest and encourage creativity.

This is potentially a quite useful book. But there are several things that it quite clearly is not. First, it is not a depiction of all of Africa, through all of time. The editors are quite explicit that their focus is on Africa and "The West"—and thus many familiar sorts of documents, such as Ibn Battuta, epic histories, or indigenous kinglists, are not included. Ethiopia (with one uninspiring document) and North Africa are also notably absent. And the sheer size of the topic means that editors had to make choices. The incorporation of South Africa here is thought-provoking, but feels sparse and thematically awkward. Documents provided here are mostly previously published, drawn from some out- of-print collections, obscure materials, or official sources. Further, for all the complexity of politics and intellectual engagement that selections demonstrate, major issues such as colonial debates over women, the politics of ethnicity, and post-colonial discussions of economics, seem left out. The post-colonial section is by far the weakest, with less coherence and a reliance on fiction by Chinua Achebe and poetry by Jack Mapanje to invoke the frustrated hopes of independence. The section lacks anything on globalization, structural adjustment, military interventions, or any of the newer ways Africa and "the West" interact.

Despite its limitations, this is an excellent book—rich in ways I have only begun to mention. Perhaps the key to its success is the editors' willingness to include large excerpts, whole documents and interchanges. Together, the documents of this collection provide powerful evidence of the sheer level of thought, debate, struggle, and planning that went into every stage of the Africa/West experience from the first contacts between explorers and coastal peoples to the achievement of the new South Africa.

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