

## Reviews

**Famine in Africa: causes, responses and prevention** by JOACHIM VON BRAUN, TESFAYE TEKLU and PATRICK WEBB  
Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. Pp. 219. £32.50 (pbk.).

*Famine in Africa* bears the hallmarks of an institutional, and quite specifically a policy-driven, creation. Drafted under the auspices of the International Food Policy Research Institute, the book seeks to ‘fill in just a few of the empirical and conceptual gaps’ (p. xv) that continue to hinder the analysis of famine. Based on survey work conducted in six African countries (with a heavy reliance on Sudan and Ethiopia), the book rests on three premises: that famine is largely a function of institutional, organisational and policy failure; that famine must be explained in a long-term context; and that there is an immense diversity in policy response to famine. There is no universal theory of famine, the authors argue, and understanding how famines are spatially and temporally specific has been hindered by ‘hypotheses of broad generality’ (p. 6) and ‘a lack of empirical analysis of socioeconomic processes’ (p. 6). *Famine in Africa* begins with its own conceptual model which sees poverty (‘an endogenous outcome of a lack of resources and flawed policies’, p. 7) as a root cause. Causal analysis of famine (something the authors aspire to) is derived from three variables – institutional and policy failure, resource poverty/climate shocks, and population pressure – which in tandem operate through four ‘layers’: (1) economic strategy and policy interaction with conflict, war, resources, climate and population; (2) organisational capacity and governance; (3) policy interventions interacting with price formation among markets; and (4) actual income and consumption failure interacting with the collapse of services. In short, the ‘model’, which purportedly is ‘structural’ (p. 14), includes just about everything. On the other hand, the authors acknowledge (p. 14) that the model cannot weigh particular variables (why some factors become causes), or fully capture political economy, or identify specific sorts of famine dynamics, or detail the collapse of actual institutions or organisations! Which poses the question rather sharply of what *exactly* we have on offer here, and whether as Pinstrip-Anderson says in the Foreword, the book sheds ‘new light on the theoretical and empirical bases for understanding famines’ (p. xiii). It is perfectly clear that it sheds no new theoretical light – indeed many of the key ideas are derived from the largely left-oriented political economy of famine literature of the 1970s and early 1980s – and provides some survey-derived (rather than ethnographic-historical) data to complement what is already widely understood if not well documented. The most original and interesting empirical data emerge in chapters 7 and 8 on household level food security and various programmes to mitigate famine (employment schemes in particular).

The architecture of the book is provided by five themes, starting with ‘gross

economic mismanagement' and war. All of this is useful but there is frustratingly little on how war transforms entitlements, and no effort (in the solid accounts of Ethiopia and Sudan) to assess the real analytical consequence of, say, economic centralisation in Ethiopia or poor agricultural policy in Sudan, as regards famine genesis (in the case of the Horn, did the agricultural policy really make a substantial difference as regards famine mortalities?). The second is the role of climate shocks and production failure, in which the authors show what has been long known, that a single drought event is rarely disastrous; droughts do of course have production consequences (nicely detailed in their data), but one would need to know more about specific agro-ecologies and the recursive effects of famine and drought on these conditions. Third are rural population pressure and urbanisation as famine causes and consequences. Here the authors try to navigate a careful line between Malthusianism *pur et dur* and a claim that population pressure is 'location and time specific' (p. 55). Much could be said about these connections, but the argument would have benefited from a more systematic set of comparisons among the cases to substantiate some of the interesting claims. Not least, the Rwanda example is not a compelling vindication of the links between population, famine and violence. The two chapters on market failures and household food security are strong, but once again the strength resides in the empirical rather than new conceptual or theoretical ideas. Finally, the authors review mitigation and prevention efforts. They provide a useful summary on the key role of the state, but seem to gloss over the complex and controversial role of NGOs and international agencies.

What is especially surprising, and indeed constitutes a grave limitation in the book, is its inability to take seriously its own theoretical position. The long term matters, the authors say, but there is nothing like a serious historical analysis of the crises under review; policy failure and institutional capacity is a root cause, but there is nothing that approximates either a serious political analysis of any of the cases or a detailed account of the collapse of capacity; the book invokes local context and local dynamics, and yet no effort is made, through a systematic comparison, to identify a typology of famine dynamics, or at least a sense of the paths and trajectories of particular forms of reproduction crisis (something that is also missing in the foundational work of Amartya Sen). Alex de Waal's recent book *Famine Crimes* focuses in an extremely critical way on issues that *Famine in Africa* chooses to ignore: structural adjustment and neo-liberalism ('there are few famines in African states post-macroeconomic reform', p. 25), and the 'business' and politics of humanitarian aid. None of this is to suggest that there is not much good sense in *Famine in Africa* – and some important empirical data. The authors do focus on inequality, on war, on the key role of the public sector and so on (as, it needs to be said, have many others since the 1970s working within a critical political economy framework). But the book is anodyne in style and approach, which both makes for a bland sort of policy prescription, and writes out of the narrative all of the complex (and theoretically difficult) rough and tumble that constitutes actually political economies: whether within states, within communities or within households. I have no doubt that the volume will be of use in policy circles, and it does provide a concise summary of some of the

fundamental empirical processes involved in the genesis of (though almost nothing on the recovery from) famine. But a work of innovative theory or analysis it is not.

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**Losing Place: refugee populations and rural transformations in East Africa** by JONATHAN BASCOM

New York: Berghahn, 1998. Pp. 200. £25.00, £13.95 (pbk.).

Taking stock of the refugee literature on the Horn of Africa over the last four decades, one cannot help but notice the preponderance of the studies of the dynamics of refugee flight in the first two decades, the nature and patterns of settlement in exile in the third decade, and the dynamics of repatriation in the last decade. In other words, the hitherto existing literature has treated the entire refugee experience as if it consisted of three unrelated components – flight from places of habitual residence, settlement in exile and repatriation to countries of original residence. This is understandable because of the manifest occurrence of one or the other at the different periods. Indeed, refugee formations in the developing world, and especially the Horn of Africa, started in the mid-1960s as a result of various factors, including disputes over colonial boundaries, ideologically based political persecution of opposition groups, and political and economic exclusion of cultural groups by the dominant group. That is, the newly created post-colonial state, Jacobin in form and substance and imposed over a multicultural polity, contained within itself many of the centrifugal tendencies conducive to conflicts and refugee formations. It was only in the 1990s that, for the first time, refugees in the Horn of Africa started repatriating to their places of habitual residence *en masse*. Hence, this book is a welcome addition to the literature because of its timeliness: it conducts a longitudinal study of the life of the refugee from the time flight was taken in the 1960s and 1970s, settlement in exile in the 1980s, to repatriation in the 1990s. In other words, the author makes a credible effort at tracing ‘the forms of social transformation during the “full circle” of flight, resettlement and the return home’ (p. i).

This book is perhaps the first to attempt to examine the refugee experience with a focus on ‘the relationship between refugees and rural transformation’ (p. 145) and how this plays a ‘prominent role in determining the prospects for repatriation’ (p. 8). It therefore fills a critical gap in the existing literature on refugees in the Horn of Africa. Rightly so, the author places the study of refugee issues alongside the broader political, social and economic forces that exert significant pressure on refugee lives. Hence, this book makes an important contribution to peasant studies. Moreover, it examines refugee social and economic differentiation as a function of globalisation – an important concept that of late has continued to critically define not only inter-state relationships but also relationships at the sub-state level. Indeed, globalisation provides a much-needed analytical tool to the study of contemporary refugee issues. Refugee issues are clearly part and parcel of the

emerging international system, subject to the vicissitudes of various political, economic and social forces. Placing refugee studies within the emerging globalisation paradigm is perhaps the most important contribution this book makes to the literature.

As stated above, Jonathan Bascom also seeks to explain the impact of refugees and rural transformation on the prospects for repatriation. However, it is not clear as to whether or not the author has succeeded in establishing a clear link between settlement patterns and repatriation opportunities. For example, using Egon Kunz's concept of 'majority identified refugees', the author claims that the Nara, as the 'symbolic owners' of the Eritrean revolution (because Hamid Idris Awate, a Nara, was the first leader of the incipient Eritrean armed opposition to Ethiopia), were more likely to repatriate. However, no explanation is provided as to why the Kunama, like the Nara, were also more likely to repatriate. Perhaps because of the history of the relationship between the Nara, Beni Amer and Kunama, and the way this relationship was managed during the days of struggle for Eritrean independence, there is a continuing perception that the Kunama were more 'sympathetic' to Ethiopia. One might argue, therefore, they were less likely to repatriate.

Unlike its title, the book is more of a case study of Eritrean refugees in Wad El Hileau, an important site but nonetheless one of dozens of Eritrean refugee camps in Eastern Sudan. Although there exist problems of access to other refugee camps in East Africa, including those in Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, adding a few from such places for a comparative study would have made the task of assessing the prospects for return easier. It appears that we shall have to wait a little longer before a theory of refugee flight, settlement and repatriation is developed. Nonetheless, this book has brought us closer to this task, especially as refugee issues relate to globalisation.

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**Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: critical perspectives** edited by JOHN L. and JEAN COMAROFF  
Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999. Pp. 318,  
£13.50/US\$19.00 (pbk.).

**African Perspectives on Governance** edited by GORAN HYDEN, DELE OLOWU and H. W. O. OKOTH OGENDO  
Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000. Pp. 323. US\$21.95 (pbk.).

In their very distinct themes and approaches, *Civil Society* and *African Perspectives* both contribute in important ways to deepening the intellectual and empirical foundations of dominant contemporary global political projects by adding the enriching perspectives of 'outsiders'. *Civil Society* brings to bear on the idea of civil society, conventionally the province of political scientists, the insights principally of anthropologists, while *African Perspectives* examines contemporary problems of democratisation and governance, overwhelmingly

dominated by Western political scientists, from the viewpoints of African students of African politics. Both volumes, in centring on Africa, address contemporary hegemonic political imperatives from the standpoint of the continent that is the world's most marginalised in almost every way that matters.

Each volume, in its distinctive ways, thus challenges anew the uncritical and underexamined, seemingly obligatory and inexorable extension of hegemonic Western political concepts and practices to a region of the world in the weakest position to resist or counteract them. *African Perspectives*, by its very existence, helps to legitimise the democratic project in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa by implicitly vesting African intellectuals with roles in shaping its contours, even as it gives powerful voice to the conceptual and practical disabilities of extending Western style governance practices to this region. *Civil Society* places its subject in macro-historical and contemporary global perspectives while, at the same time, exploring its weaknesses, ambiguities and debilities from the perspective of those expected to knuckle under to its blandishments in the name of globalisation.

Both volumes, however, implicitly uphold the legitimacy of the civil society and democratisation projects, respectively, in Africa. *African Perspectives* recognises the compelling importance of the democratisation agenda, but challenges students of politics to look beyond the fundamental issue of basic rules of the political game as they relate to democratisation to the more 'permanent theme' of examining the bearing of changes in these rules of the game on policymaking and policy implementation generally. While acknowledging the importance of policymaking, the authors challenge us to pay greater attention to the underlying problem of how institutional frameworks shape policy—as well as vice versa, they might add. They challenge us to test rather than assume that more participatory policymaking, the stuff of workaday democracy, does in fact yield more legitimate and effective policymaking. These questions, addressed throughout the volume, are offered as underexamined keys to understanding the dual downward spirals of African economic sectors and the unravelling of African political institutions.

In the evidence of the diverse case studies in their volumes, the Comaroffs find civil society to be 'deeply flawed as an analytic concept' even at home in the West, 'hydra-headed' in its many guises, inherently exclusive and inegalitarian as well as the reverse, and susceptible to high-handed and parochial application in unfamiliar territory. But one suspects that the authors themselves implicitly recognise that civil society can be at least partially rescued from these infirmities, at least in principle, both conceptually and existentially. How else, then, could it be serviceable, as they emphasise, even as (1) 'a transitional term at a moment of paradigmatic revolution', as (2) 'alone in the age of neo-liberal capital [giving] shape to reformist, even utopian visions', as (3) a singular means to 'open up spaces of democratic aspiration', and/or (4) 'mandate practical experimentation in the building of new publics, new modes of association, new media of expression, new sorts of moral community, new politics'?

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**Peacekeeping in Africa** edited by OLIVER FURLEY and ROY MAY  
Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1999. Pp. 319. £42.50 (pbk.).

Oliver Furley and Roy May have edited a comprehensive book that examines the past and the future of peacekeeping in Africa. The book does not have one perspective or argument; rather, it is a collection of essays, generally of a high quality, that examine every fact of the phenomena of international armed intervention to promote peace in sub-Saharan Africa. Experts in peacekeeping and African politics will find it a good survey of the state of the art of peacekeeping in the late 1990s. Given the clear writing of the contributors and the limited length of the chapters, it would be well received in the classroom.

The core of the book is a series of case studies on all of the major instances of peacekeeping in Africa since 1980: Zimbabwe, Chad, Somalia, Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, Liberia, Rwanda and Burundi. If Congo had been included, the cases would have been comprehensive since independence. Professor Norma Kriger provides an especially intriguing revisionist criticism of the Lancaster House settlement that yielded the independence of Zimbabwe, arguing that it was much more deeply flawed than has conventionally been assumed, although it is not clear what she would have preferred in its place. Chapters by Sam Barnes on Mozambique and Oliver Furley on Burundi and Rwanda are particularly clear and helpful in understanding the evolution of those peacekeeping operations.

The book concludes with three chapters on 'wider issues'. Timothy Murithi provides a sympathetic but constructively critical review of non-governmental organisations and peacekeeping. Richard Connaughton reviews the major issues for Western militaries in Africa. Finally, Christopher Clapham makes an important first step at analysing what it is like 'being peacekept'. The perspective of local actors, while by no means ignored in the literature, is clearly an important issue that needs now to be explored at much greater length. Indeed, for studies of peacekeeping to move forward, it will now be essential to begin to develop much more locally grounded perspectives on the effect of peacekeeping operations on national and local politics in African countries that are to host peacekeepers.

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**Regionalisation in Africa: integration and disintegration** edited by DANIEL C. BACH  
Oxford: James Currey, 1999. Pp. xix + 223. £40.00, £14.95 (pbk.).

This book is the outcome of a research programme that was launched following a conference on 'Integration and Regionalisation in Sub-Saharan Africa' at the Centre d'Etude d'Afrique Noire (CEAN), Bordeaux, from 27–29 May 1994. It is principally an attempt to highlight the process of regionalisation and the problems it faces in Africa. The book notes that regionalisation is a much discussed issue in North America, Europe and Asia, whereas in Africa not much has been written about the subject because of the standard view that there is no process of regionalisation on the continent. This proclivity is also

manifested in L. Fawcett and A. Hurrell, eds., *Regionalism in World Politics: regional organisation and international order* (Oxford 1995), and A. Gamble and A. Payne, eds., *Regionalism and World Order* (London: Macmillan 1996), which exclude the African continent in their area studies of regionalisation and world order/politics.

Bach notes that while regionalisation in Europe and North America was ‘an opportunity to establish a more appropriate framework for abolishing the pressures of multilateralism and globalisation’, in Africa or Asia it was ‘associated with trade and investment strategies of private agents who operate in the absence of institutionalised regional structures’ (p. 2). According to Bach, ‘regionalisation in Africa is primarily the expression of micro-strategies which... seek to take advantage of the resources of globalisation, with the effect of a further erosion of the states’ territorial and governmental legitimacy’ (p. 2). For Bach regionalisation in Sub-Saharan Africa is impelled by private agents. Hence regionalisation proceeds mostly from interactions initiated by non-state actors and inter-personal networks, faced with decaying states unable or unwilling to assert their sovereignty (p. 12). Although he does not provide concrete evidence to buttress this claim, on the contrary the overwhelming evidence suggests that the impulse for regionalisation in Africa emanates from the states which play dominant role in the process. (See for instance, O. J. B. Ojo, ‘Nigeria and the formation of ECOWAS’, *International Organisation* 34(4), 1980, pp. 571–604; Y. Gowon, ‘The economic community of West African states: a study in political and economic integration’, Ph.D. thesis University Of Leeds, 1996; E. E. Obuah, ‘Regional economic integration in Africa: the role of transnational corporation in ECOWAS’, D.Phil. thesis, University of Sussex, 1996). The evidence suggest that integration in Africa has been a process legislated by states *ex nihilo* in which schemes were often treated as if they would be *deus ex machina* that would bring immediate solutions to Africa’s developments. For example the plethora of conferences organised by African states in the 1960s through the 1980s led to the creation of the East African Community (EAC), Communauté Economique d’Afrique de l’Ouest (CEAO), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), etc. Similarly, the historiography of regionalisation has been mainly state-centric with limited attention given to the role of non-state actors that play key roles in the political economy of Africa. As a result, there exists a gap in the literature on African regionalisation efforts.

In her article, Alice Landau notes the growth of integration groups and multilateral institutions since the post-war period, and the influence of international multilateral institutions and the European Community (EC) on these efforts. According to her, the post-1980 regional integration efforts in Africa were ‘the result of a complex chain of reactions in which the dynamic of the EC has undoubtedly played the role of catalyst, inducing a mobilisation of political decision-making’ (p. 24). The impact of the EC on regionalisation in Africa is further demonstrated by Marc-Louis Ropivia. According to him momentous developments in the EC have affected African integration. For instance, the 1957 Rome Treaty led to the formation in 1964 of the Yaoundé Convention in which the EC formed a neo-colonial satellitic association with

eighteen African states including Malagasy; the entry of Britain and the Republic of Ireland into the EC in 1973 influenced the formation of ECOWAS in 1975, the formation of Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (CEEAC) in central Africa, and the creation of the Lomé Convention. Landau suggests the adoption of both multilateralism and regionalism by developing countries, for the adoption of only the latter may lead to marginalisation in the global economic system (p. 26).

On the history and development of regional economic integration in Africa, Walter Kennes identifies two principal waves – the 1960s–1970s with extension to 1980 with the formation of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC); and 1991 with the signing of the Abuja treaty on the African Economic Community (p. 27). A better periodisation of the development of regionalism in Africa which takes account of the impetus from the international as well as the local environments will suffice to divide the development of regionalism into 1960s–70s, and 1980s to present. While the former phase (1960s–70s) recognised the efforts of the United Nations, it was characterised by the reinvigoration of regional schemes and the creation of new groupings, the latter phase marked the period when regionalism became a macro development strategy adopted by African states. This was encapsulated in the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) which was launched by the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU) in 1980. The LPA divided Africa into three sub-regions: West Africa, Central Africa, and East and Southern Africa, with each passing through free trade area, customs union and economic community. The LPA further envisaged that these regional areas would serve as building blocks for a large economic community for Africa by the year 2000.

On the question of low intra-regional trade amongst groupings in Africa, Kennes identifies two main factors: lack of potential for increased trade in Africa; and existence of customs duties and barriers to trade such as road blocks and constraints on payment, investment and movement of persons (p. 29). On pp. 32–3 he identifies two approaches to facilitate the coherence of regional organisation and deal with the accession of new member states and the introduction of new policies. These are variable geometry, and variable speed. Whereas variable speed deals with the graduated implementation of regional policies by members, variable geometry allows a situation where some sub-group member states move towards deeper integration than others on a more or less permanent basis. Kennes therefore suggests the application of the variable geometry in the Southern Africa Customs Union and the Rand zone within the wider SADC framework; or SADC, the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the East African Community under the Common Market for East and Southern Africa; the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) under the wider ECOWAS framework. Noble and desirable though this suggestion may be, its application in Africa may have detrimental consequences. For instance, it may create rivalry; deepen the gap which already exists between centres of growth and centres of stagnation; and give rise to sub-imperialism by the more developed member states.

Furthermore, Kennes notes that the existence of national structural adjustment programmes may be complementary with regional integration liberalisation policies (p. 34). This is debatable, for the goals of trade

liberalisation for regional groupings where the preponderance of its membership are underdeveloped is at variance with liberalisation induced by the forces of global capitalism organised and implemented under the aegis of global capitalist institutions for the benefit of transnational firms. Besides, the conditions for participation in such regional liberalisation regimes differ markedly from those of global trade liberalisation.

Contributing to the debate on the constraints to regional integration, Dominique Darbon argues that the lack of defined territories by post-independence African states has led to the crisis of 'inability to make progress with the integration of its people and to ensure their compliance with the strategies designed within a specific territorial framework' (p. 41). As a result, communalist ideology and regionalist theories carry a potential challenge to the classic link between state, territory and integration (p. 42). Although post-independence African states are defined by formal boundaries, they appear divided between different rival groups, each of which maintains its domination over a specific area. Thus, instead of paying allegiance to the state, rival groups pay allegiance to central chiefs or warlords, as in the case of Angola, Sudan etc. According to Darbon, boundary disputes are rife because demarcation lines are areas of resource exploitation. Darbon further notes that the absence of 'a real institutionalisation of power and forms of trans-community mobilisation and a coherent "civil society" in Africa transforms the power struggle into a race for access to wealth, forcing political leaders to create for themselves faithful clienteles'. This leads to the creation of fiefdoms in which political elites secure a monopoly of the management of political resources and begin to appeal for international solidarity by invoking the 'right of humanitarian interference' or right of minorities as a means of legitimising a particular political struggle. Given these situations, Darbon argues that the renewal of debates on regionalism very often brings an explicit or implicit condemnation of the nation-state and strengthens the potential legitimacy of demands for autonomy, if not independence (p. 50).

On the performance of regional integration schemes in sub-Saharan Africa, both Olatunde Ojo and Peter Takirambudde note that they have made minimal contribution to the development of the political economy of member states. Although both contributors note some achievements in the areas of infrastructural development (such as road networks, telecommunication facilities etc.), in the area of intra-regional trade their contributions have been abysmal. Ojo, Takirambudde and Ropivia all identify some problems responsible for this minimal performance of regional integration in Africa. These include the lack of political will; the absence of regional identity; the absence of a hegemonic leadership capable of using coercive measures to ensure compliance by member states; the lack of implementation of protocols; the existence of IMF/World Bank imposed structural adjustment programmes; the existence of multiplicity of inconvertible currencies; the non-payment of moneys owed to regional schemes by member states; the existence of a weak manufacturing sector; and the upheavals in the international system since the end of the Cold War (p. 53).

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**Agricultural Marketing in Tropical Africa: contributions from the Netherlands** edited by H. LAURENS VAN DER LAAN, Tjalling Dijkstra and Aad van Tilburg  
Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1999. Pp. 240. £17.50 (pbk.).

Most of the eleven papers included in this text were originally presented at a one-day symposium on 'Agricultural Marketing in Tropical Africa' held in honour of Laurens van der Laan on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday. The seminar was jointly organised by the two main institutions where he had been a senior staff member; the African Studies Centre at Leiden and the Department of Marketing and Marketing Research at the Wageningen Agricultural University. In the circumstances, it is appropriate that he provides the general introduction to the main theme, with a discussion of 'obstacles to systematic study'.

This chapter is based on a review of relevant literature, using first the commodity approach, then the institutional one and finally the functional one. In each case it is concluded that the coverage is uneven. Commodities such as perishable staple food crops, institutions such as consumers, export companies, input suppliers and trade associations, and functions such as on-farm processing, standardisation, financing, commercial risk bearing and market intelligence, are claimed to be inadequately covered. However, it is not entirely clear why comprehensive cover of all aspects of the subject is thought to be desirable.

Professor van der Laan sees the study of agricultural marketing in tropical Africa as a special sub-discipline with important differences from marketing studies in other parts of the world, whilst admitting that many insights are universally applicable. He believes that biases have arisen in treating policy prescription as more urgent than description and in giving 'economic analysis... a higher priority than agricultural marketing analysis'. These tendencies are surely inevitable given the reality of rural poverty, resource scarcity, budgetary and foreign exchange constraints.

The remaining ten papers report on case studies of (durable) staple food crops in Tanzania, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and Benin, cash crops in Ghana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire (usefully compared with Costa Rica) and Kenya, and cattle in Zambia and other countries. All these fall into van der Laan's category of well-researched topics. Although these papers are interesting and useful descriptions of aspects of agricultural marketing in particular countries of tropical Africa, many concentrating on the effects of structural reform and market liberalisation, there is little mention of new methods of market study, such as integrated multi-product market systems analysis, the new institutional economics and transactions costs analysis. These papers are, in general, competent, informative and valuable traditional agricultural marketing studies.

The papers on maize marketing in Tanzania and Kenya describe the transition from state control to increasing reliance on the private sector. Marketing margins may have fallen to benefit surplus producers and urban consumers, but food security appears to have deteriorated particularly in the more remote rural areas. In Burkina Faso the private markets for food grains

fail to meet consumer needs in areas of chronic food insecurity and periods of temporary harvest failure. Improvements in state interventions are recommended. The study of rice markets in Sierra Leone emphasises the importance of non-market transactions. Marketed surplus varies from only 8.4 per cent in an upland area to 65.5 per cent in a less remote upstream area. Maize and bean producers in Benin have a choice of selling to itinerant traders or taking produce to market; for instance in 1990 only 35 per cent of maize growers studied took their produce to market. Choice of marketing outlet is related to a set of farm and farmer characteristics in this study.

Cocoa marketing in Ghana and Cameroon has been transferred from a monopsonistic marketing board to private enterprise, gradually in the first case and more rapidly in the latter. The benefits appear modest, while price uncertainty has increased in Cameroon. Government intervention is needed for quality control and provision of infrastructure. The disadvantages of Côte d'Ivoire, in terms of lack of domestic investment and poor technology as well as a weak position in the global commodity chain, are emphasised by comparison with the situation of Costa Rica.

The last two chapters on cattle marketing in Zambia and cross-border cattle marketing for the whole sub-continent both show producer response to economic incentives, which is somewhat more marked in the long run, but reject the notion that there are large surpluses of livestock kept by pastoralists, who lack opportunities to sell.

This text is recommended to students and researchers in agricultural marketing as a set of useful and informative case studies.

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**Angola Unravels: the rise and fall of the Lusaka peace process** by

ALEX VINES

New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999. £12.95 (pbk.).

Although formally 'authored' by the US-based NGO, Human Rights Watch, this comprehensive and painstakingly researched report is the work of Alex Vines, whose previous writing on both Mozambique and Angola is well known. The central thesis of *Angola Unravels* is that human rights violations by both sides in the conflict – and more especially their disregard by the international community – have been a major factor in the failure of the peace process. 'The impunity with which rights were abused eroded confidence in the peace process and created a vicious cycle of rights abuses which gradually worsened' (p. 32). The calculation by the UN and others that too robust a denunciation of these abuses would undermine the larger process was, according to Vines, fundamentally misguided.

This is a debatable proposition. As the report itself acknowledges, UNITA's original acceptance of the Lusaka accords in 1994 came as a result of strategic calculation: it was losing the war. On the same grounds, the MPLA government in Luanda was divided on the value of the peace process. UNITA's subsequent foot-dragging on virtually all aspects of the agreement,

as well as the highly developed sense of victimhood that both sides displayed throughout, suggests that stronger denunciations around human rights issues might indeed have been counter-productive, as the UN secretary-general's special representative, Alioune Blondin Beye, judged.

For example, the effect of Security Council sanctions against UNITA at different times over its failure to implement the peace process was ambivalent – leading at least initially to heightened tension and withdrawal of cooperation. The danger would have been that a stronger focus on the obvious human rights abuses of each side would have created not, as the report suggests, a stronger respect for the peace process as a whole, but merely another factory of grievances in what was already an industrial estate full of them.

Beyond this debate around its central argument, however, the report provides an excellent narrative history of a situation, the unfolding of which has been as complex as it has been horrific. The factionalisation of UNITA as the peace process advanced in 1996–97 (with the emergence of the pro-Lusaka UNITA Renovada and other groupings willing to distance themselves from Savimbi) is lucidly explored. Perhaps most valuable, though, is the meticulous account of the depth and range of continuing foreign involvement in the civil war – from the legions of arms suppliers of varying degrees of shadiness to the helpfully incurious international diamond trade.

Inevitably, some fundamental questions are suggested, but remain unanswered (and are probably unanswerable). Perhaps the most fundamental is simply whether or to what extent the Angolan situation is amenable to externally driven resolution. Outcomes always seem inevitable in hindsight. The failure of the 1992 electoral process which ended with UNITA's return to war should, it now appears, have been wholly predictable, and the temptation to carry this *ex post facto* certitude on to the breakdown of the Lusaka arrangements at the end of 1998 is strong. The local dynamics of the conflict, it is now frequently argued, are so deep-rooted and complex that third party mediation is pre-doomed to failure. Yet one of the strengths of this report is to remind us that by late 1997 a real settlement, based on the Lusaka formula and managed by the UN, seemed well within reach. The danger of its subsequent collapse may have been underestimated, but it was not inevitable. The international system may have retreated from the Angolan tragedy for the present, but it will inevitably re-engage with it. For this reason the specific recommendations offered here, not just to the Angolan parties but to the 'Observer States' (Portugal, Russia and the US), to the UN and the other relevant IGOs, and to the oil and diamond companies, should not be dismissed merely as a well-intentioned wish-list. The precise emphasis that renewed intervention should properly give to issues of human rights in advance of a political and military settlement may be open to debate. But the moral case for intervention is not, and this report is a valuable addition to the data which should inform it.

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**Greater Ethiopia: the Evolution of a Multiethnic Society** (2nd edition)  
 by DONALD N. LEVINE  
 Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000. Pp. xxi + 231.  
 US\$16.00 (pbk.).

This second edition of Donald Levine's classic work is an unchanged reprint of the 1974 edition, including all the typos. The main text was not rewritten or edited, and no new literature was incorporated into the discussion. The only additions are the new Preface (pp. xiii–xxi), where the author reflects on the changes since 1974 and in particular since 1991 when the current government took power, and the Addendum to the bibliography (pp. 223–4), which is a small list of twenty-four more recent books and articles the selection criteria for which are not always clear. Sufficient praise has been sung on the first edition of this book (its erudition, its insightful application of sociological theory to Ethiopian society, and its effort at creative synthesis), so I will not repeat that here. Criticism has also been forthcoming, e.g. on the author's unitary views, allegedly exaggerating the underlying similarities and commonalities of the very diverse peoples in the 'Greater Ethiopian' culture area, and the somewhat 'essentialist' analysis of the historical and cultural impact of the 'Amhara system' and the 'Oromo system'. Both admirers and critics are right to some extent, although I think the former a bit more so than the latter. With a few exceptions on the western fringe of the present-day Ethiopian state, there has historically been a remarkable structure of interaction and contact among the peoples of Ethiopia (including Eritrea) within which they participated in trade, social exchange, migration, political life and conflict to a far greater extent than with people outside that area.

Upon rereading this book, it strikes the reader how broad in scope, how innovative in approach, and how stimulating in arguments this book was when it came out back in the 1970s. In the past twenty years it has inspired anthropological and historical research, stimulated theoretical debate about Ethiopia's cultural and historical development, and given the impetus to modern political thinking about the complexities and challenges of Ethiopia as a country. This text thus easily remains an absolute must for any Ethiopianist scholar to read and digest. What the book and its socioevolutionary argument did not foresee, however, was the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 (and the subsequent military Marxist dictatorship), or the 'ethnicist turn' of national politics after 1991 (although Levine saw the emergence of a 'radically pluralistic community' as one possible outcome, p. 183). In this respect, it might have paid more close scrutiny to the autocratic nature of the political system and to the regional differentiation and inequality of the imperial state. Ethiopia's 'adaptive capacities' (p. 180) at the time were overestimated.

These days Ethiopia is no longer 'greater' but smaller (with the 1993 secession of Eritrea), although it is still multiethnic, perhaps more so than ever. In view of the theme of this book it is interesting to reflect on the current 'ethno-federal' model of politics introduced from above by the current Ethiopian government of the EPRDF, led by the former insurgent movement from the northern Tigray region. These issues of political transformation and

social change are the subject of the excellent and thought-provoking Preface. Here Levine addresses two core issues, all the more pressing in view of the recent destructive conflict with Eritrea: why has inter-ethnic hostility increased in present-day 'smaller Ethiopia', and how might Ethiopians work to overcome them on the basis of their (shared) history. As reasons for the first development he gives: administrative (over) centralisation, geopolitical weakening of the society's centre and a cultural depletion of the centre. This was all in evidence under the Marxist regime of the 1970s–80s. What Levine's perspective, incidentally, tends to underestimate is the critical role of persons or personal agency at certain junctures in the life of a weakly institutionalised state depending strongly on military might and patronage. Under the post-1991 regime, the political order was founded on the idea of (ethnic) 'self-determination up to secession' in conjunction with a new 'cultural' definition of the past structure of political inequality: 'Amhara' oppression (p. xviii). Apart from its historical accuracies, this approach is also doubtful as a formula for the political future of Ethiopia. Instead, Levine calls for a redefinition of the concept of Greater Ethiopia as a context for a new version of national unity and justice (p. xx). This will have to include (and this point is made here much more forcefully than in the 1974 text) that the inequities and deprivations of the conquest of the southern Ethiopian peoples must be acknowledged. An integrative vision of the future should however be achieved, based on the positive achievements of the past (p. xxi) and the rich political heritage of the country's people (e.g. Oromo democratic traditions). While it is not a necessary conclusion based on Levine's evolutionary-sociological analysis of Ethiopian society, one readily ascribes to this view, and some of the societal conditions for the realisation of that vision are present.

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**Ethiopia: a post-Cold War African state** by THEODORE M. VESTAL  
Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999. Pp. xxi + 223. US\$59.95 (pbk.).

The puzzling thing about this book is how it managed to evade the quality controls that are presumably maintained by a leading academic publisher. It provides no remotely dispassionate analytical (or even empirical) account of Ethiopia since the end of the Cold War – a period effectively coterminous with the capture of power by the EPRDF regime in May 1991. It consists, rather, in a sustained polemic against the EPRDF for failing to live up to currently accepted Western standards of democracy, accountability, human rights and 'good governance'. The tone is throughout accusatory, and the text is liberally embellished with the use of sneering quotation marks and disparaging comments; such usages as 'critics believe that...' are readily employed to sustain the author's assertions.

This is not to suggest that the EPRDF regime is remotely democratic, in any Western sense, or that it maintains any greater respect for human rights than it is obliged to do to appease Western donors. The evidence to the contrary is

overwhelming. But any book that sought to live up to its title could reasonably have been expected to seek some understanding of why the regime has behaved in the way it has. There is, for example, no consideration of history, either of the Ethiopian state or of the formative influences on the EPRDF itself: the book just starts with the EPRDF takeover, as though this constituted a tabula rasa on which a political system corresponding to American standards could readily be constructed. Nor is there any attempt to summarise even the publicly available information about how the government's programme of ethnic devolution has actually operated. Any reader seeking to discover what has been happening in Ethiopia over the last decade will be disappointed.

Where the book does acquire a certain interest is in the author's uncritical acceptance of the views of Ethiopia prevalent among a substantial section of the large Ethiopian diaspora in the United States. That these views bear little resemblance to what is happening in the country itself is scarcely the point. They involve the creation of a picture of Ethiopia, very largely informed by the experience of exile and especially of the United States, that projects that experience back onto the country of origin. The roles of African diasporas, the linkages that they maintain with their homelands, their constructions of Africa from the vantage point of exile, and the influence of these constructions in turn on perceptions of Africa in the West, form a critical and deeply understudied element in the modern African experience. It is for the light – albeit indirect and largely unacknowledged – that this book casts on these subjects, rather than for what it has to say about Ethiopia, that it is likely to retain a certain academic value.

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**FrauenEmanzipation in revolutionären und militärischen Kontexten: Aspekte der Geschlechterverhältnisse am Beispiel eritreischer EPLF-Kämpferinnen (1988–1992)** [Women's Emancipation in Revolutionary and Military Contexts: aspects of gender relations exemplified by EPLF women fighters in Eritrea (1988–1992)] by CLAUDIA SCHAMANEK  
Publications of the Institutes of African Studies and Egyptian Studies, University of Vienna, 81, Contributions to African Studies 61  
Vienna: Afro-Pub., 1998. Pp. 230. Aus. Sch. 420 (pbk.).

The third book-length German-language publication on Eritrean women to come out in recent years (after Christmann and Zimprich, both 1996), Schamanek's study is distinctly different from that of her predecessors in that she not only examines developments in Eritrean gender relations as mapped against the nationalist liberation struggle and beyond, but also scrupulously investigates her own research process. Arguing from – and continuously searching for – a theoretical standpoint which is decidedly feminist, the book is divided into two main parts: Part A deliberating on conceptual and methodological approaches to the relationship of women and war; Part B focusing on a case study of women fighters in the Eritrean People's Liberation

Front (EPLF) which led Eritrea to *de facto* independence from Ethiopia in 1991. A Prologue and an Epilogue frame the main body of the book, rounded off by an appendix containing maps, documents of the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEWmn), and a list of interviews.

The main impetus for the study comes from two field research trips the author undertook in 1988 and 1992, coinciding with the third and fourth congresses of NUEWmn. The data collated primarily through interviews, ethnopsychological field notes, and participant observation form the backbone of her book, but are embedded in a wider debate on feminist theories of war. Schamanek proposes to analyse the interdependence of female fighters to liberation front on two levels: societal structures and individual biographies. Key questions are: Which social tensions and changes can be observed when women leave traditional gender hierarchies which defined them as mothers, wives and daughters, to join a predominately 'male' liberation movement, theoretically as equals? How far do women change such a movement; how far does it change them; and how far are they being 'used' for the purposes/policies of the organisation?

The first section of Part A outlines Schamanek's theoretical standpoint, or rather, her self-reflexive deliberations on selected aspects of feminist theories of war. After a comprehensive literature survey on women's studies in Eritrea, which highlights the dearth of material in this field, the author discusses the omission of female soldiers in theoretical debates, exemplified primarily in European military history, but also drawing on Ethiopian sources. While women in military conflicts are too easily cast in the victim role, the paradoxical position of female combatants is little examined. On a structural level, the woman fighter can become an instrument of an inherently 'male-oriented' (p. 49), because military, system; on a personal level, she might experience unprecedented liberties. Images on a symbolical level can vacillate between 'warriors' and 'saints'. Schamanek also cautions against an uncritical glorification of the female fighter as a role model for women's liberation, exemplified in Algeria, and stresses the polyphony of women's experiences in times of war.

In section two of Part A, Schamanek elaborates on the methodological complexities of her investigation – research methods and process – and shares what she calls 'Irritationen [irritations]' (p. 79): her insecurities and ambiguities as a 24-year-old researcher during her first field experience in 1988, including her confrontation with women who were admirable but somehow 'Other'; her inability to distinguish between 'genuine statement' and EPFL/NUEWmn phraseology; a seeming lack of critique from inside, and the inability to discuss more sensitive issues, such as forced conscription or sexual harassment within the EPLF. In 1992, she found herself unable to renew old contacts and, not being a guest of the NUEWmn, unable to record interviews. Rather than eclipsing her feelings and disturbances, however, Schamanek turns them into a resource for understanding the area under study and for exploring her own European/female/professional identity. 'In Eritrea habe ich einige Monate meines Lebens verbracht, *nutzlos* für Eritrea, *ausschlaggebend für mich* [In Eritrea, I have spent a few months of my life, *useless* for Eritrea, *crucial for myself*]' (p. 65). This book, then, is as much about the

researcher and her research process, as it is about EPLF women fighters in Eritrea. It is certainly not 'useless', but provides valuable insights about the ramifications of fieldwork, especially for the first-time researcher.

Part B opens with a 'woman-centred' socio-historical survey of Eritrea with emphasis on the liberation war. This is followed by a portrayal of the NUEWmn and an excursion to common 'myths' by investigating male and female images of women and their reality during a liberation struggle. Special emphasis is placed on the role of the EPLF, its 'sanctuary' function in times of instability, providing for basic human needs and imbuing its members with a deep sense of 'fighter' identity and meaning – seemingly at the price of their own beliefs. Noteworthy is also the transition from 'civilian woman' to 'female fighter'. This encompassed profound changes in the physical and psychological make-up of women who, from an external viewpoint, moved towards a 'masculine' form of self-representation. The study closes with three moving case studies which represent the variety of women's war experience, as civilian supporters, armed militia, and frontline combatants.

Schamanek's overall tone is that of critical disillusionment towards the women's policies of the EPLF/PFDJ (the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, the EPLF turned civilian in 1993), noting that women's issues have been palpably neglected since 1992. She also scrapes the veneer off earlier hagiographies of women fighters (Wilson 1991). Readers familiar with Christmann and others will find little genuinely new information on female fighters in Eritrea, but Schamanek's own case studies make engaging reading. The strength of the book is the author's meticulous documentation and interweaving of her own experiences – the 'real' research as opposed to her personal feelings – which is often abandoned in scholarly works for an affectively neutral stance. At times, however, I wished for a little less of relentless self-justification. Noteworthy is also her ability to utilise holistically a variety of disciplines and sources, such as political science, ethnopsychology, creative literature, and fine arts. In her footnotes, Schamanek conducts an informed dialogue which provides the reader with an additional wealth of cross-references and information. While in Part A a comparative analysis with similar African contexts and a reference to current post-colonial theory on 'Othering' and identity might have been useful, this book provides thought-provoking perspectives on women and war, and draws attention to the difficulties and non-linearity of field research often neglected in political science studies. Given the plethora of references, an index should be considered in a reprint.

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**Beyond Inequalities: Women in Zambia** by SARAH LONGWE, MERCY SIAME, NAKATIWA MULIKITA and ROY CLARKE  
Harare: SARDC, 1998. Pp. 104. £7.50/US\$13.75 (pbk.).

**Beyond Inequalities: Women in Swaziland** by ZAKHE HLANZE and LOBO MKABELA  
Harare: SARDC, 1998. Pp. 64. £7.50/US\$13.75 (pbk.).

**SADC Gender Monitor, Issue 1: Monitoring Implementation of the Beijing Commitments by SADC Member States** by BOOKIE M. KETHUSEGILE and ATHALIA MOLOKOMME.  
Gaborone and Harare: SADC and SARDC. Pp. 44, £5.95/US\$9.95 (pbk.).

'Beyond Inequalities' is a series of titles published by the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, comprising twelve national and one regional gender profiles covering all but two SADC member states. They aim to be 'an information tool for lobbying and advocacy for regional action on the transformation of gender relations at all levels', and are meant as a 'contribution to the improvement of the status of women in the SADC region'. As the two titles reviewed here suggest, they are compilations of secondary data gleaned from sources ranging from central statistical offices to reports of non-governmental organisations to newspapers.

The three booklets are part of a larger effort to monitor the implementation of commitments made by the SADC member states in both the UN Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 and the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development from 1997. They present a daunting picture of commitments not met, even though some progress has been made.

While the profiles are written by different (groups of) local consultants, they all follow the same format, including sections on historical background, current situation analyses, policies and programmes in place, and suggestions for further necessary action. This makes for easier use by those who want an overview and who are working comparatively, but it also represents somewhat sterile reading. Yet, despite the limitations imposed by the style, the content is far from boring or repetitive. Boxes with information gleaned from the media and more inaccessible sources point to the specific problems and characteristics of each country reviewed, and the running texts support this. The Swaziland booklet thus leads us on a journey through culture, sexuality and marriage that reads like a crime story against human rights. The Zambian contribution drives home its message with well-placed statistics on gender gaps at all levels, and brings the escalating violence against women and the threat they face being infected by the HIV virus into focus by presenting us with a little news clip on a court ruling which states that 'a woman has no customary right to refuse sex to her husband'.

In Swaziland, where patriarchal tradition gives men 'absolute power of control over the family' and women are 'even in adulthood considered minors', women remain grossly underrepresented in public decision making, a gender policy is not even in the making, and the country has yet to sign the CEDAW convention. In Zambia, where the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy had hailed women's rights in the run up to the 1991 democratic elections, it is, perhaps, more astonishing to find that the situation of women

in political office has improved only slightly and in some areas has been on the rebound. The authors of the Zambia contribution also expose the process that led to a flawed National Gender Policy, which remained a draft policy document until earlier this year. Women's participation in national affairs is thus, in those two countries, still largely confined to the non-governmental sector.

The authors of the SADC Gender Monitor remind us that the SADC Gender and Development Declaration of 1997 has committed the heads of member states to achieve at least a 30 percent representation of women in national decision making, to promote women's access to and control over productive resources and to repeal laws and social practices that discriminate against them. The *Beyond Inequality* contributions from Zambia and Swaziland suggest that little of that commitment shines through in actual policies and results. Yet, writing from a comparative perspective, the authors of the Gender Monitor remain optimistic that 'Southern Africa is making remarkable progress to integrate gender perspectives' at all levels. Amongst the achievements listed are the establishment of national machinery to oversee and drive gender equality in all member countries; noticeable positive changes in the representation of women in a number of member countries including Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and, of course, South Africa; the institutionalisation of gender budgets in two SADC countries; regional and national campaigns to combat gender violence, and the like.

The largely upbeat presentation of data in the Gender Monitor leaves the reader either confused or disappointed with generalisations. The authors, themselves gender activists, are no doubt aware of this, and they point out that despite huge workloads women in SADC member countries have less access and control over productive resources than men, and that legal reform has been offset by negative attitudes, lack of awareness and assertiveness on the part of women. This suggests that national machinery has remained marginalised, women representatives in parliaments divorced from the majority of their sisters, and patriarchal value systems have not only remained in place but also gathered in strength on the ground, in tandem with advances at the national level. But this painful truth remains largely hidden between the lines, perhaps to boost the morale of those who fight for gender justice or to politely shame the national leaders of member states who clearly need to do much more if they are to meet their commitments four years down the line.

GISELA GEISLER

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**Justice in Africa: Rwanda's genocide, its courts and the UN Criminal Tribunal** by PAUL J. MAGNARELLA

Aldershot, Brookfield USA, Singapore, Sydney: Ashgate, 2000. Pp. 154. £35.00 (pbk.).

If you are looking for a succinct and informative introduction to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR for short), then look no further. This book is probably the briefest introduction available to the proceedings of the Tribunal, to its internal workings and its creation, covering

from 1994 to the end of 1998. The weakest part is the first chapter, where the author gives a neo-Malthusian account of the genocide of Tutsi in 1994. He refers to the 'psychological need' of Hutus to eliminate Tutsis (p. 21), seeing Hutu and Tutsi as 'natural competitors' because of land shortages existing in Rwanda prior to the genocide (p. 23). This appears to be quite at variance with the author's belief that this was a top-down, organised genocide, not a situation of competition. As Magnarella himself points out, the Tribunal rulings have helped to 'erase the belief that interethnic conflicts are genetically inbred and therefore insoluble' (p. 56). Another problem is the narrowness of sources used (Uvin 1998 is referred to as 'one of the most provocative studies to come out of the Rwandan crisis' (p. 29), but is not cited in the bibliography). Recent African Rights reports on the Arusha trials, including the trial of Jean-Paul Akayesu, which is covered in a chapter, seem to have been ignored. There is over-reliance on a single internet news data base, the Lexis news library. Almost half the bibliography is drawn from this one source. Typos could have been corrected (Kigalai for Kigali, p. 21; 11 January 1994 was the date General Dallaire sent his famous fax to the UN warning of genocide, not 11 January 1993 (p. 31).

The book is stronger on the legal implications of the ICTR. Though Magnarella is not a lawyer himself, he agrees that 'Employing the Nuremberg concept of crimes against humanity in Rwanda constitutes an important legal development.' It also implies 'extension of international humanitarian law to internal conflicts' (p. 47). An ironic outcome is that whilst many 'small fry' tried in Rwanda may receive the death sentence, top generals and organisers of the genocide, tried mainly in Arusha, cannot receive a similar punishment. But by 'assigning guilt to the leader-instigators, the Tribunals may also lift the burden of collective guilt that settles on societies whose leaders have directed or ordered such terrible violence' (p. 56), Magnarella hopes. There are two good chapters on the internal workings of the ICTR and on the justice system of Rwanda. Both had to be created – or recreated – from scratch after the genocide. Two important cases – those of Jean Kambanda, ex-prime minister and self-confessed architect of the genocide, and of Jean-Paul Akayesu, former Mayor of Taba, are recounted in two further chapters. Kambanda's 'extensive confession concerning his government's intentional and well-advertised policy of genocide constitutes the fundamental fact upon which future ICTR prosecutions will rest', concludes Magnarella (p. 112). Indeed, this confession is important also because it 'destroys the credibility... of revisionist historians, who claim a genocide never took place' (p. 93). Rwanda's genocide too has its David Irvings! The conclusion is regrettably brief, but there are useful appendices: the UN Resolution 955 establishing the ICTR; the UN Security Council Resolution of 30 April 1998, amending ICTR's Statute; charges brought against Jean-Paul Akayesu by the ICTR prosecutor. All in all, this study provides a reasonable factual account of the ICTR and its relation to the Rwandan justice system in the post-genocide period.

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**Ghana: the background, the issues, the people** by Rachel Naylor  
Oxford: Oxfam Great Britain, 2000. Pp. 88. £6.95/US\$9.95 (pbk.).

Naylor's book, a country profile of Ghana, can be judged by how she fulfilled the task she set for herself at the beginning – the question of whether Ghana, the first nation in Tropical Africa to gain independence from colonial rule, has failed to fulfil the developmental aspirations of its people?

The book adopts a political economy approach and traces the historical development of the state in Ghana. It recounts the impact of the country's troubled political history, and the ongoing attempts to put Ghana's development on a sound footing for sustainable results. Considerable attention is given to the human and physical geography of the country. She roots the foundations of contemporary development in the trade in gold and slaves in the immediate past, and notes that educational and cultural development of the country had been enriched by the early contacts with European missionaries. Most of the agricultural and educational activities were however, confined to the south. Naylor argues that it is this head start, especially in education, that has been the most important influence on the regional disparities in development in Ghana. Throughout the book, unqualified attention is given to this north–south divide in the country. The plight of Northern Ghana, where most of Oxfam's projects are located, is well rehearsed. But she observes that the economic structural adjustment programme that has been implemented in the country since 1983, has made significant inroads into bridging the north–south divide.

The modest achievements made under democratisation and decentralisation have been well noted. The district elections of 1988/89 were held to elect two-thirds of the membership of the district assembly and not one-third as the book alleges. Only one-third of the assembly is government appointed. She however, notes rightly that the concentration of power in the hands of the chief executives does not augur well for democratic accountability. Decentralisation of the health care system has also been attempted with limited success, as health spending has been noted to be still lower in the north of the country.

An exciting feature of Naylor's book is the way in which she brings together a catalogue of information on the lives and struggles of ordinary Ghanaians to eke out a living for themselves. It portrays human ingenuity to survive under not so favourable economic circumstances. The new constitutional order has brought growing peace, stability and a semblance of democracy and accountability, as a result the author concludes that Ghana faces the future in hope. However, she notes that the greatest fight is yet to be won, that is 'the everyday struggle against grinding poverty'.

The book is written in accessible language and makes very interesting reading. I would recommend it to students of development, policy makers and indeed, tourists who want to apprise themselves of the history and development of Ghana. This is because the book sells itself as a one-stop reference point to learning about Ghanaians and what makes them tick.

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**Regional and Local Economic Development in South Africa: the experience of the Eastern Cape** by ETIENNE NEL  
Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1999. Pp. 359. £45.00 (pbk.).

Despite its title, this is essentially a book about *local* economic development (LED). It reviews and uses an extensive literature on the subject but draws much less on the regional development literature, and the case studies chosen are all examples of LED. Etienne Nel has published widely on LED and related issues, and is certainly the leading expert on the subject in South Africa. In this book he argues the need for LED, given the failure of centrally driven regional development strategies and the weakening of central state control in the face of globalisation. Both points are valid, although the failure of regional development strategies in South Africa arguably relates more to the unique character of the strategies developed to meet the ideological aims of apartheid planning than to any inherent weaknesses of regional development strategies generally.

The book follows a straightforward plan. The introduction is followed by a literature review and a discussion of the methodology and techniques used in evaluating LED in the Eastern Cape. The next chapter reviews the South African space economy and the position of the Eastern Cape within it. An historical review of LED in South Africa follows in the next two chapters, and a third considers the evolution of LED policy and practice at the present time. Six chapters deal with case studies, including four specific rural communities, a broader programme in South Africa's 'Border Corridor' and the city of East London. Two concluding chapters offer an overall assessment, some comparison with international experience, and discussion of policy implications.

It is immediately clear that the book emanates from a thesis, and that it has not been re-written for publication as much as one might have hoped. It could have been shortened substantially: the text is repetitive both of points and themes, in part because of the author's insistence on the imposition of his chosen framework. In the case study chapters, by the time one reaches the 'assessment' and 'discussion and conclusion' sections, the content is easily predictable. The concluding chapters, while useful in drawing together the case studies, again repeat many of the earlier findings. In chapter 14 there is even reference to 'the thesis's major conclusions' (p. 299) and on p. 305 to subsequent chapters, when the book (as distinct from the thesis?) has only one further chapter. The lack of an index is surprising. There are a number of spelling and other typographical errors, with mis-spelling of such words as practices/practises, discernible and deprivation (depravation!) occurring a number of times: the copy-editing has clearly been deficient here. Maps are generally a positive feature of the book, apart from the retention of old names for the provinces on Fig. 4.2 and the near-invisibility of the Border-Kei region in Fig. 5.2.

Despite these problems, this is a very useful book at a number of levels. It is the first book to deal exclusively with LED in South Africa, and benefits from an extensive knowledge of the international literature in both North and South: the approach is eclectic. Both the historical survey and the portrait of

the South Africa space economy are worthwhile. The choice of case studies valuably compares different approaches to LED in a range of local environments, and with differing degrees of community initiative and external involvement. The book establishes techniques of measurement and assessment which can be more widely used.

Etienne Nel is, for the most part, realistic about both the potential and the limitations of what can be achieved. One senses that the realism is, however, tempered by an optimism perhaps reflective of sustained study of, and commitment to, LED over a period of years. The limitations of LED are carefully recognised, as is the existence of favourable factors in some of the case studies which are not widely replicable. But such issues are not always given the emphasis which they deserve: dependence on external funds in Stutterheim and the existence of abandoned farmland and irrigation equipment in Hertzog are but two examples. Emphasis on the apartheid inheritance is right and necessary, but perhaps obscures the operation of economic processes which undermined the *raison d'être* of many South African small towns. Nel's comments on government papers (p. 318) are gently delivered but devastating in their substance: over-reliance on business-driven growth, for instance, is described as 'a probable oversight'. Does not the overvaluing of the role of local authorities and the emphasis on so-called 'developmental local government' (without central government resources) (p.316) suggest that the government is simply passing responsibility down to a level which is, in most of South Africa, demonstrably lacking in appropriate capacity?

In the closing chapters, as Nel returns to international comparisons, the limited success of LED in more favourable circumstances is sobering to say the least. Nel demonstrates the unusual blend of developed world sophistication and developing world poverty in South Africa, and calls for a correspondingly unique approach to LED: a blending of business and community support strategies, sensitive to both the objectives of capital and the problems of the marginalised majority. In this he is clearly right, but it is far from clear that central, provincial or local government is up to the challenge of creating, sustaining and resourcing an environment in which LED can expand from a few isolated and partial success stories to a serious approach to development.

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**Success or Failure? The UN Intervention in the Congo after Independence** by ERIC S. PACKHAM

Commack, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 1998. Pp. 326. US\$24.95 (pbk.).

*Success or Failure* is a political memoir of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Congo Crisis of the early 1960s. The author Eric Packham is a British national with a long career in the colonial service, who later worked with the UN. During 1961–63, Packham served as the UN's chief civilian affairs officer in the South Kasai region of south-central Congo.

It should be noted that the Congo is a historically important case from the standpoint of UN peacekeeping: this was by far the most ambitious

peacekeeping effort ever launched during the period of the Cold War. Given its vast scale, the Congo operation was decades ahead of its time. It has much in common with recent UN peacekeeping efforts in Somalia, Cambodia and former Yugoslavia. However, Packham neglects to analyse the historical significance of the Congo operation or to consider the possible lessons for more recent UN peacekeeping efforts. Despite the title, Packham does not assess the success or failure of the Congo mission. The book ends without any real conclusion. The unambitious character of this book is disappointing.

The book begins with two chapters that recount the history of the Congo Crisis; the last chapter of the book sketches the Congo after the termination of the UN mission in 1964, up to the collapse of the Mobutu regime in 1997. Sandwiched in between these are twelve additional chapters that recount the author's reminiscences from South Kasai. The various chapters are not well integrated, giving the book a disorganised quality. There are numerous mistakes in the copyediting.

South Kasai was the scene of a secessionist regime, which separated from the Congo in August 1960 and formed a nominally independent state, under local leader Albert Kalonji. The United Nations sought to reintegrate South Kasai into the Congo, which was ultimately achieved in 1962. The discussion of these events, and Packham's role in them, constitute the main part of the narrative. However, Packham does not distinguish the important from the unimportant. The overwhelming tone is an endless series of intrigues, complications, political crises, and ethnic conflicts; all are recounted in great detail, without analysis. From time to time, one finds an interesting insight or a new piece of information; but these are infrequent.

Most of the sources cited are over thirty years old. The bibliography (pp. 311–13) lists only one source that was published since 1990. In addition, Packham seems unaware of the vast amount of primary materials on the Congo operation which have emerged from the UN archives, and also from government archives in the United States and Great Britain.

The Congo Crisis has produced an exceptionally rich secondary literature, as well as some fine memoirs. *Success or Failure* is not one of these.

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**Speaking With Vampires: rumour and history in Colonial Africa** by  
LUISE WHITE  
Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000. Pp. 368. £31.50, £12.50  
(pbk.).

*Speaking With Vampires* is an absolutely fascinating book, packed with stories from Central and East Africa that are often dismissed as superstitions that do not warrant serious enquiry. Luise White's book is a real page-turner, and so it is a rare treat. The central argument is that the stories of mumiani (blood suckers) that are found across the central and eastern regions of the continent reveal the breadth and depth of daily life and thought, in a way that other forms of evidence used by historians do not; so the book is about a world that

can only be revealed by specifically investigating rumour and gossip. The stories explain what was fearsome and why, and articulate ideas about bodies and their place in the world. As such, White argues that the stories of bloodsuckers are definitely not a collection of fears and fantasies, but a history of African cultural and intellectual life under colonial rule.

The material in the book has been gleaned through interviews with hundreds of individuals across different cultures and national borders. White makes a very strong, though rather overlong, methodological case for the nature of the material and what it reveals. She suggests that the stories should not be viewed as 'truth' in a positivist sense, since this is precisely why academics have ignored the stories in the past. Rather, the rumours of bloodsuckers indicate a flexible 'truth' that is negotiated through talking, since hearsay is a kind of truth when people believe it. Therefore, the purpose of gossip is not to deliver information, but to discuss it in a way that means the story is corrected and altered with every re-telling. In fact the methodological justification for the work takes up nearly a third of the book; undoubtedly this is to satisfy the critics of work that relies on perceptual information and qualitative interviews. The argument that this type of work does not contain any 'hard data' is strongly rejected in the book. My other slight criticism is that the case studies of particular rumours in the third part of the book look like stand alone pieces with little to link them, other than that they are about bloodsuckers of one kind or another.

Nevertheless, *Speaking With Vampires* cleverly manages to avoid making the stories of *mumiani* look like quaint, or worse laughable, indications of ignorance and superstition. Rather, White argues that gossiping about people in positions of authority, tells us how penetrable a reputation may be because it discloses the boundaries of attack and subversion. This has great relevance to research on African politics today, since various interest groups spread stories and rumours about their opponents in order to undermine them; successful gossip is often passed across great geographical and social distances, precisely because it is considered salacious enough to repeat to others inside particular gossip circles.

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**Poverty in World Politics: whose global era?** by SARAH OWEN  
VANDERSLUIJ and PARIS YEROS

Basingstoke: Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. 248. £42.50, £15.99 (pbk.).

As Julian Saurin notes in his chapter in this edited collection, poverty is one of the invisible subjects of mainstream international relations (IR) theory. This, then, is a timely volume that seeks to rectify that serious omission from IR debate by bringing together a collection of articles addressing aspects of poverty in world politics. Much of this work has been previously published in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. The book itself is divided into three sections connected by a concern with what the social theorist Andrew

Sayer describes as the 'moral economy'. By this I mean a concern with bringing ethical questions back into our understanding of how economies are to be organised. As Amartya Sen notes in his *Ethics and Economics*, classic political economy has tended to have both an 'ethical wing' and an 'engineering wing'. The former is largely concerned with ideas of the good life and answering the question: how should we live? The latter has been a practical concern with the mechanics of economic production. In effect, this is what contemporary economics has become, losing sight of the ethical claims that are at the heart of classic political economy.

So what of the book? The first section is an ambitious introduction by the two editors which attempts to redress this ethical imbalance by invoking the idea of global citizenship as a mechanism for changing moral consciousness about our relations with the world's poor. Self-confessedly following a Hegelian approach, the chapter sets out humanism as the necessary global moral background to substantive citizenship, as a means to challenging the normalisation of poverty as something that naturally or inevitably happens to distinct groups of the world's population. The second section, 'Ethics and Poverty', is quite diverse in its content. Fiona Robinson critiques rights-based approaches to applied ethics as being too thin and abstract a basis for challenges to poverty, instead setting out what she describes as a 'critical ethics of care' (p. 37). Jan Aarte Scholte provides an overview of the dialogue between the IMF and civil society with regard to poverty alleviation strategies, leading to a depressingly predictable conclusion that the dialogue, if not deaf, is certainly hard of hearing. By way of contrast, Jenny Edkins presents an overview of current debates about famine, which I must confess to having found highly problematic. My criticisms are many but I will restrict myself to just two. First, her 'Derridean double-reading' of Sen's work is a strange interpretation that would have us believe that Sen is a technician in economic theory (p. 73). I know that there are always grounds for interpretation (!) but I cannot think of a major economist who has done more to revive the ideas of classic political economy than Sen. Whatever the weaknesses of his work, he has consistently argued that ethics and economic theory are inseparable. Second, the pretentiousness of the chapter is a worrying trend for 'development studies', if this is an emerging field within it. In a convoluted and often contradictory manner, the actually quite banal and unoriginal thesis is that famine relief aid is not simply a technical issue but is an ethical one, and that we should always ask questions about the process! The route by which this conclusion is reached is an object lesson in the art of theoretical rhetoric. In truth I suspect that one would get a clearer idea of the problems of famine and aid from South Park's treatment of its character Starvin' Marvin. The third section of the book, focusing on globalisation and poverty, is the strongest, with Marianne H. Marchand examining the gendered nature of poverty, while Paul J. Nelson considers the extent to which NGOs have been able to challenge the neoliberal agenda of the World Bank. The strongest chapters are the last two. Mustapha Kamal Pasha focuses on poverty in South Asia and the problems of the concept of global civil society. This is a powerful corrective for those caught up with the often uncritical acceptance of global civil society as an intrinsically progressive development.

Finally, Julian Saurin offers a penetrating critique of the ideological underpinnings of orthodox conceptions of development. IR has tended in theory and in practice to focus its attention in an overwhelmingly uncritical manner on the rich and powerful, excluding the poor and powerless, the majority of the world's population, from their concerns. Poverty has been the invisible counter-point to this focus on the world's elite. Overall, the book is to be welcomed because it addresses crucial and underanalysed issues in IR.

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**The Global African: a portrait of Ali Mazrui** edited by OMARI H. KOKOLE

Trenton, NJ and Asmara: Africa World Press, Inc., 1998. Pp. xxiii + 367. US\$21.95 (pbk.).

*The Global African: a portrait of Ali Mazrui*, is a good collection of essays about the life and works of an all rounded African academic. The collection has eighteen major chapters. All of them principally deal with the different aspects of the works of Ali A. Mazrui – aptly dubbed in the compendium *Mazruiana*. Omari Kokole's first introductory chapter about 'The Master Essayist' is a well-balanced assessment of the main features as well as the themes of *Mazruiana*. As someone who had been personally and professionally quite close to Mazrui, Okole also gives with an unquestionable authority an informed account of what he thinks and what others said about the pros and cons of the style and scope of Mazrui's writings by putting in perspective how they evolved over time.

John W. Harbeson's 'Culture, Freedom and Power in *Mazruiana*' makes reference to well-known international relations (IR) scholars such as Hans Morgenthau, Joseph Nye and Kenneth Waltz with a view to relating elements of their theories to *Mazruiana*. Harbeson's attempt at 'a macro-level inquiry' by placing Mazrui's ideas in the context of contemporary thought in IR is commendably original. And yet what Harbeson has to write with regard to the relationship between the two and the conclusion he draws appear, for the most part, to be inaccurate. A few examples may be mentioned. Harbeson writes, 'An implicit and unstated hypothesis of Mazrui appears to be that the culture of politics is defined by those whose actions and pronouncements have the most profound and far-reaching impact on the sensibilities of a people or age; those who have exerted the most cultural power regardless of who views their impact as beneficent and who views it as malevolent. Indeed it may be that in this sense Mazrui fits more comfortably than might be apparent initially within the realist philosophical tradition reaching from Machiavelli to Morgenthau. Culture is, as he says, about power, particularly the power of ideas' (p. 25). Mazrui's own stand on Harbeson's reading of *Mazruiana* on power, culture and ideas notwithstanding, it becomes clear even after a cursory reading of the basic IR literature that the line of thought that regards 'culture as power, particularly the power of ideas' fits much more comfortably in the social constructivist IR school than in the realist philosophical tradition.

The inaccuracy as well as the unsustainability of his conclusion that remotely draws a parallel between Mazruiana and political realism's materialistic theory of power politics is nevertheless revealed by Harbeson himself when he writes, 'Where Morgenthau saw military and political power as being of primary importance, and cultural norms as secondary, Mazrui seems to do the reverse; power in human history emanates less out of the barrel of the gun than from the mouths of prophets, poets, playwrights, and philosophers' (p. 27). The description of Mazruiana in these terms is accurate. However, this in itself does not automatically make it a sound premise for concluding that Mazruiana fits well in the realist school of thought. In any case, when the reversal of Morgenthau's realist thought in ways such as the above is discussed, the names that readily come to mind to a student of contemporary international relations are those of N. Onuf and A. Wendt, among others. Mazrui could be regarded in this sense as one of the pioneering contributors to social constructivism, advertently or inadvertently.

Dunstan M. Wai's chapter, 'Mazruiphilia, Mazruiphobia', is perhaps the most balanced and fairly thorough introduction to the works of Ali Mazrui. It also excellently summarises the principal features of Mazruiana, and the positive and negative reactions to it. A further strength of this chapter lies in its attempt, in my view quite successful, to relate Mazrui's ideas to the current crises of development in Africa. Wai's chapter is theoretically rich and a well-written assessment of Mazrui's work.

Daryl Thomas's 'From Pax Africana to Global Africa', is an exhaustive, if sketchy, introduction to the major ideas contained in Mazruiana. Thomas does a great service to the readers also by making a careful chronological account of the evolution of Mazruiana on different themes by making elaborate reference to Mazrui's published as well as unpublished materials. For novices as well as for those familiar with Mazrui's works, this chapter provides a condensed summary without too much personal judgement by the writer himself.

'*Mazruiana on Conflict and Violence in Africa*', by Negussay Ayele touches upon and assesses what Mazrui had to write on the different levels and types of political violence in Africa. Parvis Morewedge's 'The Onyx Crescent: Ali Mazrui on the Islamic/Africa Axis', philosophically scrutinises and interprets arguably one of the most controversial segments of Mazrui's more recent works. These include his works on the themes of ethnic conflict, Arabs and slavery, and Islamic, African and Western civilisations. Hussein Adam's short essay, 'Kwame Nkrumah: Leninist Czar or Leninist Garvey?', attempts to make the point that Kwame Nkrumah was philosophically and historically more akin to a Leninist Garvey than a Leninist Czar, contrary to what Mazrui had argued in 'his most influential article on African Affairs' (p. 152). Alamin M. Mazrui's 'Mazruiana and Global Language: Euro centrism and African Counter-Penetration', aims to analyse Mazrui's idea of 'linguistic-counter penetration'. Alamin Mazrui's analysis points also to the unacknowledged, and perhaps even unrecognised, fact that Mazrui's arguments belong quite fittingly to the social constructivist tradition of analysis in IR.

Claude E. Welch's 'Human Rights in Mazruiana' is an essay written by someone who knew Ali Mazrui intimately during his Oxford years, and to a

lesser extent, later in his life. The two not only studied together; but also work (at least at the time of the writing of the chapter under review) in the same academic institution. Welch's paper is dull to read, but contains a useful analysis of Mazrui's ideas. Peter N. Thuynsma's chapter, 'On the Trial of Christopher Okigbo', reads like a belated review of a novel with the same title written by Mazrui more than twenty years ago. Presumably, the essay was relevant for assessing Mazrui's overall works and contributions. This essay is also well written and favourable. 'On the Concept of "We Are All Africans"' by Richard Sklar is another short essay with a very positive assessment of one of the earlier Mazrui writings. Betty Craige's 'The Africans and the Global Village' is a good analysis of the reactions of different segments of the audience to the airing of Mazrui's TV documentary, *The Africans*. One of the things that distinguishes this essay from the rest in the collection is that it is a philosophical analysis of Mazrui's work on the basis of what appears to be a social constructivist methodology.

Ali Mazrui's own first major essay in the anthology, 'The Black Woman and the Problem of Gender: an African perspective', is a typical, succinct Mazrui-style article which offers a useful insight into the issues of gender in reference to African woman. The essay is significant in that it deals with an issue that the multifaceted works of Ali Mazrui had not systematically addressed in the past. Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie's 'Beyond Hearsay And Academic Journalism: the Black Woman and Ali Mazrui,' is, to use Mazrui's own characterisation in the succeeding chapter, 'an academic slap' in his face. In its tone and content, Ogundipe-Leslie's critique of Mazrui's work is nothing more than a calumny that suffers from the popular *ad hominem* fallacy. She keeps telling the reader that Mazrui is unfit to tackle the subject of African woman, without substantiating how his 'unfitness' is manifested and adversely affects his analysis. Ali Mazrui's response to Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie's critique in his essay entitled, 'Woman as Victim, Woman As Victor: a feminist dilemma' is excellent. In his characteristic, semi-autobiographical style of writing, Mazrui's rebuttal is a well measured both in tone and substance. And yet in his eagerness to 'slap her back' in the face, he seems to have run the risk of leaving the impression that he endorses an aspect of malign sexism, the type of sexism he attacked in his essay (see his anecdote, pp. 264–5).

The chapter by Chaly Sawere, 'The Multiple Mazrui: scholar, ideologue, philosopher, artist', is another piece of excellent writing about Mazrui by someone who closely knows him. The writer implies that Mazrui could be the most prolific African writer of all time. As someone who is reasonably familiar with Mazrui's extensive works as well as many of that of other major African writers, this reviewer shares Sawere's view. Burjo Avari's 'Recollections of Ali Mazrui As An Undergraduate', though not so well written, is an apparently honest introduction to Mazrui's personal traits while they were both teenagers. Diana Frank's 'Producing Ali Mazrui's TV Series *The African: A Triple Heritage*' is the last chapter in the collection. This is essentially an insider's account, very balanced in my view, of the anatomy of the production of the TV programme and Mazrui's specific role in putting the pieces together. The chapter also acquaints the reader with the nitty-gritty of the production process of the programme.

In general, *Global African* is a very welcome anthology about a versatile African scholar who, to use the most fitting description of Colin Leys, is 'incapable of writing a dull paragraph' (cited on p. 11). The theoretical portion of the anthology, however, could have been further enriched if a full-fledged analytic chapter on the social constructivist orientation (which, by the way, pervades virtually all of Mazrui's writings) had been included.

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**Ngugi wa Thiong'o** by PATRICK WILLIAMS

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999. Pp. 206. £9.99 (pbk.).

Williams' *Ngugi wa Thiong'o* is a noteworthy addition to the body of criticism that has recently emerged on Ngugi's *oeuvre*. It is the only study, to my mind, that attempts to engage with all his novels, plays and essays in an attempt to tease out continuities and breaks within the body of his works, while at the same time eschewing the kind of theoretical obscurantism that we have come to associate with works rooted in post-colonial studies. It is likely to be useful to students of African literature interested in the basic thrust of Ngugi's writing and literary politics. Currently, only two books, in my judgement, provide a comprehensive study of Ngugi's works: Cook and Okenimpke's *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of his Works*, and my own *Ngugi's Novels and African History*. While my text is confined to Ngugi's novels, Cook and Okenimpke, though comprehensive, do not deal with *Matigari* and Ngugi's more recent essays.

The book is divided into five basic sections. The first section deals with contexts and intertexts, and is largely concerned with Ngugi's biographical details and the intellectual traditions which shaped his growth from a nascent political intellectual to a radical Marxist writer and activist. Kenya's nationalist struggle, epitomised in the Mau Mau war, remains a major influence on both his life and creative writing. The second section deals with issues of nation formation and argues for the link between narrative and the making of a nation as one of the defining features of the novel form. Ngugi's earlier novels, Williams argues, grapple precisely with issues that relate to the re-assertion of Africa's historicity and resistance in the face of colonial hegemony. Consequently, anxiety about the intersections of tradition and modernity shapes much of the discourse in Ngugi's earlier novels. Williams also argues, quite correctly, that the problems of leadership and power struggle that become major impediments to the realisation of genuine Uhuru and its ultimate betrayal are already manifest in Ngugi's earlier narratives. It is for these reasons that Ngugi seems to suggest in *A Grain of Wheat* that historical memory is vital for Africa's revolution. It is the apparent lapse of historical memory in the minds of the nationalist elite, Williams avers, that *A Grain of Wheat* anticipates, and it is also what leads to the betrayal that we encounter in Ngugi's later works such as *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross*, *Matigari* and the plays. In a remarkable departure from many studies on Ngugi, in the third section Williams provides a fairly sympathetic reading of

Ngugi's postcolonial narratives and singles out *Petals of Blood* for its complexity of structure, arguing that it is a more 'fully realised novel, with a more open structure and above all a diversity of voices', hitherto unknown in Ngugi's narrative. In fact, what other critics have read as striking departures, such as the preponderant use of allegory in the subsequent novels, are in Williams' reading equally foreshadowed in *Petals of Blood*. The only major deviations in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* are in the significant way in which these texts transgress the boundaries between 'novelistic realism and what lies beyond: fantasy, the supernatural, magic realism, hyper-real, Bakhtinian grotesque realism' (p. 112), and indeed Ngugi's pre-occupation with matters of readership, language and audience reception. If *Devil on the Cross* represented the imaginings of a writer under conditions of displacement, in this instance solitary confinement, Williams argues that *Matigari*, written in exile, presents a much more devastating experience for Ngugi. Conditions of exile would seem to be more paralysing than writers like Edward Said are prepared to concede. Exile does not have any tangible benefits for Ngugi, hence the overwhelming theme of 'return' in *Matigari*. The fourth section deals with the essays and attempts to show that there is, as in his fiction, continuity between his earlier essays and later ones. And although Williams acknowledges the sin of repetition of ideas that many critics have noted in Ngugi's essays, he seems to think that repetition is in itself a crucial aspect of resistance and cultural struggle that is at the heart of Ngugi's political project. Indeed, if there is any change in the accent of Ngugi's essays, it is that issues of cultural identity have become more pronounced in his anti-imperialist crusade. The final section, strikingly the least satisfactory, sets out to give a critical overview but in the end degenerates into a response to the body of criticism on *Petals of Blood*. Rather than give us a summation of the basic threads of the book's argument, this conclusion reads more like a literature review, and is far too defensive for a text that sets out to provide a balanced view on a writer. One gets tired of the 'iron curtain' that some critics are prepared to build around Ngugi and his works, even when they run the risk of foreclosing any critical engagement with his ideas. I occasionally detected this wall in Williams' analysis, particularly in the last section, ironically titled 'Critical Overview and Conclusion'.

Yet, to be fair, Williams, unlike many critics of Ngugi, manages to maintain a reasonable critical distance to render his book credible. My basic problem with the text, however, has to do with the goals of the text pronounced in its preface: namely to re-read 'various recognised themes' of Ngugi in a fresh way and to 'to show something of the important relation of his writing to historical events and processes both inside and outside Kenya' (xi–xii). I found very few new insights in Williams' 're-reading' that are markedly different from the existing body of scholarship on Ngugi. Other than Williams' sympathetic, but unfortunately less cogent, treatment of gender relations in Ngugi's texts, much of what he writes is hardly new, not even his handling of the operations of power in the texts. The book also flounders in its attempt to provide us with the context within which much of Ngugi's fiction and essays find expression. In a text that sets out to draw some linkage between fiction and historical processes, it is difficult to accept the total absence of any competing versions

of Kenya's history beyond what we are able to glean from Ngugi's own pronouncements. It is now taken for granted that Ngugi's works do not just lay a claim to the area of culture, but that they are in fact very much part and parcel of the contested terrain of Kenya's and indeed Africa's historiography.

The basic limitation of Williams' book lies in its discussion of Ngugi's texts very much on the terms set by Ngugi, thereby risking the possibility of erasing the problematics and contradictory meanings of his texts. I found Williams' uncritical purchase of Ngugi's manichean vision, upon which much of Ngugi's narrative and essays are theoretically anchored, rather complacent, particularly for a text that sets out to reveal the underlying complexities of power operations in the works of an influential writer like Ngugi. And although Williams warns us in the preface not to anticipate any theoretical rigour in his approach, I found his selective use of theoretical pronouncements by scholars like Fanon, Said and Althusser rather contrived, particularly when their ideas are wheeled out, as if they are self-evident, to support Ngugi's own position on power relations in post-colonial Kenya. For example, Williams' constant reference to Althusserian notions of the totalising nature of state apparatus and Gramsci's idea of hegemony to support Ngugi's representations of power relations in his works can hardly stand the rigour of recent post-modernist theories which have radically revised our understanding of post-colonies, and shown them up as more complex than theories rooted in hegemonic control are prepared to allow. They have shown that power relations that are located within the parameters of the resistance/collaboration dyad that Ngugi embraces cannot allow us to capture the ambivalent, and often indeterminate, nature of the post-colony.

In conclusion, Williams' book is nevertheless an accessible and a valuable introductory guide to Ngugi's works and therefore a useful addition to the existing body of scholarship on Ngugi.

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**Ken Saro-Wiwa: a bio-critical study** by FEMI OJO-ADE

Oxford: Africana Legacy Press (distributed by the African Books Collective), 1999. Pp.300. £16.95/US\$27.95 (pbk.).

In this book, Femi Ojo-Ade sets Ken Saro-Wiwa's work as writer within the context of his career as a federal politician and president of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). Ojo-Ade's aim to relate Saro-Wiwa's fiction to his political work is an interesting one, first, because Saro-Wiwa's experience of popular writing for the television and newspapers undoubtedly assisted MOSOP's publicity campaign, and second, because the themes and characters of his fiction address the complex relations in village politics between the centre and the grassroots, and between elders and youths. Six of the nine chapters focus upon Saro-Wiwa's literature, showing how many of the themes foreshadow the concerns of the MOSOP campaign in Ogoni and the circumstances of Saro-Wiwa's trial and execution.

In examining *Flowers of the Forest*, the first 'rotten English' work written in

1966, and *Sozaboy* (1985), Ojo-Ade highlights the way Saro-Wiwa confronted the myths of a romanticised rural tradition by writing about the cruelties and injustices that are part of village life, such as the conflict between the generations, and the violent 'justice' dispensed by village youths. Ojo-Ade's criticism that 'rotten English' was addressed to an international audience, rather than a Nigerian one, is unsubstantiated and indeed is contradicted by the rest of the chapter which demonstrates how varied Nigerian audiences have engaged with Saro-Wiwa's innovative use of language. Ojo-Ade illustrates how the critique of the 'village tradition' that characterises the early novels is set alongside works such as the *Jebes* novels (1988, 1991) and the television series *Basi and Co.* (1985–90), which examine the 'modern' problems of urban life and government corruption in Nigeria during the 1980s and 1990s.

As president of MOSOP Saro-Wiwa sought to engage a far narrower Nigerian audience than he did in his literature, focusing solely upon the problems of the Ogoni and refusing to forge political alliances with either minority or majority ethnic groups. Ojo-Ade points out that Saro-Wiwa condemned as 'indigenous colonialists' (p. 263), the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani 'majority' groups who he says have consumed the profits of Ogoni oil, although Ojo-Ade only differs from Saro-Wiwa in that he considers the Hausa-Fulani alone to be responsible for majority group domination through the 'northernisation of Nigeria' (p. 18). With the start of the MOSOP campaign, Saro-Wiwa's politics did move away from pan-Nigerian concerns. Ojo-Ade highlights the problem of the lack of an inter-ethnic base for Saro-Wiwa's politics, and asks why links were absent between MOSOP and the organisations representing the other ethnic minorities living in the southern oil fields (p. 10). This creation of a specific Ogoni agenda, which after 1993 belonged to an increasingly fractured section of Ogoni society, contrasted with the popular writing that Saro-Wiwa produced for a wide Nigerian audience and fostered a vulnerable isolation.

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**Ken Saro-Wiwa: writer and political activist** by CRAIG MCLUCKIE and AUBREY MCPHAIL

Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000. Pp. 291. \$59.95.

Unlike those studies of African writers where discussions of political activism serve as sub-text to analysis of the 'real texts' of literature, *Ken Saro-Wiwa: writer and political activist*, seeks to acquaint the reader with the several dimensions of a multi-faceted individual, each in its own right. Ken Saro-Wiwa is examined here as political activist, writer, publisher and businessman. There is little attempt to mythologise Saro-Wiwa in these essays, and the personal responses of the authors to his varied activities extend from the laudatory to the critical.

The collection of twelve essays is divided into four sections, entitled: 'The Context', 'Literary Experiments', 'The Public Man' and 'Popular Media'.

The early chapters in the 'The Context' revisit the political issues and forces that led to Saro-Wiwa's emergence on the national and global stage, the Nigerian military, petroleum, the Nigerian civil war, and the struggle for survival by minority groups in the Nigerian Delta, such as the Ogoni.

With the exception of Chris Dunton's contribution on Saro-Wiwa's unpublished plays, the literary articles do not for the most part provide many new insights. They do offer a comprehensive overview of Saro-Wiwa's literary production by giving a sense of its range, its novelty, its occasionally uneven quality, and the intersections between Saro-Wiwa's politics and his writing. They include essays on his poetry, his short stories, his children's stories and television plays. It seems to me that the essays in the section on 'Popular Media' could just as easily have fitted into the section on literature since the texts are examined primarily as literary texts rather than as popular media.

The section on the public man is one of the most fascinating in this collection. Rob Nixon shows how Saro-Wiwa was strategically able to raise international awareness for the Ogoni by positioning their struggles in relation to global movements campaigning against multinational corporations, for environmental justice and the rights of indigenous peoples. Misty Bastian documents responses to Saro-Wiwa's execution among Nigerian immigrants in the United States in the form of organised protests and discussions on Nigerian web sites. Laura Neame examines Saro-Wiwa's activity as a publisher and the connections between his writing, publishing and politics. Did he write to make money, to entertain or to advance a political agenda? These are issues certain to inspire debate for some time to come.

The book also features an 'Epilogue' containing some of the poetry of Tanure Ojaide, another Nigerian writer from the Delta region, on the issues that animated Saro-Wiwa in his lifetime. The lengthy 'Appendixes' provide a chronology of Saro-Wiwa's life, the Nigerian civil war, and a very extensive annotated bibliography of works on Saro-Wiwa. To conclude, this work constitutes an important resource for those interested in Saro-Wiwa and Nigerian politics. In conjunction with other texts, it would be recommended for courses focusing on issues such as African writers in politics, minority groups and the military in Nigeria, and cultural politics in Nigeria at the end of the twentieth century.

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