Zimbabwean Literature: the Importance of Yvonne Vera

Yvonne Vera, *The Stone Virgins* (Harare, Weaver Press, 2002), 165 pp., ISBN 1-77922-002-2.

Yvonne Vera is one of the most prolific and important creative writers to emerge from post-independence Zimbabwe. Since 1992, she has published six volumes of fiction: a short story collection (*Why Don’t You Carve Other Animals*, 1992) and five novels – *Nehanda* (1993), *Without a Name* (1994), *Under the Tongue* (1996), *Butterfly Burning* (1998) and *The Stone Virgins* (2002). Her texts (novels in particular) are marked by their women-centred subject matter, their ‘difficult’ lyrical style and their deliberate breaking of thematic taboos (they deal, unflinchingly yet compassionately, with violent and traumatic events such as rape, incest, abortion and infanticide). In all of these respects, Vera’s latest novel, *The Stone Virgins*, is typical of her opus. However, there are also several senses in which this novel represents a new departure for its author and an important benchmark for Zimbabwean fiction in English. I would argue that *The Stone Virgins* is Vera’s most accomplished and powerful work so far.

Unlike any of Vera’s other novels, *The Stone Virgins* spans the pre- and post-independence periods of Zimbabwe’s history. (*Nehanda* is set in the 1890s, *Butterfly Burning* in the 1940s, *Without a Name* and *Under the Tongue* in the 1970s.) The novel is divided into two parts – one entitled ‘1950–1980’, the other ‘1981–1986’ – and it starts and finishes with chapters containing descriptions of Bulawayo, the capital of Zimbabwe’s southern province of Matabeleland. The colonial Bulawayo described in Chapter One is a city of sharp edges and divides, where black men and women are seen meeting literally underground, dreaming of freedoms that they do not possess: ‘All they want is to come and go as they please. At independence, they just want to go in there, and leave, as they please, not to sneak or peep, but to come, and go, as they please’ (p. 9). In the novel’s final chapter, on the other hand, a black woman wanders freely in the city’s streets. There are flowers everywhere; there are also, after independence, black mannequins in department-store windows, ‘recently employed black bank tellers and trainee managers’ (p. 149) and black residents in apartment blocks with colonial names such as ‘Kensington Flats’. *The Stone Virgins* makes it clear that independence has brought about an irreversible social advancement. It has, however, also brought suffering, tragedy and trauma.

Most of the novel’s narrative (framed by the descriptions of the city) does not take place in Bulawayo. It is set, instead, in a rural enclave called Kezi, some 200-kilometres away, and focuses on the kind of people and places that are normally considered peripheral. ‘In truth, the bus drives from Bulawayo to Kezi, then back to Bulawayo. But … in the minds of the residents of Kezi, of course, Kezi comes first: the bus, therefore, is seen as driving from Kezi to Bulawayo to Kezi during the entire week’ (p. 17). (In emphasising her narrative’s potential function as an alternative, unofficial history, as in matters of style, Vera owes a significant debt to the Zimbabwean novelist Chenjerai Hove.) The story that unfolds in Kezi comprises four narrative strands. The first is about the love between Cephas, a young man from a distant part of the country, and Thenjiwe, a Kezi woman ‘more beautiful than rain’ (p. 30). The second is the story of Sibaso, a former nationalist guerrilla who has, after independence, become one of the ‘dissidents’ – armed men unhappy with the new dispensation who roamed rural Matabeleland in the 1980s. The novel’s third narrative strand tells of how Sibaso murders Thenjiwe (spectacularly, by beheading her), then violates and mutilates her younger sister Nonceba, whom Cephas later befriends and takes to the safety of Bulawayo. The fourth strand...
narrates the destruction of the social centre of Kezi – the Thandabantu (literally ‘love-people’) general store, and the torture and murder of its owner Mahlathini by the soldiers of the new, independent government.

*The Stone Virgins* presents this narrative material with unprecedented compositional balance and clarity, and in a style that is more measured and controlled than in any of Vera’s previous novels. Her usual deluge of ‘poetic’ images and figures of speech (which has, on occasion, given free reign to less-than-disciplined critical outpourings) is here carefully restrained. Images are embedded within the text with greater precision (see, for example, the recurrence of the word ‘bone’, or the references to the African continent); one of the most shocking events in the novel – the murder of Thenjiwe – is told with extraordinary grace and economy of language. A further dimension of the uniqueness of *The Stone Virgins* is the presence in it of a male character who makes no attempts to appropriate or control a woman’s body, and who is allowed access to the intimate circle of healing, reserved in Vera’s other work for women alone. In addition to that, Cephas is by profession a historian; and although he has come to Kezi from Mashonaland, he is, at the novel’s end, working on restoring kwoBulawayo, the seat of the pre-colonial Ndebele state. ‘A new nation needs to restore its past’ (p. 165). The novel may therefore be said to associate him with the kind of nationalism that is positive and emancipatory because it is non-violent and pluralistic. Nationalism’s dark, violent and destructive face is in part embodied by Sibaso.

*The Stone Virgins* is not the first novel to refer to the post-independence war that ravaged Matabeleland in the 1980s. The conflict between the ‘dissidents’ (the Ndebele former guerrillas unhappy with the way they were treated after independence) and government forces is also represented in Chenjerai Hove’s 1991 novel *Shadows*, and Alexander Kanengoni’s *Echoing Silences*, published in 1997. Kanengoni’s text sees the post-independence violence in Matabeleland as an extension of the ethnic clashes between the two African nationalist armies that fought the liberation war. Hove’s novel, on the other hand, highlights the plight of rural peasants who, after all the hardships of the war of independence, find themselves at the mercy of further, dissident-inflicted violence. In as much as it does not analyse the political causes of Sibaso’s discontent, but concentrates instead on the harm he causes to civilians, Vera’s novel is written in Hove’s wake. (Unlike *Shadows*, however, *The Stone Virgins* enters a dissident’s psychological world: Sibaso has, during his time as a guerrilla, turned inwardly into stone. He sleeps in, and desecrates, a sacred hillside cave decorated with ancient paintings, ‘the stone virgins’.) But it also takes a step further: to my knowledge, it is the first Zimbabwean novel in English to refer to, and openly condemn, the violence against civilians sponsored by the government of independent Zimbabwe.

The novel draws a parallel between the destruction of Mahlathini and the Thandabantu store, and Sibaso’s act of mindless brutality. The store had functioned as the social heart of Kezi: a place where people met to trade and talk, and where, as a sign of social change brought about by independence, female freedom fighters had won the right to sit on the veranda on upturned empty crates – something previously reserved for men only. It is precisely because it was a place of meeting and dialogue that the store was destroyed, its owner accused of providing a space ‘where anything could be spoken, planned and allowed to happen’ (p. 121). At the time of ‘dissident’ revolt, the Zimbabwean government sent to Matabeleland a specially trained military unit (the Fifth Brigade), which wiped out countless civilian families. Written in an equally violent historical moment, Vera’s text has the courage to assert that such acts were deliberately executed and planned, then just as deliberately deleted from the nation’s official memory. ‘The team of soldiers who congregated on Thandabantu store had demonstrated that anything which had happened so far had not been random or unplanned. Atrocious, yes, but purposeful’ (p. 124). ‘Mahlathini’s death would not be registered. There would be no memory desired of it. It was such a time; such a death’ (p. 122). After independence, rather than being liberated, the rural space of Kezi becomes ‘a naked cemetery’ (p. 143).

When I met and interviewed her in Bulawayo in 2001, Vera was working on *The Stone Virgins*. Speaking of the transformative effect of writing on her life, she said:

You must feel it and experience it as something which transforms you. I always feel, with each paragraph I write, I have to be at a new threshold. Either in my own mental state, or in the voice and the language, in what I have discovered about the character, about the moment, about the art of writing, the act of writing. Paragraph by paragraph. I feel transformed. And I always feel at the end of the day, when I manage to
write, I panic, my heart beats, and I think, if I had not written today, I would not be where I am right now, right now, this moment.

With this brave and balanced novel, Vera has transformed the present moment of Zimbabwean fiction.

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... New criticism

Robert Muponde and Mandivavarira Maodzwa-Taruvinga (Editors), *Sign and Taboo: Perspectives on the Poetic Fiction of Yvonne Vera* (Harare, Weaver Press, Oxford, James Currey, 2003), xvi + 236pp., £14.95 paperback, ISBN 0-85255-584-9.

Edited by Robert Muponde and Mandi Taruvinga, *Sign and Taboo: Perspectives on the Poetic Fiction of Yvonne Vera* (2003) seeks to account for Yvonne Vera’s increasingly central place in contemporary Zimbabwean writing in English, and to explore her relationship to Zimbabwean literature in general. Given Vera’s considerable output, a collection of essays on her work has been long overdue. The present textbook fills that gap with great success, and it consolidates the still rather flimsy web of critical work on the work of African women’s writers. *Sign and Taboo* brings together a rich and broad set of critical perspectives on Vera’s novels. Essays range from narrowly focused readings of particular novels, with a particular accent on *Nehanda* and *Under the Tongue*, to overviews of both her writing and of its place within contemporary Zimbabwean writing. One of the book’s strengths is the patient, thoughtful and illuminating close reading approach adopted by most critics. Many of the essays share a concern with Vera’s complex weaving of politics and aesthetics.

Noted for her imaginative and provocative use of language and narrative strategies, Vera is a deeply political writer, willing, as the title of this essay collection suggests, to leave few taboos unbroken. Indeed, the editors’ suggestion that Vera works outside any identifiable literary tradition is a rather odd one: some critics approach Vera as one of a number of writers working expressly within a women’s tradition. In writing that is in turn poetically suggestive and brutally honest, Vera explores some of the most divisive issues in contemporary postcolonial writing, especially as they reflect on nationalism and identity. On the whole, these aspects of her work are handled with great care and perspicuity, much as the emphasis on the political may at times seem lopsided. For if Vera is a Zimbabwean writer for whom the anti-colonial struggle offers a deep and rich source of material for her novels, all her texts seem to me to complicate definitions of postcolonial writing in ways that few writers are able to do. Drawing as she does on a range of aesthetic and political motifs for her work – a point the title of this collection of essays perfectly illustrates, with its overtly poststructuralist and psychoanalytical echoes – Vera challenges reading models and any reductive attempts to classify her as this or that kind of writer.

Meg Samuelson highlights this aspect when she enlists Gayatri C. Spivak’s work to suggest a way of reading Vera that veers away from allegorical or metaphorical readings of postcolonial writing, towards, precisely, a more specific focus on the texts as art, as aesthetic constructs in their own right, rather than as always addressing some colonial grand narrative (p. 93). The ‘writing back’ that Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin\(^1\) identify as one of the intentions or qualities of much postcolonial writing is not, and cannot be, the main criterion through which such narratives can be read. In Vera this is made particularly evident through her focus on women’s experiences of, and in, the nationalist struggle, and of the trauma that ensues. For if at the heart of *Nehanda*, or *Under the Tongue*, resides a concern with (re)visioning the past, these are texts also essentially preoccupied with what Samuelson, citing David Lan’s work, identifies as the hijacking of ‘the symbolic system’ (p. 96) by men. Indeed, the collection’s penultimate piece, a discussion by Terence Ranger of Vera’s latest

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1 B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back* (London and New York, Routledge, 1989).
novel, stresses the way in which Ranger’s own historical writing has been profoundly affected by Vera’s novels. The implication, then, is that it is time African women novelists are seen to be initiating new critical and analytical parameters, rather than simply engaging with established paradigms.

Inevitably, a review of this nature can make only cursory reference to the excellent critical work offered in this collection. Let me move on to those essays that I thought most genuinely engaged with Vera’s work. Meg Samuelson’s essay, for instance, impresses in spite of, or perhaps precisely because of, a conscious realisation that the critic can only ever seek to provide partial answers. Similarly, Lizzy Attree’s essay engages convincingly with Vera’s work, although I wondered why, yet again, a reading of an African woman’s work has to perform such an agonised interpretation of its feminist politics. Faced with a writer who so brutally foregrounds women’s suffering at the hands of men – yes, coloniser and indigenous – why should the critic refrain from drawing on feminist reading models for fear of becoming infected by their western views? Jessica Hemmings’ reading of four of Vera’s texts within a cloth paradigm offers a rather structuralist, but imaginative, analysis of works that demand of the reader a deep and careful engagement. Similarly, through a focus on the kinetic quality of Vera’s writing, Jane Bryce produces an analysis of some of the texts that is wonderfully attuned to their unique qualities, much as her essay risks trying too hard to find a pattern that ‘fits’ Vera’s complex and unwieldy prose.

In Ranka Primorac’s essay we have possibly one of the most thorough and fascinating textual analyses of Vera’s oeuvre. It is, in spite of its ambitious scope and the overview approach that the essay develops, possibly the most challenging contribution to the collection. Willing to question the dogma that all postcolonial writing is inherently about colonialism (how can it not be about it?), it imagines a time when Vera herself might begin to situate her novels in the post-independence moment (which she does in The Stone Virgins, 2002). Indeed, criticism such as Primorac’s begins to suggest ways of reading, and of writing, that go beyond the rather linear apprehension of postcolonial literature as in some sense ‘unlock[ing] the nation’s conscience’, to quote from Mangwanda’s reading of Nehanda. It seems almost perverse, if ironic, that writing such as Vera’s, Emecheta’s, and Aidoo’s, to name but a few of a growing body of African women writers, should be co-opted both to give birth to and nurture a nation that their writing repeatedly set out to critique and analyse. If Chimurenga was a struggle for freedom, for land, for justice and dignity, it was also a struggle fought by both men and women. Forms of resistance, as Fanon, Bhabha and Spivak have noted, differed greatly between colonial settings, but were equally inflected differently in terms of gender, class or sexuality. As numerous postcolonial critics have noted, resistance to colonial oppression was often, for the colonised woman, a transferral from one master to another. Vera’s treatment of the rape of the black female body illustrates her emphasis on this aspect. Ruth Lavelle’s ‘conclusion … that perhaps [the] urge to reclaim masculinity may have contributed to acts of sexual violence committed by freedom fighters in an attempt to prove that they had not, in fact, been emasculated by colonial governments’ (p. 110), naïve as it may seem in view of Fanon’s pioneering work in The Wretched of the Earth, reflects provocatively on an issue that imaginative writers have yet to address in any detail.

Indeed, as Nana Wilson-Tagoe puts it in her dense and rewarding essay, in Vera’s work the rape acts ‘as a subtext that writes a discourse of gender within the text’ (p. 170). If anything, I suggest that she puts it only too mildly – the rape of the female body and the trauma that ensues are inextricable from the way in which Yvonne Vera reads the postcolonial nation. In the words of Wilson-Tagoe, ‘Such a writing of rape moves it beyond individual violation into the wider, socially constructed sphere that organises sexuality and power relations’ (p. 171). She goes on to explore the significance of incest in Vera’s writing, and specifically her treatment of incest as a comment on narratives of liberation. Referring specifically to Under the Tongue, she writes: ‘Herein incest has other connotations: it is an exploitation of women’s powerlessness within a world constructed around their silence; on another level it is a negative symptom of a construction of masculinity embedded in the community and particularly heightened during the war’ (p. 174). The point here is not that one should overlook the specific historical constraints on human, and notably male forms of behaviour, but to temper the urge to read all such actions as excusable in terms of a narrative of resistance that repeatedly silences women’s participation in the anti-colonial struggle. Rape is not a ‘battle of the sexes’, as Samuelson proposes, drawing on a long list of such views, but a more insidious
manifestation of gender structures, an exercise in power that is inextricable from a larger social model in which men and women are 'marked out' not as biological but as social beings.

However, *Sign and Taboo: Perspectives on the Poetic Fiction of Yvonne Vera* offers such a wide and rich array of readings of Yvonne Vera's work that my criticisms might be read, in part, as the requisite response from a reviewer. I would recommend it to anyone encountering Vera for the first time, or engaged in a more detailed exploration of her work. Such exploration will, ideally, move on to attempt to situate her precisely within a complex web of literary, aesthetic and political affiliations.

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**Herbert Chitepo: Assassination, Confession and Narrative**

Luise White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo. Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington; Weaver, Harare, 2003), xv + 139 pp., £33 hardback, ISBN 1-919930-28-0.

Luise White has written a very original book. One could say the same, of course, about all her previous books, but this one is original in a different way. It is not a book that works inwards from the margins but a book that works outwards from the centre. It is not about sex-workers or vampires but about a murder that has been at the very heart of the nationalist history of Zimbabwe for more than 30 years – the murder in March 1975 of Herbert Chitepo, Chairman of ZANU and revered martyr of the liberation struggle.

I have thought of writing a book about Chitepo myself. He was my friend. I knew him well in Rhodesia; stayed with him and Victoria in Dar es Salaam in 1963; met him in Lusaka in the early 1970s. Two of the key figures in the narrative of his assassination – Cornelius Sanyanga and Simpson Mutambanengwe – had been my students at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. After 1980, I regularly met Victoria and the Chitepo sons and daughters. When I published my family biography of Thompson Samkange and his sons, Stanlake and Sketchley in 1995, the Chitepos asked me to write a biography of Herbert too. I told them that I could not do so. The Samkange papers were voluminous. There were no Chitepo papers. The causes of the deaths of the Samkanges, father and sons – heart failure, drowning and lung failure – were all too tragically clear. So too was the cause of Herbert’s – a bomb explosion. But nobody knew who was responsible for it. The Chitepo family thought they knew who had done it but they had no proof. I told them that all I could have done was to write an account of Herbert’s life; present the conflicting hypotheses about his death; and show how after his death he became much more glorious and revered than he had been during his life. Meanwhile, I had been guiltily using the then available competing versions of Herbert’s death as an exercise in source criticism for my Special Subject students in Manchester.

The difficulties that I felt have prevented anyone else from writing a biography of Herbert Chitepo. Now, however, Luise White has turned these difficulties into positive advantages. She does not attempt to write a biography of Chitepo or even to sketch his character. She does not try to determine who actually did murder him or why. What interests her is the existence of so many confessions to the murder by so many ‘perpetrators’, black and white. She asks why there have been all these confessions, and even more allegations; why, despite them all, there remains so much uncertainty about the murder; and why it continues to matter so much in contemporary Zimbabwe, after so many other murders and countless unexplored and unexplained deaths. In short, Luise White is doing, with great sophistication, what my Special Subject students were clumsily struggling to do in the late 1970s.

White remarks that Zimbabweans show an interest in, and knowledge of, their recent history that puts Americans to shame. (I recall that when I spoke at a secondary school in Bulawayo in 2000 and the history teacher rashly told his class that I could answer ‘any question about history’, the first hand to go up was that of a girl of sixteen, born long after the grim events of the 1970s. ‘Who killed
Chitepo?’ she asked. ‘Who killed Tongogara?’ asked the next young man. The obsessive interest which Luise White documents starts very early in Zimbabwe. White also remarks that histories of Zimbabwe often take this interest and knowledge for granted and hence are full of detail that makes them fascinating to Zimbabwean readers but inaccessible to anybody else. It is her laudable aim to write for a general audience. She avoids acronyms and almost completely avoids jargon. I think, though, that the sheer and necessary complexity of the confessional narratives and the bewildering profusion of characters and names will make this book, too, very difficult for a general reader. For Zimbabweans, however, some very important points emerge.

White argues that the confessional narratives have all been ways of constructing Zimbabwe’s recent history. That there are overlapping and contradictory black narratives and overlapping and contradictory white narratives demonstrates that it is much too simple to interpret history in binary terms – white versus black; anti-colonialism versus colonialism. Indeed, White shows how multiple and complicated is the apparently simple construct of ‘nationalist history’ or the contemporary notion of ‘patriotic history’. (She also shows that ‘nationalist’ history and ‘patriotic’ history are not the same things and have involved different processes of creation).

By focusing on the authors of the various confessions and on the interests they were serving, she breaks up such generalised historiographies into multiple strands. She writes:

> Historians of Zimbabwe have to abandon the either/or paradigm in which either the liberation forces or the Smith regime are the causal agents of every deed and action during the war. Some forms of struggle, resistance and negotiation may originate elsewhere. Historians of Zimbabwe – like those of the rest of Africa – need to look outside the frame they’ve set for themselves, and shift the history of war and violence beyond their interrogations of nationalism. If war and violence can be uncoupled from the history of nationalism and its triumphs, it can have its own history, a history of guerrillas instead of a history of guerrilla struggle. (p. 36)

White goes on to make a series of shrewd points about the dynamics of ‘a history of guerrillas’, which are all the more relevant today now that the ‘ex-combatants’ are reasserting and reproducing themselves, inscribing guerrilla narratives into Zimbabwe’s new public historiography. At the same time, momentarily uncoupling the history of nationalism from that of war and violence, she uses the Chitepo story to make some shrewd points about the ingredients of nationalism in Zimbabwe. Making a rare foray into Chitepo’s actual biography, for example, she notes his early involvement in the Capricorn Africa Society and suggests that liberalism – and capitalism – deserves a place in the ancestry of ZANU. Some narratives of Chitepo’s death were aimed at those ZANU leaders who could be held to represent liberalism and capitalism and were thus an attempt to exorcise them in favour of the myth of the increasing and irreversible radicalisation of the movement.

White handles the details of the various confessions and allegations very well, often throwing me back into the confusion and brutality of the mid-1970s. But she also draws the reader forward into post-independence Zimbabwe and indeed right up to the present. Confessions by whites, after all, came after independence. The various white confessions have very different intentions from each other, some being designed to clear their ZANU masters of any blame for Chitepo’s death and others being designed to glory, in exile, in the murderous skills of Rhodesians. (Luise White makes the first use of the Rhodesian army and intelligence deposits in the Bristol Museum of Empire to confront Ken Flower’s later selective memories by citing his contemporary intelligence reports.) What interested me most of all, however, was her comments on the current debate about history in Zimbabwe.

In my own recent talks and writings about the historiographical crisis in Zimbabwe I have emphasised that the Mugabe government is determined to propagate ‘patriotic’ history in every way – on radio and television, in the state-controlled newspapers, in school syllabi and textbooks, in lectures by war veterans in militia camps to party youth and reluctantly co-opted headmasters, and in courses in so-called ‘Strategic Studies’ to be mandatory in all tertiary institutions. But I have been lazily inclined to see this ‘patriotic’ history as merely a narrowing down and simplification of the old nationalist historiography. White argues that it is made up of a number of competing strands, some of them innovations.

Commenting on the return to centrality of the war veterans, White writes:

> The new entitlements of war veterans and farm invasions scripted two new histories of the making of Zimbabwe. In one, the foundation of Zimbabwe was based entirely on the war, now recast as a unified and
unflinching struggle for the land white farmers had stolen from Africans in the 1890s. In such a history, the place of the party, like that of refugees in Mozambique, was submerged and collapsed into the history of a single liberation army. In the other, the founding movement has been reduced to the agreement reached in the negotiations at Lancaster House in 1979. Those negotiations ... have been revived in political talk in Zimbabwe as an example of how British perfidy subverted the struggle. This particular history ... claims that the cease-fire sold out guerrillas, denying them the land they were about to seize in battle. More important, perhaps, is that this particular history made Britain central to Zimbabwe’s history as it had never been before. (p. 95)

White says that these two versions ‘have competed to be true and official, but no version has managed to dominate the other for very long’. In a general militarisation of the past – resolving the old dilemma of whether the gun should control the party or the party control the gun by fusing the two – ‘a new, inclusive narrative took hold in Zimbabwean political lore, as several observers reconstructed Zimbabwe’s history in order to make every 1970s politician a guerrilla’.

This process has continued since White finished her book. The ex-guerrilla and novelist, Alexander Kanengoni, finished his last fictional account of the traumas of the liberation war, Echoing Silences (Heinemann, 1997) with a dream rally in the bush at which the spirit of Chitepo and the other murdered heroes lamented the betrayal and corruption of the revolution. Kannengoni’s novel does not mention Mugabe. But now Kanengoni, a strong supporter of the ‘third revolution’ of land redistribution, has described in the press the heroism of Robert Mugabe in the Mozambiquan bush. In 1975, Kanengoni tells us, the Frelimo base commander approached Mugabe and his small band, ordering them to surrender so that they could be handed over to the Rhodesians ‘because our colleagues in Zambia had killed Herbert Chitepo’. In Kanengoni’s version, Mugabe responded to this crisis by defying the Mozambiquans, declaring that ‘we would rather die at the hands of Frelimo than give the Rhodesians the immeasurable pleasure of killing us’. Then Mugabe set about instructing his companions in the history of the struggle – ‘and throughout all that rather academic process, there was not a single book, a single piece of paper, a single pen … It was an incredible time, he was an extraordinary man … When I look at him now – 23 years later – the man has not changed because what he told us then he is telling an entire nation now’ (Daily News, 12 April 2003).

White comments on the tensions with which Kanengoni has been grappling. ‘The traces of history [are] everywhere, including idealisations of Chitepo and Tongogara’ – the murdered lawyer and the soldier who may have had him killed. ‘As topics of conversation, and press conferences, and as ghosts, both men were portrayed as more heroic, more charismatic, and more judicious figures than they had ever been considered in their lifetimes. Chitepo and Tongogara have been re-invented as men who would have been president of independent Zimbabwe had they lived’. Mugabe had somehow to manage and even to exploit these resurrections rather than be declared ‘illegitimate’ by them (pp. 96–97).

As for Mugabe’s denunciations of the man he calls ‘Tony B-Liar’ – against whom, rather than against Morgan Tsvangirai, he seemed to be contesting the March 2002 presidential elections – White again brings out the contradictions:

Zimbabwe has been given a new history in which it was a British colony until 1980 … This new colonial history sits awkwardly beside the history of settlers, dominion status, and the Rhodesia Front’s renegade independence. That history, far more than any imaginary colonial past, is constituted by questions about who rightfully belongs in a country and how that country can protect its national sovereignty (p. 97).

White thus extracts a great deal from her focus on the long-ago murder of one man. She could, indeed, have included even more material. She might have discussed the mushroom growth of ‘chimurenga’ songs during the 1970s liberation war glorifying Chitepo as the martyred saint and hero of the revolution – a more diffuse process of narration than the confessions on which she concentrates. She might have discussed how, when he finally won control over ZANU and its army in 1977, Mugabe strove to check the cult of Chitepo by creating an alternative myth of the late Leopold Takawira, who died in prison without ever reaching the field of war. Mugabe created an annual Takawira Day and recommended that every guerrilla make him his/her model. She might have written about the myths current in Manicaland – Chitepo’s home region – about the supernatural events that attended his re-burial at Heroes Acre, when it is said that a great white bird flew out of the open grave and Mugabe started back in guilt. Or about the spirit medium in the Manicaland hills, possessed by the spirit of Herbert Chitepo and seeking to communicate with his descendants. She might have written about the
terrible legacy of Chitepo’s death on his own family, with the suicides of a brilliant son and daughter. Or about the extraordinary saga of the annual Herbert Chitepo lectures on Human Rights, the first given by Robert Mugabe and the second by President Chissano, both arguing that human rights come out of the barrel of a gun. She might have done all this, but what she has done is achievement enough. This is an original and fascinating book.

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Zambia: the Entrepreneur’s Story

Andrew Sardanis, *Africa: Another Side of the Coin. Northern Rhodesia’s Final Years and Zambia’s Nationhood* (I. B. Tauris, London and New York, 2003), xii + 340 pp., €27.50 hardback, ISBN 1-86064-926-2.

Before coming into Northern Rhodesia (colonial Zambia) in 1950, young Andrew Sardanis worked for two years at the *New Cyprus Guardian*, a ‘fiercely nationalistic’ Greek daily broadsheet (p. 16). The experience he gained under its ‘near-deaf, septuagenarian’ owner and managing editor stood him in good stead more than 50 years later, when the idea for the volume under review was initially conceived. Though written from a journalistic angle and aimed primarily at the general reader, *Africa* is a book which, given the notoriety and unquestionable historical relevance of its author, will surely attract the attention of academic historians and other social scientists.

Sardanis’ first, unhappy year in Northern Rhodesia was spent in Chingola, a mining town on the Copperbelt, where his brother-in-law and other Cypriot relatives ran a small transport company. Having been entrusted with the task of establishing a series of rural trading stations, Sardanis lived a nomadic existence in the remote North-Western Province for the next five or so years. By the end of the 1950s, still in his late twenties and endowed with a sharp eye for business, Sardanis was already in control of a newly formed company, North-Western Trading, and had inaugurated the first of his Mwaiseni stores. Unlike any other European-owned shop in Chingola, it ‘was managed and run entirely by African staff’ (p. 73). His reputation as an enlightened businessman and his efforts to ‘spread the UNIP gospel amongst the Europeans’ (p. 97) in the run-up to the first Northern Rhodesian General Elections of October 1962 resulted in the fashioning of a strong bond with Kenneth Kaunda and in his selection as the party’s candidate for the Kabompo national seat. Despite failing to be elected to the Legislative Council, Sardanis remained very close to the nationalist leadership and, after the attainment of Independence at the end of 1964, he was appointed as Chairman and Managing Director of INDECO, the state’s Industrial and Development Corporation. This was the peak of his public career. Under his stewardship, INDECO ceased to be a ‘small lending institution pretending to be a development bank’ and became a ‘large holding company, operating in a variety of fields’ (p. 205). The implementation of the ‘Mulungushi economic reforms’ of 1968–1969 further raised the profile of Sardanis – who, in addition to his position at INDECO, was also at one time Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Mines. It was Sardanis who negotiated the controversial Zambian government’s takeover of 51 per cent of the mining enterprises’ shares. In 1971, having turned ZIMCO, INDECO’s successor, into the ‘mother of all parastatals’, he quit government service to join the AIFC, a new group within Tiny Rowland’s Lonrho. Undaunted by the failure of this latter venture, Sardanis founded the ITM and Meridien groups, the fortunes (and misfortunes) of which he presided over for the next two decades.

It is this very eventful life that forms the backbone of *Africa*, a book that – notwithstanding the author’s efforts to keep the general picture of Zambian history at the centre of the narrative – remains, essentially, an autobiography. *Africa* comprises 40 short chapters, subdivided into four parts of approximately the same length. Part one deals with Sardanis’ adolescence in Cyprus and his first ten years in Northern Rhodesia. In this reviewer’s opinion, its main value lies in the author’s perceptive remarks about the activities and *forma mentis* of the Provincial Administration officials with whom
he became acquainted in the North-Western Province. In particular, Sardanis brings out clearly their paradoxical incapacity to translate their potentially unrestricted authority into actual ‘development’. One wishes, however, that the author had seen fit to elaborate on the inner workings of the Northern Rhodesian Greek community – a subject which still awaits detailed historical treatment – and its interactions with the broader ‘settler society’. For interspersed throughout the book, there are tantalising indications that all was not always well in this latter sphere of social relationships. We are told, for instance, that the Greeks of Chingola never openly supported the nationalist movement, since ‘like all small minorities [they] were afraid of controversies’ (p. 88). Sardanis himself experienced the endurance of colonial urban stereotypes during the 1962 electoral campaign. ‘Man, you do not care about the country’ – a South African miner burst out during a meeting of upper-roll voters at Bancroft Mine Cinema. ‘You are up there just to make money in your shops’ (p. 123).

The last chapters of part one and much of part two encompass the years 1959–1964, the period between the banning of ZANC, Kaunda’s radical splinter party, and Independence. It would probably be unfair to expect a full-blown critique of Zambian nationalist orthodoxy from someone who was so closely involved in its early formulation. Yet Sardanis is to be commended for the frankness with which he describes some of the weaknesses by which Zambian nationalist politics were affected. Much of the available Zambian autobiographical and/or political literature has tended to disguise these weaknesses behind a rhetorical smoke screen. A good case in point is his account of a UNIP National Council meeting, the proceedings of which he overheard from an adjoining room sometime in 1962. Sardanis was appalled. ‘The participants were not comrades united in a common purpose. They were at each other’s throats. Groups of young toughs from one end of the country were accusing leaders from another end of subverting the party for their own ends. And vice versa’ (p. 96). The motives behind his own adhesion to the ‘black camp’ are also presented in a refreshingly dispassionate form. ‘I never made a conscious decision to get involved in nationalist politics. Because of my Cypriot background I sympathized with African political aspirations. But it was my style of life, my predominantly African friends and my almost total assimilation that drew me into it’ (p. 62).

Independent Zambia’s difficult ‘first steps’ are dealt with in the third part of Africa. Unsurprisingly, this section of the volume has much more to say about economy than politics strictu sensu. Sardanis’ treatment of the ‘stresses and strains’ experienced by UNIP in the years preceding the inception of the One-Party State (1973) adds very little to the existing body of academic literature, and it is certainly simplistic in identifying ‘tribal loyalties’ as the sole cause of the ‘deterioration of the political landscape’ (pp. 198, 199). By the same token, his dismissal of the threat posed to UNIP’s hegemony by Simon Kapwepwe’s UPP is open to question. For, as Miles Larmer will argue in his forthcoming PhD thesis, the new party’s ‘essentially Bemba’ (p. 201) character might not actually have been its exclusive, or even most defining, trait. Its appeal to scores of miners and town-dwellers, bitterly disappointed by UNIP’s inability to deliver the long-awaited ‘fruits of Independence’, ought to have received closer consideration. Conversely, the author’s account of his time as the ‘Supremo for the industrial development of Zambia’ (p. 183) between 1965 and 1971 is both readable and informative, and the self-exculpating thread which runs through it is, to the non-specialist at least, sufficiently convincing. Although subscribing to the basic tenets of the doctrine that inspired the nationalisation of the economy and the growth of the parastatal sector, Sardanis – so we are told – always sought to manage INDECO as a profit-oriented company and to prevent its ‘wholesale politicization’ (p. 265). In the end, however, the burden of ‘unpopularity’ and the constant demands for ‘loans to the party faithful’ (pp. 241, 243) made it impossible to pursue the author’s technocratic course of action.

In Sardanis’ reconstruction, his resignation paved the way for the ‘political assault on State Enterprise’ (p. 265) and the rapid decay of the economic edifice that he had so painstakingly built.

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2 See, for instance, K. Makasa, March to Political Freedom (Nairobi, Heinemann, 1981) and E. Mudenda, Generation of Struggle (Harare, SAPES Books, 1999). But for a counter example, cf. S. Zukas, Into Exile and Back (Lusaka, Bookworld Publishers, 2002).

3 The best example of which remains W. Tordoff (ed), Politics in Zambia (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1974).

4 M. Larmer, ‘A Class Apart: Mineworkers and Political Change in Zambia, 1964–1991’ (PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, forthcoming).
This – together with some of his experiences outside government – form the subject of the fourth and final section of the book. While one might agree with the author that the revocation of the mining agreements in 1973 smacks strongly of corruption and has had more than a little to do with the subsequent decline of the mining industry and the country’s overall economic collapse, his decision to omit from the narrative the ‘rise and fall’ of the ITM and Meridien groups – with which the figure of Sardanis is indissolubly associated in present-day Zambia – is frankly unjustifiable and bound to raise legitimate misgivings about the ultimate sincerity of his intentions. Sardanis’ assessment of the quality of the UNIP leadership during Zambia’s Second Republic (1973–1991) could hardly be more negative. Interestingly, however, Kaunda is by and large exempted from his overall condemnation. Admiration for the first Zambian President, in fact, oozes throughout the book. To be sure, his many mistakes and high-handed actions are admitted; but these are generally ascribed to his candour and ingenuousness or to his having been poorly counselled by sycophantic and/or ‘incompetent self-seekers and timeservers’ (p. 300). While historically untenable, this judgement is indicative of the quintessentially charismatic roots of Kaunda’s authority and of the extent to which personal loyalties have influenced – and continue to influence – Zambian post-colonial politics.

The final chapter of part four and the book’s epilogue consist of a discussion of sub-Saharan Africa’s future perspectives. It is the optimistic tone that informs it that provides the rationale for an otherwise entirely inappropriate title. Despite this reviewer’s serious reservations, this is a book that deserved to be written and which historians are especially likely to appreciate for its extensive use of quotations from the author’s vast collection of confidential documents. These have been promised to the newly formed Non-Governmental Archives Unit of the National Archives of Zambia. They will surely prove to be among the most highly requested items of the NAZ’s rapidly expanding collection of personal papers.

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History of the Rhodes Trust

Anthony Kenny (Editor), *The History of the Rhodes Trust 1902–1999* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), viii + 606 pp., £60 hardback, ISBN 0-19-920191-9.

Cecil Rhodes has for long been the most written about figure in southern African history. Now it might be asked whether the bequest of any historical figure has been more written about than that of Rhodes. W.T. Stead’s book, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes*, was published in 1902, setting out how Rhodes intended his money to be spent. Almost a hundred years later we are told in Sir Anthony Kenny’s sizeable edited volume how the money was actually spent. In between these two publications there have been several books and articles on the history of the Rhodes Scholarships in particular. There is even a book on Newfoundland Rhodes Scholars.

Few historians would today attempt to defend Rhodes. His aggressive colonialism, capitalist manipulation and exploitation, and crude racism have been sufficiently exposed to demolish the heroic image created by many biographers in the first half of the twentieth century. Remarkably, though, his name still enjoys considerable currency. This is largely due to his bequest. Rhodes was obsessively concerned about his own immortality. With great astuteness he prepared his will to ensure that his name would live on. In the minds of those who now know little about Rhodes the historical figure,

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5 See, for instance, Lord Elton (ed), *The First Fifty Years of the Rhodes Trust and the Rhodes Scholarships, 1903–1953* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1955); and, more recently, T. J. Schaepfer and K. Schaepfer, *Cowboys into Gentlemen: Rhodes Scholars, Oxford, and the Creation of an American Elite* (New York and Oxford, Berghahn, 1998).

6 D. Cole, *Rhodes Scholars of Newfoundland* (Portugal Cove, NF, ESP Press, 2000).
the name, through the scholarships, has come to be associated more with excellence and prestige than with British imperialism.

At his death in 1902, Rhodes' net bequest amounted to little more than £3.3 million. This was hardly a staggering sum, and yet it has gone a long way. In the past hundred years it has funded over 6,000 Rhodes scholars, in addition to many other projects and ventures. And the coffers are still full – after the 1990s bull run, the capital in the fund stood at £200 million in 1999.

This rather awkwardly structured book can be likened to a bulky sandwich. There are two large slices – the first and last chapters, in which Kenny and John Darwin, respectively, examine the politics, administration and finances of the Rhodes Trust. In between is the filling – seven chapters on the history of the scholarships in those countries where they were offered.

From Kenny and Darwin we obtain a picture of how the Trust operated – its priorities, its financial caution, its aspirations and exigencies. For much of the century the trustees had to balance different concerns and obligations. Sustaining the scholarship scheme was its priority. There was a commitment to supporting business ventures that had been associated with Rhodes but not properly established in his lifetime – such as the Smartt Syndicate, and the Rhodes estate at Inyanga in Rhodesia. There was, too, an understanding that Rhodes' political ideals should be promoted – a priority that waned rapidly in the second half of the century when the empire was both dismantled and discredited. And what about the business of commemorating Rhodes? How much attention should the Trust devote to that? This was a question to which the trustees did not always respond wholeheartedly.

In any event, the bulk of the Trust’s expenditure in the course of the century was educational rather than political. Although it was feared, during the hard economic times from the late 1920s, that the Trust’s resources might not be able to meet the costs of the scholarships, it later became possible, in better years, to expand the number of scholarships. A sum of £50,000 was granted to support the founding of Rhodes University College in 1904 – but only £1,000 towards the establishment of the University of Fort Hare a decade or so later. Although the University of Cape Town campus came to be established in the grounds of Rhodes’ Groote Schuur estate, the trustees showed greater generosity towards Rhodes University College, ‘which they regarded as a more solid incarnation of English ideals’ (p. 31).

Apart from the scholarships, Rhodes House stands as the Trust’s single most important contribution to Oxford University – and as the major memorial to Rhodes outside Africa. Designed by Baker and opened in 1929, Rhodes House was originally intended to serve three main functions – as a library, as accommodation for the Trust Secretary, and as a meeting-place for scholars. From the outset the library was deemed to have been the most important of these – but seems to have lost its pride of place, much to the dismay of researchers, with the future of Rhodes House under reconsideration for the past three years. Reviews of the building’s function are not new. Earlier secretaries of the trust, such as Philip Kerr (1925–1939) and Lord Elton (1939–1959), had wanted Rhodes House to be a centre for the study of empire, or even an imperial think tank. Smuts had envisaged it as an African Studies centre – an idea now apparently again being considered.

Given the Trust’s financial caution in its early years, little could be spent on promoting Rhodes’ political ideals. Moreover the pre-eminent position that he envisaged for white English-speakers in South Africa became an ever more remote possibility as Afrikaner political domination became more entrenched. It is also surprising how little the Trust devoted to the business of memorialising Rhodes. A proposal that every school in Rhodesia should have a portrait of the founder was not supported by the trustees in 1933. They also gave the cold-shoulder to persistent requests to have the Muizenberg cottage where Rhodes died converted into a museum. But in 1955 they did ask an accountant to examine Rhodes’ business papers with a view to removing anything that might damage his reputation.

The seven chapters on the Rhodes Scholarships are of uneven quality. Some of the authors are too preoccupied with the administrative and procedural minutiae surrounding the scholarships. The controversies over the criteria for the scholarships make for the most interesting reading. For decades the scholarships were the preserve of single white males who could display both intellectual and athletic qualities, as well as character and leadership potential. Although the will did not lay down any racial bars, it is clear that Rhodes intended the awards to go to whites. In 1907 a black American received a scholarship, much to the disgust of some fellow American scholars. But for decades thereafter the pattern of the awards largely accorded with Rhodes’ wishes.
From the 1970s, the exclusionary criteria came to be challenged. In 1972 the Women’s Equity Action League in America challenged the legality of the scholarships on the grounds that they excluded women. Four years later women first became eligible and, in 1977, thirteen women were chosen as American Rhodes scholars. A black American scholar was elected in 1963, but not surprisingly the real racial controversies centred on South Africa. Until the late 1960s, the non-election of any black South Africans as scholars scarcely raised a murmur. Then for about two decades South Africa’s racial politics impinged upon the scholarship scheme. The selection of the first black (Indian) South African Rhodes scholar in 1976 did not resolve the issue. There was still the problem that four of the country’s scholarships were reserved for certain white, boys-only schools. There was much legal wrangling around this thorny issue, until the school scholarships were saved by the ending of apartheid in the early 1990s.

The award of a Rhodes scholarship brought with it considerable prestige. The various chapters tell much about the successful careers of former scholars. In the United States, many went into the legal and academic professions, while others were drawn to political office or government service. When a former scholar held the American presidency for eight years in the 1990s the prestige attached to the scholarships soared markedly.

With well over 6,000 scholars passing through Oxford in the past 100 years it is hardly surprising that not all of them turned out to be the proper, wholesome, masculine, anglophile types that Rhodes had in mind. G. J. Maritz, a 1909 Rhodes scholar, was arrested in 1915 for participating in the Afrikaner anti-war rebellion of 1914. Later, Nazi sympathisers and activists would be found among German Rhodes scholars. During the McCarthy era, the House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities investigated ‘communist influence in Rhodes scholarship matters’. Some Rhodes scholars testified to belonging to Marxist study groups at Oxford. Rhodes’ money had been funding reds. Earlier, in the 1920s, an Australian scholar with communist leanings had caused much dismay among the trustees.

What does not come out of this book is any suggestion that Rhodes scholars have ever been perturbed by their association with the name of Cecil Rhodes, a figure with an increasingly tarnished reputation. There was one early exception – the first candidate from Stellenbosch Boys’ High School to be offered a scholarship turned it down because he did not want to be associated with Rhodes the imperialist. This was an early Afrikaner response when the Jameson Raid and South African War were still part of recent memory. Later generations of scholars have seemed little bothered by the name attached to their awards. Indeed, if Rhodes really was obsessed with his own immortality he could not have done better than provide for the scholarships in his will. It is the scholarships more than anything that have kept his name alive and brought to the name connotations of prestige and excellence. Ironically, while historians have been uncovering Rhodes’ dubious financial dealings, it is his money – in the shape of his bequest – that has led many today to turn a blind eye to his historical role. The recent link-up between the Rhodes Trust and the Nelson Mandela Foundation illustrates well the sanitisation of history and the art of forgetting.

It has been said that with most historical figures the good that they did goes with them to the grave, and the bad comes out after their deaths – but with Rhodes, it is suggested, it is the other way round. Certainly Kenny reckons that the provision for the scholarships ‘was the best of all the things he did in his full tumultuous life’. Indeed, this is how Kenny brings to a conclusion this substantial, if somewhat unwieldy book – a book that would have benefited from pruning and restructuring. John Darwin’s chapter, full of sharp insights, should have come at the beginning to provide the broader context. The chapters on the scholarships are comprehensive – often too comprehensive – and inclined to lose sight of the larger issues amidst all the procedural and administrative detail.

The centenary of Rhodes’ death fell in 2002. Early in 2003 there was a gathering of about 400 Rhodes scholars from around the world to mark the centenary of the scholarships. These occasions, together with this weighty publication, have temporarily deflected attention away from the history of Rhodes himself and his misdeeds. For a while longer he can rest in peace in his grave in the Matopos.

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Oral History and Forced Removals in Cape Town

Sean Field (Editor), _Lost Communities, Living Memories: Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town_ (Cape Town, David Philip, 2001), 142 pp., €12.95 paperback, ISBN 0-86486-499-X.

Some time between the 3 and 7 November 1959 Frederick Mitchell committed suicide by hanging himself near the beach at Camps Bay, Cape Town. It is almost certain that the suicide was triggered by a notice Mitchell had been served a few weeks earlier to vacate 7 Tramway Road, Sea Point, the house his family had occupied for years. His elderly mother lived in the house next door. The suicide traumatised the community of Tramway Road. One former resident recalled that Mitchell’s death ‘shook the whole community … down to the core’. Until then, they had hoped that they would ‘outlive eviction’. Now, however, it had become clear that ‘the writing was on the wall’ (p. 58). Indeed, the writing had been on the wall for some time. In 1950, the National Party government passed its infamous Group Areas Act. When the state eventually got around to moving against the permanent black residents of Sea Point, it did so rapidly. Between 1959 and 1961 all persons of colour were removed from the suburb’s only black enclave and flung into the ghettos of the Cape Flats, splitting families in the process. The denouement came in 1963 when apartheid’s bulldozers flattened the cottages of Tramway Road. In their place the City of Cape Town built a recreation park and reserved its use for white persons only.

Frederick Mitchell was one of 150,000 Capetonians forcibly removed from their homes between 1950 and 1979. _Lost Communities, Living Memories_ is a collection of their stories. It is a book about tragedy and injustice. It should stop those who continue to draw distinctions between ‘grand’ and ‘petit’ apartheid, for the ambitious plans of apartheid planners and the ‘petty’ schemes of local councils humiliated in equal measure. Drawing on scores of oral interviews collected by the Centre for Popular Memory of the University of Cape Town, this collection, with its evocative photographs, has numerous aims. At one level it seeks simply to ‘contribute to the recorded memory of forced removals’ (p. 11). In this regard, the collection of essays succeeds admirably. One cannot fail to be moved as Sean Field, Michele Paulse, Felicity Swanson, Jane Harries and Albert Thomas bring to life the accounts of community and culture of former residents of Windermere, Sea Point, District Six, Lower Claremont and Simon’s Town. One reads of Africans and ‘coloureds’ who lived side-by-side in Windermere before the former were moved to Guguletu and Langa, of a Simon’s Town dockyard worker who was sacked for celebrating the death of ‘that vark’, Dr. Verwoerd (p. 91), and of a mother who, after being moved from Lower Claremont to the Cape Flats, was forced to take her children out of Livingstone High School as a consequence of high transport costs. The authors rarely conceal their distaste at the inequity of forced removals. And this reviewer, who grew up in Windermere/Kensington-Factretton and was educated at Livingstone High School at a time when classmates were being evicted from their homes surrounding their school, can hardly pretend to be dispassionate.

_Lost Communities, Living Memories_ has more ambitious aims than the recording of life histories. It is also about memory – specifically about ‘how and why former residents keep their memories alive’ (p. 11). Central to these memories, and a theme that runs throughout the volume, is the notion of ‘community’. The authors are quite aware that the ‘community’ rarely speaks with one voice, and they are sensitive to the dangers of romanticising these ‘lost communities’. Yet, far too often, these multiple voices are simply left to speak for themselves. The term ‘community’ is never subjected to analytical scrutiny, nor is it employed as an analytical tool. As a consequence, the tensions between ‘communities’ that were at once deeply divided along lines of class and complexion, yet united through common aversion to, and experience of, everyday apartheid, is never resolved. Paulse speaks of community divisions as if they were a consequence of universal (and thus ahistorical) human values, and cites Max Weber in support of this view (p. 51). Swanson’s contribution on Lower Claremont comes closest to seeing ‘community’ as a historical process when she notes that youth gangs ‘were very much part of a process of community formation in Claremont, where struggles over space and territory existed alongside neighbourliness and solidarity’ (p. 111). But this tantalising and insightful comment is immediately dropped and never developed.
Above all else, *Lost Communities, Living Memories* passionately reminds us that history matters. The commuter railway lines of contemporary Cape Town continue to serve as impermeable barriers of racial segregation. Restitution has been slow in coming, but the mere opportunity to tell their stories has empowered many. This collection rails against South Africa’s tendency towards amnesia. It is worth reading for this reason alone.

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**Unforced Removals? The ‘Brain Drain’ in Southern Africa**

David A. McDonald and Jonathan Crush (Editors), *Destinations Unknown: Perspectives on the Brain Drain in Southern Africa* (Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa, 2002), v + 400 pp., £24.95, ISBN 0-7983-0148-1.

This is a valuable book containing conscientious survey research inspired by concerns about the new patterns of migration that have emerged in southern Africa during the past decades. These concerns are mainly the loss of highly trained labour since the end of nationalist rule in South Africa, and xenophobia as a reaction to the new waves of highly trained immigrants coming from elsewhere on the African continent. Most of the book – five chapters – is concerned with South Africa. Two chapters deal with Botswana and one with Lesotho. The second half of the book consists of a complete set of tables drawn from the surveys among skilled nationals and skilled immigrants. Such findings can thus serve as a secondary source for further interpretation.

A major conclusion is that the danger of a brain drain from South Africa may be overstated for while many respondents may have given thought to leaving South Africa, there remains a big difference between having such thoughts and actually leaving. Despite this, the book documents great concern among professions and in industry about a lack of highly trained labour and about African nationalist policies that are suspicious of new immigration. Besides such general statements, the research in South Africa produced some interesting findings. For example: skilled black South Africans entertain as many thoughts – with some variation in intensity – about leaving the country as white South Africans.

The surveys produced much information about the perceived quality of life in South Africa. It is not surprising that personal safety and security play a major role. The magnitude of the problem is clear in this finding: ‘Nearly 60% of skilled non-citizens have been robbed since they first arrived in South Africa, over a third have been harassed and one in five has been physically assaulted’ (p. 131). Botswana provides a much more hospitable environment than South Africa. Personal safety and security were mentioned as a main reason for skilled nationals to stay in Botswana, and fewer of them consider emigration and with less intensity than in South Africa. Immigrants are also much more satisfied, but do not have a longlasting commitment to the country. Their sojourn is seen as more temporary than in South Africa. Fewer want to stay longer than five years in Botswana (31 per cent) than in South Africa (49 per cent). While 24 per cent of skilled immigrants in South Africa seriously considered citizenship, in Botswana 12 per cent considered it. These differences are interesting in relation to the finding that foreigners saw themselves as viewed much more negatively in Botswana (46 per cent) than in South Africa (28 per cent).

The chapter on Lesotho introduces another world. The desire among skilled Basotho to emigrate is pervasive, especially if the figures are corrected for age. Older people are more inclined to stay. The Lesotho survey documents above all a great disenchantment with Lesotho as a nation. It measures commitment to Lesotho on three variables: willingness to work in Lesotho after completing school; to serve in the army; and support for restriction on money being sent abroad. Those who feel no obligation on such issues are the mostly likely to emigrate. There is a core of nationalist feeling but this is small: ‘About a quarter of those interviewed felt that these demands were justified, while only 4.4% thought they are unjustified’ (p. 195). These weak nationalist feelings have to be seen in
conjunction with great political dissatisfaction: ‘only 14% of the interviewees (skilled Basotho) felt that the government had made a positive impact on themselves, their race, their fellow Sesotho speakers, their economic class and their country’ (p. 195).

It is clear that this book contains a wealth of information that cannot properly be summarised. It provides in the first place a stimulus for further research and the editors present it as such in their introduction. One set of findings, potentially especially stimulating for Africanists, may not have been sufficiently highlighted in this review: the detailed information on immigration from elsewhere in Africa.

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