Cheikh Anta Babou. *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal,* 1853-1913. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007. 294 pp.

The considerable historiography of the Murid tariqa has been dominated by political scientists and sociologists fascinated by the role of the Murids in Senegalese political and economic life. Though it includes some good books, it is often inadequate on the movement’s roots and has generally presented a shallow picture of the movement’s founder. Cheikha Anta Babou is well qualified to counter this. A member of one of the Muridiyya’s leading families, he is also an historian well trained both in Dakar’s fine history department and with David Robinson at Michigan State. His links to the leading families gave him access to diverse Murid traditions. This undoubtedly also brought pressure on him to be discreet, but he handles this dilemma well. He has consciously written an insider history, but at the same time, discusses the movement’s many traditions with the critical eye of an excellent historian. He does not shy away from dealing with conflicts within the Mbakke family, within the movement, and opposition to Bamba from elites, who often ended up becoming fervent Murids.

Babou has given us a succinct picture of the roots of a movement that now has over four million disciples. He has also put Amadu Bamba in centre stage. He also makes the religious concerns of Bamba and his followers central to the movement’s success. To do this, he relies very much on a wide range of oral traditions and on the letters and writings of Bamba himself, but he does not ignore French sources. He starts with a discussion of the Mbakke family and its commitment to study and teaching. Originally from the Futa Toro, they migrated to Jolof, where they were modest teachers and scholars. They tended to keep away from political conflict, but Bamba’s father became involved with Lat Dior’s resistance to the French and served for awhile as Lat Dior’s cadi. Bamba served as his father’s secretary, but when his father died in 1882, he went on an eighteen-month study journey to visit various scholars, which ended up with the Mauritanian cleric Cheikh Sidia, who initiated him into the qadiriyya. This led to his first two books and also may have been a confrontation with the racism of the Mauritanian bidan.

Babou criticizes the very shallow views of French critics of the movement, like colonial intelligence officer Paul Marty, who clearly never understood it, and of scholarship which uses Marty. In particular, he criti-
cizes the idea that the Murids were somehow the successors to the Wolof resisters. Instead, he sets Bamba within the historical development of Senegambian Islam. Bamba was early an outstanding scholar and early convinced that he wanted to avoid any involvement with established chiefs. An oft-told tale of a meeting between Lat Dior and Amadu Bamba never took place. Rather, Bamba alienated Wolof chiefs by his refusal to have any relationship them and his criticism of their behaviour, such as the enslavement of Muslims. At his father’s funeral, he supposedly refused an introduction to the rulers, saying: “I do not have the habit of mingling with rulers, and I do not expect any help from them. I only seek honor from the Supreme Lord (God)” (59). His problems with the French were rooted in French fears that his popularity could lead to a revolt against their very fragile authority. The chiefs reinforced the French fears with their complaints and tried to rid themselves of a leader who did not cooperate with them. The result was two periods of exile and a lifetime spent in an assigned residence.

Babou stresses Bamba’s mysticism and his commitment to the Sufi path. He also makes clear that the practices of the order were shaped by its founder, not by his followers. After returning from his study trip, he convened his disciples and announced that he would henceforth devote himself to tarbiyya, or the “education of the soul.” This made piety, asceticism, and obedience to a sheikh the sources of religious authority. He suggested that those who did not like his orientation leave to find other teachers. This approach alienated clerics committed to lengthy study of the Quran. He lived a simple ascetic life and was given to periods of seclusion and meditation. His arrest and deportation to Gabon in 1895 was a trial for Bamba. The equatorial climate and the isolation of his exile were painful. It was also a trial for the movement. Babou says that there are few sources for this period and that it was a period when many of his disciples kept their heads low and kept their distance from his family for fear of bringing on further French repression. Nevertheless, it is the exile which contributed to the myth of his miraculous deeds and led to the movement’s rapid growth after his return. He treated his exile as a trial imposed by God to test him and develop his moral strength. He was to be exiled again a little over a year after his return, but this time to Mauritania, where he was put under the care of Cheikh Sidia. In Mauritania, he was able to maintain ties with his followers, and in 1904, established the Muridiyya as a separate religious order.

This is a well-written and clearly argued book that has become indispensable for any understanding of the Murids. I still have two reservations. First, though his focus on the inner history is an important corrective to flaws in other interpretations, I do not think Babou gives adequate atten-
tion to the larger context. The dislocations of the conquest period did not create the movement, but they did create conditions that facilitated its rapid growth. Second, although I agree that religious motivations were important to his followers, there were secular variables. In particular, he does not deal at all with an argument I have made that the daaras, communities of young males which colonized the open lands, were crucial in making it possible for slaves to free themselves from dependence on former masters. Aside from these are minor quibbles, this is a superb book.

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Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo and Marjorie Keniston McIntosh. Women, Work and Domestic Virtue in Uganda: 1900-2003. Oxford: James Currey 2006. 308 pp.

In this ambitious text, Grace Kyomuhendo and Marjorie McIntosh undertake a broad survey of the histories and experiences of women in Uganda over a century of immense change. Challenging artificial colonial / post-colonial periodizations, Kyomuhendo and McIntosh divide their subject into two periods: the generations of gradual change from 1900-71 and the era of radical transformations from 1972-2003. This impressive collaboration between a Ugandan anthropologist and a North American historian utilizes a vast array of sources and frameworks.

Employing methodology from both fields, Kyomuhendo and McIntosh combine extensive archival research with sample surveys and questionnaires. The authors take a schematic approach to their subject, creating a web diagram of eight factors imperative to the position of women in Ugandan society: politics, economics, demographics and health, legal rights, women’s organisations, education, religion, and ideology. This diagram of factors returns throughout the study as the template against which the authors measure progress and change.

The authors also conducted a sample survey comprising 113 women from six districts and seventeen ethnic groups across Uganda. Box-text profiles of these women punctuate the historical narrative, their experiences representative of various social, economic, and political realities. Furthermore, the authors offer biographical sketches of eight women deemed “Torchbearers”: pioneering Ugandan women in the public spheres of business, NGOs, and politics.

The competing claims of work and domesticity in the lives of Ugandan women provide the central tension of this text. The authors focus
on “income-generating activities” over household labour while in tandem developing their theory of the Domestic Virtue Model (DVM) [3]. In this model, the value of women rests on several factors related to their contribution within the family: as wives and mothers, as caregivers, as responsible for family food production, and as subservient and deferential to male authority.

Early in the colonial period, the DVM developed out of both Bagandan patterns of gender definition and Victorian patriarchal ideals brought by British administrators and Protestant women. British administrators and Bagandan men wrote the underlying principles of the DVM into legislation, triggering gendered conflict around marriage, inheritance, land-owning, and the role of women in the public sphere. Missionaries played a contradictory role as they reinforced the ideals of domesticity and the “good woman” while simultaneously promoting women’s advancement through literacy and limited employment.

As the colonial period progressed, the DVM proved of limited flexibility as variants developed to allow for women’s work outside the home. Although Uganda remained largely rural in this period, migration increased in the later colonial period, women’s organizations emerged, and informal economic activities such as brewing became the domain of women. Employment opportunities for women as teachers, missionaries, and hospital workers opened new avenues of public participation and authority to women. Variants to the DVM, such as the “service career” and the “petty urban trader,” developed in response to these trends: working women could maintain respectability provided their work was in the service of the community and they did not neglect their domestic duties.

The transition from protectorate to independent nation revealed a large degree of continuity. Nationalist rhetoric positioned women and their work in terms of national development. Slow change characterized this era, and women’s education, rights, and access to resources remained limited.

The reign of Amin and second term of Obote witnessed years of “abrupt and forcible change” [146]. Both governments exercised targeted repression of women, banned their organizations, and caused widespread violence and insecurity throughout the country. Newspapers reinforced an exaggerated version of the DVM. However, this official ideology conflicted with the increasing need for women to engage in cash-generating activities to support their families, dislocated by war and repression. Increased female participation in the cash economy in this period revealed necessity rather than empowerment for women.

Continuing this era of dramatic change, Museveni’s rise to power in 1986 returned stability to the country, expanded the free market economy,
and instituted affirmative action policies towards women’s participation in the public sphere. Although agricultural labour remained dominant, more women than ever before engaged in cash-generating work and women’s organizations reformed. However, government policies were largely donor-driven and substantial changes in the Land Act, gendered violence, and women’s education and poverty levels remained out of reach. By 2000, affirmative action policies faced a huge backlash; the press demonized and sexualized successful women and domestic violence increased as husbands sought to reassert their authority in the home. HIV/AIDS added a further pressure on the domestic lives and work of women. Despite the immense initial improvements enacted by Museveni’s government, by 2003 the authors perceived the erosion of many of these gains and the need for sweeping reforms.

The authors conclude with the ambitious task of presenting historically- and anthropologically-grounded recommendations for change. These recommendations stress the need for immediate intervention into the issues of poverty and education. Most dramatically, the authors call for state intervention into gender definitions and the meaning of the DVM. They call for the improvement of the gender division of labour, the redefinition of gender expectations through open public dialogue, and the reworking of legislation on land and marital rights.

This text provides immense insight into the past, present, and future importance of the work of women in Uganda. Travelling through the country today, debates around the position of women dominate the urban and rural landscape. Billboards appear across the country warning against the dangers of cross-generational sex and the need to empower young women. Although a brave undertaking, the recommendations put forth rely heavily on changes in leadership and government policy and leave little room for change on the ground. This text is also inherently and admittedly elitist; the sample relies heavily on the histories of educated women and the urban/rural divide dominates without necessary problematization. It is unfortunate that, despite the benefits of combining historical and anthropological approaches, the authors rarely allow their different sources to interact and cohere. Despite these shortcomings, this text offers a timely and thoroughly researched intervention into the historical processes that shape the lives of women in Uganda.

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Vivian Beckford-Smith and Richard Mendelsohn, eds. *Black and White in Colour: African History on Screen*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2007. 373 pp.

The seventeen essays in this very readable and quite entertaining collection seek to address the status and uses of fiction films in relation to African history. This is the first collection of essays dealing specifically with African history on film, taking the discussion about “history and film,” first proposed and theorized in Anglo-American academia by film and history scholar (and historian) Robert Rosenstone, to African history. The resulting book is, to my mind, remarkably successful in spite of the methodological reservations I express below; but it is most especially useful for teaching.

There is an effort here to cover most of the African continent in terms of films and connected historiographies. The films discussed include examples from the well-established cinema of West Africa (Ousmane Sembene, Gaston Kabore, and Souleymane Cissé); they include Raoul Peck’s *Lumumba*, Gillo Pontecorvo’s *The Battle of Algiers*, Claire Denis’s *Chocolat*, and Jean Jacques Annaud’s *Noirs et Blancs en Couleurs*, in addition to Hollywood (or Hollywood-like) treatments of well-known events in African history — *Zulu*, *Breaker Morant*, *Cry Freedom*, *Hotel Rwanda* among others. Most of the contributors to this collection are based in South African universities, reflecting the slightly higher proportion of essays dealing with that country’s history and its films.

Following Rosenstone’s lead, the aim, expressed by the collection’s contributors and editors, is to go beyond using “historical accuracy” as a yardstick for the analysis of history films. Accordingly, it is not whether a movie gets its “facts” right or accurately depicts “true events” that is important or significant. Instead, there are questions, which the essays in the collection address with varying results: What use has “the writing of history,” or the production of historical knowledge, for fiction film? And, what use has the teaching of history for fiction film? Fiction film (including even the most “faithful” cinematic dramatizations of true events) is inevitably constituted by “invention” and fictionalization (as well as deliberate choices and omissions), and to deal with this Rosenstone lays out a theoretical framework of “true invention” as against “false invention” in fiction film. The former is consistent with the “discourse of history,” while the latter is not.

The notion of a “discourse of history” is rather vague and uncertain, as Robert Harms points out in his contribution to this collection (“The Transatlantic Slave Trade in Cinema”). It also, to my mind, tends to presuppose (or at least strongly suggest) a more or less stable, almost
uncontested, and identifiable historical knowledge prior to a given filmic treatment. On the other hand, the idea of a “discourse of history” does appear useful, not so much as a structuring device for analyzing how history is presented in fiction films, but because just trying to make sense of it leads to a close engagement with the filmic texts, which is the main and ostensible purpose of a collection of essays on films that themselves present and engage with the history of Africa. The notion of a “discourse of history” probably finds its greatest usefulness in the questions it prompts rather than in the answers or definitions it produces. The most interesting essays in this collection, therefore, tend to entertain loose and questioning relationships to Rosenstone’s categories. Moreover, I would argue that cinema itself constitutes a kind of historical discourse. Cinema owes its existence to a technology capable of manipulating our perception of time and space, a technology that, at the very least, places the “now” into spatial and temporal perspective — the “now” of a film’s making, the “now” of its narrative and the events it depicts, the “now” of spectatorship. Many of the best essays in this collection also take up these questions, analyzing films within temporal and historical contexts of production, reception, and circulation. Carolyn Hamilton and Litheko Modisane’s long essay on the films Zulu and Zulu Dawn are fine examples of this kind of multilayered and complex contextualization.

The essays, sometimes individually, but certainly when taken as a whole, point to the diversity of genres within historical fiction films and the ways that each genre or style delivers different, varying kinds of histories and truths. These issues really jump out in a discussion of the cinema of Ousmane Sembene for example; and here I was left wishing for a more head-on engagement with authorship (auteurship) and intentionality, rather than to a discussion of the historiography of colonial French West Africa, compelling though this was. On the other hand, engaging more squarely with theoretical or methodological issues was Nigel Worden’s essay on the South African film Proteus.

Proteus presents a fictionalized and imaginatively treatment of an event at the Cape Colony in the seventeenth century about which the historical record is a bit vague. Nigel Worden shows rather convincingly that Proteus works as historiography because the film, by, for instance, making deliberate use of anachronisms, and disrupting the temporal continuity upon which classic fiction films are based, stays one step removed from narrative entertainment. Proteus, by destabilizing classic narrative film codes, reminds us that fiction film especially plays visually with space and time to offer up verisimilitude for public consumption — for entertainment, visual pleasure, and/or edification. Proteus contributes, through visual and narrative means, to the poststructuralist view that there is no stable truth
in history, but only textual representation. While political avant-garde cinema in the sixties (Jean-Luc Godard, 1968), and then feminist film criticism in the seventies (Laura Mulvey, 1975), already made the connection between narrative film and “discourse” (per Foucault this time), it seems to me an interesting and suggestive avenue to put the production of historiography in dialogue with avant-garde history film. On the other hand, Proteus is excessively conceptual: didactic and nearly emotionless; and if one is considering seventeenth-century history, its entanglements with apartheid and a particular South African conversation are impossible to move beyond.

Fiction film confronts the historian with the idea that history is not only about “what happened” and “why.” History, it becomes very clear in fictionalized film treatments, is also about the subjectivity of human experience, which itself shapes historiography, or the “historical record.” Subjective experience is real yet difficult to communicate, or definitively characterize. Because of cinema’s particular ability to manipulate time, space, and movement, history fiction films are uniquely capable of bringing out so many of the questions, speculations, opinions, manipulations, and contradictions that have shaped the historical record, and that continue to shape the way the past is viewed and experienced in the present. There is the danger of historiography erecting itself as a kind of stone god to the “history film.” For instance, while Claire Denis’s film Chocolat has been criticized with some justification for shamelessly aestheticizing and objectifying the black male body, Ruth Watson criticizes it somewhat unfairly in the name of “historiography,” thereby denying Claire Denis her experience as a historical actor whose memories and composite inventions are also valid. Also exploring the intersections of memory, fantasy, and historiography, is Nigel Penn’s interesting essay about the “white experience” in Kenya.

Although most of the essays are analytically strong and a pleasure to read, none of the contributors are film studies scholars. In fact, the great majority is historians conducting what appears to be fairly traditional research. My main general criticism has had to do with a certain heaviness of traditional historiography in the analysis of film, where a conventional [but by no means uninteresting] presentation of historiography outweighs the analysis of the films as films, that is to say, as visual texts and artifacts subject to different rules. The most shocking example of this non-engagement with the specificity of the visual, and the specificity of cinema more particularly, is Mohamed Adhikiri’s piece about Hotel Rwanda. Certainly this Hollywood treatment of the Rwandan genocide suffers from many inadequacies, but is “too little horror” one of them? Adhikiri argues that the film should have shown graphic violence more explicitly in order to really render the horror of what happened in
Rwanda. Is Adhikiri not aware that “gore” (he seems to be advocating for more blood onscreen!) is an ironic film genre that does nothing whatever to sensitize anyone to any real violence?

Taken together, this collection of essays does a good job of covering the ground in relation to what cinema can offer history, and what history can offer cinema. But only Robert Harms’ and Nigel Worden’s essays (especially) attempt to address the specificity of film as source and producer of historical knowledge. Cinema exists at the various intersections of text, image and technique; literature and technology; visual representation and performance. Film has a complex and specific language, which historians, if they are using cinema in their work for any purpose (be it historiographic analysis or teaching), cannot afford to ignore or avoid learning something about. Even if the essays in this volume do not always succeed in raising “film” questions to their fullest extent, they do successfully raise “history” questions. Ultimately, this collection of essays about how African history fares on film seems to support the idea that film is “historiography by other means” — an idea certainly worth pursuing and exploring. But in this volume, the essays tend to give greater weight to “historiography” while somewhat neglecting the “other means.”

[Editor’s Note: A complementary volume to the book reviewed is Peter Davies’ In Darkest Hollywood: Exploring the Jungles of Cinema’s South Africa. Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1996.]

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Giorgio Blundo and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan (with N.B. Arifari and M.T. Alou). Everyday Corruption and the State: Citizens and Public Officials in Africa. Translated by Susan Cox. London: Zed Books, 2006. 298 pp.

In this excellent book, anthropologists Giorgio Blundo and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan provide an insightful analysis of the nature and workings of corruption in contemporary Africa. Based on a comparative ethnographic study of Benin, Niger, and Senegal, Everyday Corruption and the State offers a revealing account of a widely misunderstood phenomenon. The book makes many significant contributions, including: an explanation of the value of foregrounding corruption as an object of anthropological study; a focus on everyday forms of corruption; an emphasis on examining practices as well as discourse; a use of conceptually rigorous
typologies to organize a comparative analysis; and a willingness to address thorny questions about the relationship between “culture” and corruption.

The authors argue persuasively that the study of corruption is an instructive perspective from which to understand African public space, suggesting that “the study of corruption enables us to penetrate to the actual heart of modern African states” [6]. They contend that the “real” workings of the state are in many ways removed from its “official” functioning. Based on a two-year systematic study of petty corruption in these three countries, the book demonstrates how informal administrative operations both facilitate and rely on practices of everyday corruption. Rather than reducing corruption to the absence of a modern bureaucratic or Weberian state, the authors show how the interpenetration of formal and informal procedures and the intersection of tacit and official rules not only produce corruption, but constitute the actual machinery of the state. While avoiding deceptive and overly normative comparisons to the West, Blundo and de Sardan perceptively recognize that the official African state, which is so often depicted as absent or failed in the accounts of Western scholars, journalists, democracy activists, and development agencies, is, in fact, a “Western-style state ... part of the `real state’ [which] must be taken account in the analysis” [108]. Further, they recognize that many ordinary Africans are well aware of the Western model, and judge their governments and the problem of corruption, in part, based on this awareness.

One of the great strengths of the book is that it examines corruption from the bottom up. The authors focus on the behaviour of low-level state officials and ordinary citizens as they interact with and attempt to secure resources and services from the state. As such, the data is concrete; anyone who has experienced the processes and social relations by which corruption unfolds in dealings with the state and its officialdom will recognize the validity of the evidence. By focusing on what they call the “habits, procedures and justifications for corruption” [8], Blundo and de Sardan provide a discerning perspective that helps make sense of the apparent contradictions of corruption for ordinary citizens.

*Everyday Corruption and the State* offers a systematic conceptual framework — including several helpful typologies — for categorizing and making sense of corrupt practices and the discourses they generate. For example, in the chapter on everyday corruption, the authors divide corrupt practices into seven basic forms (for example, commission for illicit services, gratuities, and string-pulling) and provide clear definitions of each, which then help guide the analysis of the case studies presented in the second half of the book. Similarly, the authors identify six common strategies for enabling corruption. In another chapter on the popular semi-
ology of corruption, they describe eight forms of discourse that are deployed by ordinary citizens to justify and legitimize corruption (such as coping, social pressure, and redistribution) and six semantic fields through which people talk about corruption (such as manducation, transaction, and sociability). While their penchant for categorization and typologies can, at times, make the prose a bit sterile, the authors have nevertheless provided a comprehensive anthropological analysis of the subject.

The book also presents a thorough review of the anthropological literature on corruption in Africa, clearly delineating the main foci of existing work and the principal lines of debate that characterize previous analyses. Particularly illuminating are the discussions of the degree to which the colonial legacy explains (or does not explain) postcolonial corruption in Africa and the critique of so-called “culturalist” explanations of corruption. The authors recognize the consequential legacies of colonialism, but they are also committed to understanding the significance of current practices in reproducing corruption. This informs their perspective on the relationship between corruption and culture, which I would describe as a moderate form of cultural relativism. Blundo and de Sardan make it clear that they reject essentialist or primordial notions that attribute the prevalence of corruption in Africa to some fundamental, timeless, and pathological aspect of local culture. In their view, cultural practices must be understood in context, which includes history and current structures of inequality. But they also insist that to adopt the reverse position — to pretend that practices of corruption are not in some sense cultural — is to ignore the fact that these practices have become entangled with people’s ways of life. In the end, they hedge the issue a bit, fearful of being branded culturalist but unwilling to fully sketch out a different conception of a cultural perspective.

The first half of the book contains almost all of the more theoretically interesting material. The second half consists of three case studies (including two written by collaborators Arifari and Alou) of different sectors in which corruption occurs — the legal system, transport and customs, and public procurement. These are informative but somewhat dry. Lost in the extensive empirical descriptions of corruption is any intimate sense of the ordinary people who are engaged in corruption and the ways they experience their lives. The reader does not, for example, get to know any individuals. The ethnography is detailed, but at a level removed from people’s actual lives.

Among the many great insights of the book, one that I wished the authors had pursued further, is the fact that many ordinary Africans are ambivalent about corruption, condemning it even as they justify it. While the authors consistently acknowledge this ambivalence and the paradoxes
it generates, they do not explore it in any depth. Furthermore, because they focus so insistently on understanding the practices of corruption, they do not address its consequences — which, arguably, can be equally complex and multifaceted.

Overall, Everyday Corruption and the State is an outstanding piece of scholarship, providing insights into corruption in Africa with methodological rigour and analytical sophistication.

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Ann Cassiman. Stirring Life: Women’s Paths and Places Among the Kasena of Northern Ghana. Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2006. 318 pp.

Ann Cassiman’s doctoral ethnographic research on the Kasena of Chiana in Northern Ghana provides a masterful overview of daily life as well as ritual practices and meanings in Kasena. The resulting book reveals that, in Kasena discourse, the house is a living body and its life cycle parallels women’s life cycles. The house is also bolstered by women’s paths and movements, thus enabling regeneration of life and continuous propagation of the Kasena social and cultural world. Cassiman’s major goal in this book is to explore Kasena practices and traditions from a female perspective.

Cassiman’s introductory chapter is inviting and exciting for a reader unfamiliar with the Kasena people and culture. It offers a detailed and high-definition snapshot of daily life in Chiana and provides a vivid description of its rich cultural landscape. Cassiman offers an insightful and well contextualized examination of the social, economic, and political organization of the Kasena’s patrilineal world.

In the second chapter, Cassiman examines Kasena cosmology and mythologies of origin. She reveals the Kasena metaphorical view of the world as a calabash, split into two by We (sky), the originator of life. We is responsible for the spatial delineation of this world (visible world of the living) and the otherworld (invisible world of origin).

The cosmic ordering of Kasena lifeworld intimately involves ancestors. Cassiman highlights that alignment to the normative order imputed by the ancestral world guarantees the unity of the community. She briefly explains Kasena cosmological orientation of east-west and cosmological time concept of duality. Respect for cosmological order and orientation ensures fertility, prosperity, and life.

Cassiman also explores the importance of land in the Kasena worldview.
She explains that *Tiga* (earth) and *We* are interconnected and form the universe. *We* created the earth and left a custodian in charge. The earth is the uterine regenerative source of life: “life comes forth from the land and returns to the land to be regenerated into life” [67].

In the third chapter, Cassiman addresses the importance of built dwellings in Kasena. A Kasena house, following the east-west orientation order, is sculpted from earth and water and consequently possesses regenerative properties as it is attached to the source of life. Cassiman provides a blueprint of the processes, rituals, conditions, and tradition involved in building a house. The built dwelling adopts the shape and contours of a woman’s body; each room represents a part of a woman’s body, and thereby carries its own significance. Cassiman also compares a new house to the birth of a newborn in the Kasena tradition and observes that the house goes through similar rituals. This comparison further cements her argument that a house in the Kasena context symbolizes a body.

A house is considered to root an individual in the past, present, and future. Cassiman highlights the importance of tracing houses to those of one’s ancestors. All paths of each house lead back to the house of origin. Cassiman further examines the multiple meanings and metaphors of paths to the Kasena. Among them, she highlights that paths serve as an important embodiment of kinship relations and matrimonial alliances and signify continuity of life and interconnectedness in the Kasena community.

Cassiman’s analysis also underscores that sons do not leave their paternal house unless there are irreconcilable issues, usually between the daughter-in-law and the son’s mother. The daughter of the patrilineal house is expected to leave upon marriage and dwell in the house of her in-laws.

In the fourth chapter, marriage is examined as a socio-cultural phenomenon and spatial practice. Cassiman highlights that marriage is often arranged with the consent of the daughter and the parents. The suitor makes a public declaration of intent of marriage by presenting gifts to the parents. The parental house agrees on marriage when the mother prepares a meal for the suitor and his companions. Cassiman accordingly details the rich marriage tradition and ceremonial procedures. When the new bride enters the marital home, she is first seen as a stranger; but gradually, and especially with motherhood, she appropriates her own space (room and yard) in the domestic sphere. Throughout her marriage, the bride maintains her agnatic ties and remains involved in rituals taking place at her natal house. Upon death, the wife is brought back to her paternal home, along the same path she travelled during marriage. The members of the paternal home are presented with gifts, and the ensuing process mirrors the marriage ceremony rituals. The wife is then brought back to the marital house, accompanied by members of both houses, to be buried. As in life, the alliance between the wife’s natal house and
marital house remains strong after death.

In the fifth chapter, Cassimans examines pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood practices in Kasena. She asserts that pregnancy inserts the woman into the husband’s lineage and that motherhood further strengthens the relations between the houses. The child is delivered by all the women of the house, symbolizing that it is the whole house giving birth and demonstrating that the child belongs to the house, not the mother.

In the final chapter, Cassimans stresses the overarching theme of paths created and followed by women during their lifetime. These paths enable women to play a pertinent role in stirring and continuing the flow of life in Kasena land through their multiple ways of belonging to their natal and marital houses, fostering strong ties between both houses and their nourishing and regenerative capacities.

Overall, it is highly questionable whether Cassimans truly succeeds in offering a female perspective that is different from the Kasena male discourse on cultural and social practices. In a society that is deeply saturated with male-centred discourse on customs and traditions, it is difficult to disentangle male prescription of female roles from what purports to be the female perspective on female roles. Cassimans provides more of a narrative on the way things are and work in Kasena, and thus focuses on women’s roles within this prescriptive narrative, rather than capturing a true female perspective.

One also wonders why Cassimans does not explore the influence of Islam on Kasena society, precisely because the religious experience of the people is significantly affected by what Mazrui terms “Triple Heritage,” whereby the African indigenous heritage often interacts greatly with foreign beliefs (The Africans: A Triple Heritage. London: BBC Publications, 1986). Given the predominance of the Islamic religion in Northern Ghana, the influence of Islam cannot be divorced from the contemporary social and cultural structure of the Kasena.

Cassimans deserves applause for the comprehensive details and explanations that she provides in her book. However, her occasional tendency to offer needlessly repetitive information renders some sections onerous to read. On the whole, however, she skilfully presents an overwhelming amount of information in a coherent manner. This book is easy to read, with pictures that serve as an excellent aid to understanding her description of Kasena housing.

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Marie Soleil Frère. *The Media and Conflicts in Central Africa*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2007. 287 pp.

The last few years have seen the publication of a number of book-length monographs on African media, including those by Louise Bourgault, Lisa Garron, and Francis Nyamnjoh. Marie Soleil Frère’s study of media and conflict in nine Central African countries is a useful addition to that work. Specifically, the book — first published in French in 2005 — joins a growing subfield literature on media and conflict resolution. It covers the period from 1993 to 2004 in nine countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Chad, Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea.

The countries share two traits: they are characterized by conflicts over resources and wealth as a means of controlling the state, and second, the weakness of institutionally organized methods for the population to participate in the management and sharing of public property. The countries are presented as three groups: (1) the Great Lakes countries — Burundi, Rwanda, and the DRC — characterized by violent, regionally-implicated civil wars with hundreds of thousands killed; (2) countries that have experienced violent civil war with less of a regional impact — Republic of Congo, CAR, and Chad; and (3) countries like Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea that have not experienced war since 1990 but in which the democratic process is subjected to important social tensions.

Each country study consists of a media history, industry profile (who owns what, volume of media), identity of readers and audience, liberalization of the media sector, the role of media in political conflicts (ranging from civil wars to violent pogroms of ethnic cleansing), an assessment of journalistic practice, and the kind of factors impacting on journalists’ work. Each chapter also includes speculation on the impact of new technologies. The latter refers to the use of the Internet and the impact of media produced by national diasporas based in Europe and North America.

Frère says she chose the nine countries in Central Africa because of their history with conflict and media’s “two-edged” role in those conflicts. Until 2004, the region experienced the greatest number of major conflicts (that is, situations in which more than a thousand people a year were killed). At the same time, the region has witnessed an unprecedented increase in the numbers and scope of media. What has become clear is that journalists can “incite hatred, provoke violent demonstrations, voluntarily manipulate information in the service of war-mongering strategies, promote antidemocratic reflexes, and, more or less consciously create the roots of deep divisions within society.” But journalists do not just play a
negative role. They have “often contributed to taking the first step toward democracy, restoring piece in troubled regions, establishing respect and political dialogue between powers, and transforming the warriors of yesterday into negotiators in the process of conciliation” [1].

Journalists are subject to influence by political parties and often present information that is “distorted, unchecked and deliberately false” [40]. In most cases, Frère accuses journalists of being propagandists for political factions. Low salaries, little training, and short histories with free media often accounts for these lapses. A key point of Frère’s is that the decline in journalistic standards appears to coincide with the liberalization of the sector. For example, the emergence of private media in Rwanda in 1992 also marked the beginning of violence and political unrest in the country, leading to more than 300,000 dead. Frère also suggests that foreign NGOs and media organizations’ lack of knowledge of local conditions can often lend credibility to discredited “media,” as it did protecting “freedom of expression” in the case of a jailed editor of a rightwing newspaper fanning ethnic hatred in Rwanda in the early 1990s [83].

A final chapter by Human Rights Watch’s Jean-Paul Marthoz rounds out the book. This chapter concerns itself with how the international media covers Africa. The point is to emphasize the impact of international media on modifying perceptions of a conflict at the local level in Africa, a point that Frère alludes to earlier [23, 56].

The book is low on analysis or theory. Much of it amounts to description — in some cases very basic data — of the respective media systems, and of abuses by those media. In most cases, the data is already outdated. Much of it is available in up to date form on the websites of media NGOs such as PANOS, the London-based development institute which supported this research, Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists, or the individual sites of media scholars.

Frère’s discussion of new technologies could have been more thorough. For example, it would have been interesting to see a discussion of how guerrilla leaders in some of the regional conflicts (in the Democratic Republic of Congo especially) use new media forms to conduct media relations with visiting foreign journalists or communicate with potential followers or loyalists in their respective diasporas. In this regard, Laurent Nkunda, a rebel leader in Eastern Congo (he is a former DRC army colonel) is an interesting case. As OXResearch reports, in 2005, Nkunda hired professional film crews to shoot documentaries of himself in which he presented himself as a figure akin to the King of Rwanda “and thus, as saviour of all Rwandese, in Congo and elsewhere.” Though the recordings were clearly intended for a local audience in Eastern Congo, English and French subtitles suggested audiences among the Congolese diaspora and
news media representatives. Nkunda, according to OxResearch, actively courts journalists (see “Central Africa: Warlords Develop New Media Strategies.” OxResearch [Oxford] 31 July 2008).

Despite the criticisms above, the book must be welcomed for adding to a very limited literature on African media, especially for studies of media in Central Africa. Annually updated versions of this book would serve as handy reference tools.

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Bayo Holsey. Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008. 280 pp.

Over the last ten years, few studies have dealt with the memory of slavery in Africa. Even though “memory” is a popular trend, the word being largely used in different titles of books and conferences, the majority of the scholarly works conceive memory as “tradition.” In Routes of Remembrance, Bayo Holsey’s purpose is different: “instead of searching for hidden, implicit memories of the slave trade” [8] she rather deals with the public constructions of the past. Relying on extensive fieldwork in Southern Ghana, Holsey tries to understand how the residents of Cape Coast and Elmina construct different narratives of the past, relying on European histories of the slave trade; how these two towns are conceived as part of the Atlantic World; the role of the African diaspora and the tourism industry; and finally, the various attempts to publicize the history of slave trade in productive ways. In the opening pages of the book, Bayo Holsey makes clear her conception of memory by asserting that she does not judge the histories collected “against the fantasy of a complete history” [17]. Instead of searching to establish the “historical accuracy of these histories” she rather tries to understand “the process and effects of reconstruction” [17].

Routes of Remembrance is divided into two parts: part one comprises five chapters examining how local residents attempt to sequester the history of the slave trade; part two comprises two chapters dealing with how the history of the slave trade is being reconstructed in Ghana as a result of the tourism industry, especially targeting African American visitors. In the first chapter, Holsey revisits the history of Elmina and Cape Coast during the period of the Atlantic slave trade, by focusing on the European presence in the region, in particular the various forms of association with locals and gender relations, including the marriages between European men and local women. Chapter 2 deals with the place of what of
Holsey calls “domestic slavery” in the constructions of family histories. By using oral interviews, Holsey succeeds in showing how slavery in Ghana is omitted in the public discourses, by remaining a stigma for the descendants of slaves and a forbidden subject for the descendants of slave owners. If the silence involving slave ancestry can be seen as a mean to “protect” the slave descendants, the distinction between the descendants of former slaves and the descendants of slave owners persists. Despite using the term “domestic slavery” to define slavery in Cape Coast, Holsey agrees that the notion of “incorporation” is a myth. Chapter 3 deals with regional histories and narratives. Holsey examines how coastal residents try to distance themselves from the stigma of the past vulnerability to enslavement by placing at the same time this stigma on the residents of Northern Ghana, a region that is still perceived as a reservoir of potential slaves. Holsey successfully explains the complexity involving the different groups of Ghanaian society: regional differences, inherited from the period of the Atlantic slave trade, are still present, despite the efforts of the nationalist movement. Chapter 4 explains that while the slave trade is sequestered from public discourses, local residents have developed strategies to replace the narratives of enslavement with stories of integration into the Atlantic economy in favourable terms. In these stories, the slave trade and the colonial past are merged to rather insist on the positive aspects of European presence (especially the Dutch) in Elmina and Cape Coast. These constructions are ambivalent: by recognizing the European legacy, coastal residents reject an image of inferiority, but their “fundamental identity remains that of black people” (120). In Chapter 5, Holsey demonstrates that slavery and the slave trade are minimized in national histories, in history textbooks and history teaching. She states that these fields were first dominated by Europeans, who used the slave trade to stigmatize Africans, and later by Ghanaian historians who privileged colonialism and independence. Holsey revisits the debate on the impacts of the slave trade in Africa (Fage, Rodney, Boahen, Inikori) and the African involvement in the trade.

Holsey also analyzes in detail one textbook used in Ghana’s high school system. This textbook addresses the positive and the negative effects of the slave trade, and associates the participation of Africans in the slave trade with immorality. Holsey also attended some classes devoted to the slave trade in a local private school, where, once more, the complexities of African participation in the trade were absent. In the classroom, the history of the slave trade is presented as “the physical defeat of those enslaved and the moral defeat of those who enslaved them, from which there can be no redemption” (145). Chapter 6 focuses on the development of tourism and commemorations aimed especially at African American
Holsey reviews the history of what she calls “Afro-Atlantic” dialogues, since the period following the independence of the country. She draws up the history of Cape Coast and Elimina castles, the two main historical sites related to slavery. Indeed, since the 1980s, their importance as tourist sites has increased, mainly over the influence of the United States, via a major USAID grant. Holsey develops a brilliant analysis on how the local population deals with the presence of the castles in the landscape of the two coastal towns. She also examines in detail the discourses developed by the tourist guides during the visits as well as the impacts of these discourses and the sites themselves (the Door of No Return, the male and female dungeons) on African American tourists. Chapter 7 examines how diaspora tourism is leading local residents to negotiate and to renew their own discourses. If the development of slave trade tourism has faced opposition from Ghanaians because of the emphasis on a past they want to forget and overcome, the tourism industry offers to the local population new possibilities not only to make new uses of history in an emancipatory perspective but also to be part of a global dialogue.

In *Routes of Remembrance*, Holsey highlights that “slavery existed among the Fantes, and indeed throughout West Africa before the arrival of Europeans; however it was a very different institution from slavery in the Americas” (41). Relying on Larry Yarak’s study “Elmina and Greater Asante in the Nineteenth Century” (*African Affairs* 70, no.279 [1989]: 113-24), Holsey affirms that slaves were integrated in the family life. However, she also reminds us that *nnonkofo* did perform many activities as agriculturalists, miners, skilled artisans, porters, soldiers, and household servants as well as “garden slaves” who worked on plantations. By overlooking a thirty-year old debate in the historiography of slavery involving scholars, such as Claude Meillassoux, Suzanne Miers, Igor Kopytoff, Paul Lovejoy, and Martin Klein, Holsey involuntarily reinforces an idealized and benevolent vision of slavery in Africa. Along the text, the reader would like to know more about the transformations in the nature of slavery during the three hundred years of the Atlantic slave trade in the Gold Coast, as well as the distinction between the trade aiming at providing slaves to the New World and the trade aiming at providing captives to the Trans-Saharan slave trade. Despite these points, *Routes of Remembrance* has many strengths. The book covers in detail the most important aspects related to the construction of the public memory of slavery in Southern Ghana. The book makes visible all the complexities related to the slave past (doubtless an uneasy subject) that emerged during Holsey’s fieldwork. It also suggests interesting avenues to all those planning to conduct multi-sited fieldwork in West Africa. *Routes of Remembrance* is, overall, a valuable contribution to the studies of the public memory of slavery in West Africa and an
unavoidable reference to scholars working on the plural memories of slavery in other parts of the North and the South Atlantic.

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Marie Miran. *Islam, Histoire et Modernité en Côte d’Ivoire*. Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2006. 546 pp.

Marie Miran embarks on an ambitious journey recounting the recent history of Muslim communities in *Islam, Histoire et Modernité en Côte d’Ivoire*, a book based on her dissertation. By incorporating the theoretical frameworks of anthropology, she endorses a new approach to urban African history. This study is a micro-history of urban Muslims in Abidjan during the twentieth century. Focusing on civil society and leadership, Miran shows how the social space occupied by the Muslim communities of Abidjan changed profoundly in the course of this long century, and how, in this process, they created an *Ivoirian* Islam.

At the center of this study are conceptions of modernity within Islam of which education is a major component. Additionally, the development of an inherent nationalism emerges as a key factor dividing Ivoirian and non-Ivoirian Muslims. With the need for the affirmation of discrete identities within increasingly urbanized lifestyles, the city mosques embodied the symbolic function the villages once played in these Muslim communities. At the same time, the transition to the newly-independent nation in the 1960s favoured Christianity and secular institutions. Miran argues that Muslims, in this context, became increasingly alienated from public participation. The relationship for Muslims to the state in Côte d’Ivoire has been and continues to be complex. The one party system that emerged after independence left Muslim communities in a precarious political position with most opting to remain in the periphery of public life.

In the 1970s, as a result of the oil boom, money came into the country from Arab nations, namely Saudi Arabia, and this fostered Muslim associational life centered on Wahabism. Elder Ivoirian Muslim leaders reacted by reforming religious practices from within. By rejecting strict orthodoxy they created a new outlook on modernity and Islam. Identifying as a Muslim then, became ideologically charged by the end of the century. But after being politically marginalized at first, Muslims eventually achieved government representation with the establishment of the Conseil National Islamique (CNI), in 1993.
This book is divided into nine chapters, some of which overlap chronologically. Throughout the text are maps of the discussed regions as well as many charts and tables. The most impressive inclusion is the sixteen-page spread of colour photographs of the mosques and Muslim community leaders across the different neighbourhoods of Abidjan. These photographs allow the reader to observe the diverse ways Muslims express themselves, especially through architecture. The charts and tables documenting a variety of Muslim organizations in twentieth century Côte d’Ivoire are effectively used as statistical inserts.

Miran’s sources include the archives of the Minister of the Interior of Côte d’Ivoire and a number of records from Muslim organizations. Moreover, the most original source materials are mined from private libraries of such prominent Muslim men as El Hadj Boubacar Sakho and El Hadj Cheikh Tidjane Ba. In addition to her interviews, a number of Friday mosque sermons were recorded and transcribed by a research assistant. The combination of these unique sources of information gives a plurality to Muslim voices in the historical record, representing an original research method.

Through the Miran’s intimate knowledge of certain Muslim leaders’ personal contributions to political and national history, she is able to portray urban Islam’s contribution to it. With ample evidence, and relying on Frederick Cooper’s ideas about cultural and acultural modernity, Miran contends that Islam is modern in Côte d’Ivoire. Based on this assertion, she engages theory to conclude that Marxist and Weberian perspectives are not useful to understanding Islamic practice in this situation. This is because, as a religion of laws, she argues, Islam does not allow for a separation of capital from dogma. Miran places her study within the larger ideas on postmodernism and globalization generated by Ernest Gellner. She also incorporates Marc Bloch, Dale Eickelman, and Emile Durkheim in her assemblage of theoretical models.

The book includes an epilogue dedicated to the changes in Côte d’Ivoire since 11 September 2001, where she briefly acknowledges both this and the 2002 coup d’État as major turning points in Ivoirian history. What is ultimately significant for Miran in this opaque period that has exacerbated clashes between communities is a general increase in all forms of religious fundamentalisms. She argues that, despite these changes, Muslims remain open-minded, expressing through the CNI public denunciations of the attacks on the US, the Taliban, and Al-Qaeda.

The connections between Muslims on the coasts and those in the hinterlands are rarely studied for Côte d’Ivoire. This major contribution will be of interest not just to scholars of Africa and Islam, but also to those interested in the interaction between religion and politics. Throughout
this history, such a process has entailed remaining a secular society with separate political and religious spheres. Furthermore, Muslims have sought to participate in the plural state and have a voice within it. For Miran, an Ivorian Islam represents modernity as a successful marrying of faith and nation simultaneously, not the pursuit of an authentic Islam. The sheer amount of information she provides speaks to the thoroughness of her research. What is also apparent is the complexity of writing a modern history. We are fortunate that Miran completed her research at the end of the millennium, before Islam became re-essentialized in a global context.

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Donald S. Moore. Suffering for Territory: Race, Place and Power in Zimbabwe. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005. 399 pp.

Suffering for Territory discusses “race, place and power in Zimbabwe” through focusing on land, resettlement, and agrarian re-organisation. It contributes to our understanding of why the land question led to a political implosion by the turn of the century in that country. For those interested in methodology, the crisis of development and accumulation, and the accompanying contest for space, power, and control, has been tackled by using a rich combination of archival and ethnographic sources and a case study. Suffering for Territory applies ethno-methodology and provides a framework for understanding the struggles, real and imagined, in Zimbabwe.

The book takes on both the contests between traditional versus state institutions, and local versus international ideals for the pursuit of the elusive goal of development and its problems. At one level, Donald Moore deals with the differences in understanding development and how contesting parties (in this case, government and its bureaucracy on one hand and the rural communities on the other) approach rural economic development. The state pursues a modernising agenda at any cost, while the rural communities are sceptical of state led, top down projects and prefer to rely on historically and traditionally tried and tested ways of achieving livelihoods. In the case of Kaerezi, the high levels of politicization through its history of resistance to structured and centralised planning under the Smith regime makes its people sensitive to anything that resembles colonial planning. Tangwena people believed that “they should have the freedom to choose their settlement patterns and land use practices” while the postcolonial government continued — in the fashion of the colonial
regime — in blaming them for degrading the soil (41). While articulating this disjuncture, Moore has not been forthright in taking a position and could be accused of romanticization.

The institution of traditional authority in Zimbabwe has faced a turbulent history, being forced into places allocated for it by changing regimes in their ever-changing roles for the rural space in development and state politics. After independence, the institutions of traditional authority continued to be controlled by the state, and power was allocated or withdrawn as the state wished. For a more historically grounded analysis of the evolution of the relations between chiefs and state the treatise by Jocelyn Alexander in *The Unsettled Land, State-making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003* (London: James Currey, 2006) would be a good place to start. Kaerezi had a sovereign who had strong ties with the liberation struggle by virtue of having saved Mugabe, making his tenure secure and his profile high. After the death of Rekayi Tangwena, the new Chief found himself having to locate himself in that history and tradition for his legitimacy. *Suffering for Territory* articulates the contestation for control, the right to deliver “development” and its interpretation between a modernising state and chiefdom feeling threatened. A common thread throughout the histories of state intervention in rural administration has been a political project — either to contain and suppress the rise of mass politics (in the case of colonial rule) or to be seen as the benefactors of the poor, and so whipping up support for the ruling regime. Following independence, state officials often wanted to be seen as allies of the people, using the land question for populist purposes, constantly reviving the link between liberation war and the land question. In this regard, Moore provides the basis for understanding Mugabe’s use of land and his dealings with traditional authorities since independence as well as, most recently, after the failure of his 1999 referendum to replace the Lancaster Constitution. The questions of being, agency, identity, and authenticity for rule and development are all encapsulated in the land and land politics married to liberation and nationality. The critique of tenure rights in *Suffering for Territory* links private tenure squarely to productivity. This is in line with Euro-centric social systems; as such, it is unsympathetic with other forms of tenure. Kaerezians expressed their problems with the boundary lines and not with state tenure as lines were seen to be arbitrary, not taking into consideration traditional settlement logic that sought to bring under one family different environs to maximize livelihood. Thus, arguments for private tenure come from a stretch of the imagination of authors, reflecting more than what they expect the interviewees to say. The ethnographic methodology is employed, tested, and developed in the process of researching for the book in a deeply skilful manner. However,
time spent within a community does not necessarily yield a much deeper analysis and understanding of the issues.

By attempting to make up for their lack of understanding of the societies they are working in, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and development workers in Africa assimilate the unknown into what they are familiar with, thus ending up with flawed conclusions. Jan Vansina argues:

The unknown misleads us just as the exotic charms us. The outsider remains incomprehensible because foreign to our experience. What cannot be tied to something known cannot be understood. Therefore the unknown must be assimilated, for better or for worse, to a series of preconceived images and concepts in the collective memory (1989, 32).

Moore’s book addresses this challenge to objectivity in writing about African societies through an impressive ethnographic exercise. By establishing himself among the Kaerezians and observing from within, Moore puts himself within the rhythm of the society. However, while he tells us about his building a hut for himself (45-48) in his “ethnographic positioning” (24) he does not say whether he worked a field for himself or if he paid for all his food, or whether his position was a form of labour tenancy in spite of the grants and fellowships he held. However, *Suffering for Territory* is an indication of how to use the ethnographic method to achieve (in an unassuming way) a clearer understanding of a historic and evolving crisis affecting the post-independence agrarian project, the bias towards private property notwithstanding.

Moore’s book is a testimony to how ethnographic methodology applied with skill can lead to a clear understanding of studied subjects and their actions. The methodology and analytical skill with which *Suffering for Territory* is crafted makes the book a reference point for an understanding of events in selected places of Zimbabwe. Moore importantly argues for the use of space in analysis by regarding the way it is made “meaningful by cultural actors,” making culture a “shared system of meanings devoid of sustained struggles” in which “place, becomes far too settled in several senses” (emphasis in original) (19). How long it takes to produce culture from the agency of actions in response to environment and place as norms is itself an interesting subject that requires further consideration (as this could help to produce an understanding of the responses of African communities to government led “development projects”). Moore foregrounds spatiality: the production, practice, and the power relations of space, acknowledging it “as a locus of production” focusing on “the production of space in the disciplining of land, labour, and rural livelihoods” (20-21). In addressing the Kaerezi complexities, Moore denies the economistic analysis that posits “capitalist functional needs as struc-
turally determining a ‘spatial fix’” in preference for “spaces imbricated in cultural politics and governmental projects, shaped by historical contingency rather than structural determination” (20), suggesting that African societies require different tools for analysis to understand them. While the contribution of this book in these areas cannot be fully articulated in this limited space, suffice it to say that the contingency discourse articulated is not so different from post-modernism. However, without undermining these contributions, I am of the opinion that the Kaerezi case study could have been used alongside another so that the valuable contribution made can be applied more generally. As a Shona-speaking Zimbabwean of the Ndua-jindwi of the broad chiManyika stalk, I found Moore’s insistence on interpreting his subject at the heart of the Manyika region of Zimbabwe through his Harare learnt chiZezuru very much like the Government of Zimbabwe insisting all people from the various sub-dialects of the Shona language speak in the Zezuru dialect of Mugabe and the bulk of his ruling cronies. His title, Suffering for Territory, is interpreted from kutambudzikira nyika. The chiManyika interpretation would be kunetsekera nyika. Unlike other resettlement schemes, such as Mayo, that assembled beneficiaries from various parts of Zimbabwe, Kaerezi is mostly resettled by people originally from that area, meaning that this interpretation of the title was not imputed upon Moore by his information but by his Harare baggage. Most of his usage of the Shona language as a vernacular savvy anthropologist is guilty of this Zezuru hegemony. I am not surprised that the Shona readers of his manuscripts would let this slip as it has become the unquestioned situation that, even at the heart of the Ndua / Changana tribes in Chipinge and Manyika tribes in Nyanga, Shona teachers push the Zezuru version. So deeply does this Zezuru pervade that it is a wonder that it has not been declared the medium of instruction in schools and the language of business in school. While this cannot be blamed on outsiders trying to understand and communicate their analysis of a situation, it is worrisome when they fall into the trap of these local projects.

In the final analysis, Suffering for Territory, in spite of the highlighted stylistic problems, still remains a major contribution to the discourse on rural development and rural organisation. In a society that is still overwhelmingly rural and has a high agriculture dependency, understanding the agrarian question and how it can be resolved is still important. Donald S. Moore has definitely formulated opinions that cannot be easily disregarded.

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Isabel Moutinho, The Colonial Wars in Contemporary Portuguese Fiction. Woodbridge, UK: Tamesis Books, Boydell & Brewer, 2008. 176 pp.

Isabel Moutinho begins her study of the depiction of the colonial war in contemporary Portuguese fiction by noting that this theme may appear to some readers best suited to the work of writers from the previous Portuguese colonies. After all, the “colonial war” was also an “anti-colonial war,” if one might state the obvious, and as such it has been powerfully narrated by Angolan, Guinean, and Mozambican writers working in Portuguese. Yet after 500 years as one of the world’s longer-lasting imperial powers, it is only natural that the colonial war and its role in the collapse of that empire should preoccupy Portuguese fiction writers. In her introduction, Moutinho asserts that the end of the empire has in fact driven much of Portugal’s contemporary political cultural and historical discourse into a self-conscious process of amnesia. The war, synonymous as it is with colonialism, defeat, and trauma, speaks of a period of Portuguese history that remains poorly explored in public discourse.

Therefore, Moutinho posits that the novels she examines in this study are at the forefront of an attempt by some Portuguese fiction writers to speak the unspeakable, as it were, the metaphorical elephant in the room that so powerfully haunts Portuguese culture and society. In what follows, she undertakes a series of close readings of six recent novels published after the end of the Portuguese empire and concerned with the exploration of its unresolved postcolonial pathologies. Moutinho is at her best in the closely detailed and richly insightful readings she offers of some of the most innovative and provocative fiction to have appeared since the end of the Portuguese empire. Divided into two central sections, one devoted to personal memories of the war, the other to a collective memory, Moutinho’s book is an important contribution to an understanding of the impact of colonialism in the cultural and psychological fabric of a former colonial power. Novels such as António Lobo Anunes’ Os Cus de Judas (1979), Manuel Alegre’s Jornada de África (1989), and Lídia Jorge’s A Costa dos Murmúrios (1988) each offer a powerful and polemic narrative intent on exposing some of the complex ways in which Portuguese colonialism inflected the nation’s past and its present.

The study is loosely informed by postcolonial theory, feminist criticism, and structuralist theory, and both benefits and is hampered by this somewhat pragmatic critical position. To be sure, Moutinho makes no bones about her special interest in the literary representation of the war, hence her attention to formal issues and the close reliance on traditional literary criticism: “My aim is to investigate how the memory of the colonial wars is expressed in literary terms” (6). However, given the nature of
the material, greater attention to postcolonial criticism may have allowed Moutinho fully to examine the complex ideological frameworks that both produce and feed off these novels. Yes, the colonial war was ugly and painful and its memories for the Portuguese can only ever be clouded by deep trauma, but the memory of war that these novels recover and rehearse is also very carefully cultivated. For example, that so many of the characters saw Africa, the colonial war, and interaction with the settlers as damaging to their so-called truer selves is hardly surprising. The soldiers sent out to the colonies to fight a war they felt was not theirs resented the fact that the settlers seemed to have it so much easier than the metropolitan Portuguese; even the brutality of Salazar’s regime was milder in the colonies, as his secret police agents were much too busy arresting and torturing students and activists in the homeland. No wonder the soldiers felt soiled by the raw effluent of a war that brought them little or no personal gain. As Moutinho notes, generally the narrators or central characters associated Lisbon (if not Portugal as a whole) with “civilisation” and Africa implicitly or explicitly with savagery and barbarism.

That is the key to the relationship the narrators and characters maintained with Africa, and a key also to their Portuguese memory — personal and collective — of the colonial war. It is biased and self-serving because that was always the way metropolitan Portugal related to its colonies. The amnesia she identifies in the present treatment of the war is merely a cruder manifestation of earlier modes of relation between the metropole and its colonies. Indeed, having noted the obvious autobiographical links some of the writers hold with narrators or characters in their novels, Moutinho might have made more of his issue. The personal is, in a society so recently separated from its grandiose mythology, inherently political; hence the collective forgetting — but one might argue that the strategic recollections these novels enact is no less immune from a desire to (re)create a new set of self-serving mythologies.

Thus, even when they gesture towards a recognition of the humanity of the colonised Africans or the settlers, or perhaps especially when they do so, these novels are essentially concerned with recreating the world in a way that makes sense for the Portuguese themselves. The novels may indeed constitute a kind of counter-history to accepted Portuguese historical accounts of the war, but that thesis needs closer critical attention to how race, gender, and class inflect the entire relationship between the writing of the past and the material evidence of that past. How is Africa being used once again, and to what effect, to use that critical tool so loved by Edward Said? Moutinho quotes, approvingly, Boaventura de Sousa Santos’ view that Portuguese colonialism was “different” from other colonialisms, notably as practised by the British and French, but how different?
The answer matters because it will account for the way the present novels privilege the interiorised world of experience, of memory and trauma, so often at the expense of the social webs that produce the raced, gendered, sexualised self.

Ultimately, *The Colonial Wars in Contemporary Portuguese Fiction* goes some way towards explicating how the colonial war, or its legacy, inflects the work of many of the most influential contemporary Portuguese writers. Moreover, in so doing, Isabel Moutinho makes a persuasive case for a reading of the fictional work as “a window into the soul” of the Portuguese national imaginary. How these novels in turn contribute to the ongoing silences of the colonial war is the ghost thesis running throughout this well-researched and clearly written book, almost desperately dodging the overt emphasis on formal literary elements. Enjoyable at all times, scholarly in its execution, *The Colonial Wars in Contemporary Portuguese Fiction* might have benefitted from a bit more postcolonial gumption.

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Stephen Rockel. *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century East Africa*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2007. 345 pp

Even though most historians’ accounts of the nineteenth-century history of East Africa would give the expansion of long-distance trade a central place, this is the first book-length study of the people who made this expansion practically possible: the caravan porters. It focuses on the Nyamwezi porters ubiquitous in the written record, and hence on the Tanzanian so-called central route to Bagamoyo in which they predominated, rather than the southern one to Kilwa controlled by Yao porters or the northern one to Mombasa. Within this geographic area, it also considers the “Swahili” porters based on the coast.

This book, which won the 2008 Joel Gregory Prize (awarded by the Canadian Association of African Studies), fills a gap, and it does a lot more. Stephen Rockel conceptualizes the caravan porters’ history as that of a “crew,” comparable to other tightly-wrought groups of labourers on imperial frontiers. His main reference points for comparison are British sailors and New Zealand lumberjacks, situating nineteenth-century East African history firmly within the global expansion of resource and trade frontiers in the imperial age. Moreover, by emphasizing the commercial, voluntary
character of Nyamwezi participation in the long-distance trade, he makes
the case for a pre-colonial version of East African modernity, which the
onset of colonialism destroyed.

To this end, Rockel first has to argue against the widespread percep-
tion that the porters employed in the long-distance trade were predomi-
nantly slaves — an assertion left unchallenged (though not explicitly
endorsed) as recently as 2006 by Jan Georg Deutsch in his *Emancipation
without Abolition in German East Africa* (Oxford: James Currey). The
resulting first chapter of Rockel’s volume is a revealing study of the origins
and perpetuation of this misperception. It was welcome to otherwise quite
disparate observers of East Africa: missionaries keen to emphasize the
need for their presence, politicians justifying imperial intervention,
Manchester cotton merchants hoping for new markets if wage labour was
introduced, and twentieth-century authors critical of imperialism.

Re-reading written sources and supplementing them with oral
accounts, Rockel makes a persuasive case against these stereotypes and for
the acceptance of porters on the central route as a pre-colonial wage labour
force. On the whole, his focus is very much on written, in part published,
sources, and he gives an impressive demonstration of what can be achieved
with them. Nevertheless, it is clear that slaves were also present in the
caravans, and regrettable that Rockel’s sources do not permit a clearer
delineation of the different groups. It is a lot to ask given the amount of
sources, but more extensive use of oral sources might have helped mitigate
some of the limitations of the written ones.

The bulk of the book is taken up with a detailed account of the devel-
opment of Nyamwezi porterage as a form of wage labour since the early
nineteenth century, the customs and practices of caravan labour at work
and at rest, labour relations and protest, and the role of pre-existing
cultural practices in shaping “customs in common” on the central route.
By focusing on the practical issues that are constantly in the background
of nineteenth-century travelers’ accounts, Rockel produces a vivid,
detailed narrative, well illustrated with quotations and images. The amazing
physical resilience and social competence of the porters is evident not
just from their performance at work, but even more from their ability to
provide for themselves and pursue leisure activities after a day’s journey.
Detailed observation of techniques, for instance for fording flooded plains,
or of the mayhem following a large caravan’s arrival at an overused well,
show the hair-rising difficulties porters contended with.

There are many high points in this study. One is the account of the
development of the crossroads town of Mpwapwa, including the environ-
mental effects of the caravan trade. Others are Rockel’s careful attention
to the roles of women in long-distance caravans, safeguarding male porters’
nutrition as well as conducting their own business, and his discussion of *utani* joking relationships. This device for managing social tensions, extended over time from families to clans to inter-ethnic and professional relationships, is relevant for anyone who has encountered *utani* in the everyday lives of present-day Tanzanians. Here, the porters appear as pioneers of a social practice that has become a pervasive Tanzanian characteristic in the present.

Rockel’s classical labour history approach has some drawbacks. His focus on porters produces an absorbing portrait of their lives and ways, but at times this narrative appears unduly isolated from the societies the porters interacted with, and the changes their activities help produce in them. In part, this point concerns geography: for example, we learn the names of the most dangerous stretches on the trade routes, but just why they were so particularly challenging does not become quite clear. At the societal level, Rockel is careful to point out the importance of Nyamwezi traders, the *vbandevba*, in the caravan trade, and that of slaves and women in replacing porters in Nyamwezi agriculture. Just how these new social roles developed and reshaped the overall dynamics of Nyamwezi society, though, remains beyond the pale. One suspects that Rockel has material for a follow-up volume on these questions in hand, and it is very much to be hoped that it will be written.

The study indicates other areas for further research as well. One is the process Rockel describes as the “deskilling” of porters, and, more broadly, the demise of the profession under colonialism. He suggests that the violence wrought by some caravans on the areas they passed through in the 1890s was already a symptom of dysfunction. For the present reader, more familiar with the history of the southern trade routes to Kilwa, the question arises whether raiding by caravans was not to some extent part of their *modus operandi* even before they began to decline. Another issue crying out for further research is changes in markets, commercial practices, and production in the societies porters originated from or interacted with. The list could be extended.

Regrettably, the publishers managed to “lose” the ends of a number of photograph captions and even of chapters during production. A list of the errata is available from the review editor of the present journal.

**Felicitas Becker**

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Corruption is endemic in Nigeria, rearing its ugly head in almost every facet of societal life, and it has been identified as one of the banes of the country's democratic and developmental drives. In *A Culture of Corruption*, Daniel Jordan Smith offers an exceptionally brilliant anthropological analysis of the forms and character of corruption in contemporary Nigeria and how this undermines the fulfillment of the great potentials of the country, with illustrations predominantly from the Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria. More importantly, Smith cleverly situates the location of ordinary Nigerians in the process, who, tragically, are not only actors, but also “simultaneously the main victims and the loudest critics” (xii). The paradox in ordinary people’s encounter with corruption on daily basis, according to Smith, was due to “circumstances that are partly beyond their control” (6). Anyone familiar with the so-called Nigerian factor will appreciate that this is an honest and thorough assessment that can hardly be faulted.

Apart from the introduction, which situates the study in theoretical and comparative perspectives, and the conclusion that recapitulates the main submissions of the study, the book is organized into seven chapters, each dealing with an important subject of interest. The first treats the issue of e-mail scams proposing “urgent business relationships” (28) with diverse illustrations. While this is a longstanding and dominant trend in the country, its contemporary manifestations are unprecedented. Smith recognizes these and acknowledges, though with a limited emphasis, the fact that the 419 scam enterprise actually takes two to tango. This is the import of the very first long narrative of the Texas oil executive caught in the web of Nigerian 419. Why else should any foreigner yield to the alluring influences of a larger payoff from a meagre advance fee? After all, the scam made it clear that it was an ill-gotten wealth that could only be released to a foreigner.

The second chapter demonstrates Smith’s mastery of the Nigerian corruption landscape, with an authoritative account of the various forms and manifestation of corruption. His typologies include official settlement of the oga (boss), police extortion of motorists, prebendalism and clientilism, and the decline and decay of the Nigerian academy to a ridiculous level where admission and grades are being traded. In Chapter 3, Smith explores, in a dispassionate manner, the increasing appeals of NGOs in Nigeria's development and how associated contradictions have served to energize corruption in the country. He hits the nail on the head by his
disapproval of double standards characteristic of Western donors in dealing
with expatriates and local NGO workers. The attendant inequalities,
Smith argues, constitute “the backdrop of corruption” (110). Chapter 4
accounts for how the hopes generated by the return of Nigeria to democ-

racy in 1999, sooner than expected, were squandered by a series of self-

inflicted wounds by the political elites. The most notable example here
was the widely publicized “civilian coup,” the Uba-Ngige saga in Anambra
state, which demonstrates how politics reinforces corruption among the
elites — godfathers and godsons — and the complicity of the state in these

unhealthy systems of exchange.

Chapter 5 focuses on the modes of expression of popular discontent
with corruption by Nigerians. The accusation and name-calling of corrupt
people, specific targeting of their properties for destruction, and general
scandalization, as manifested in the Otokoto and Okija shrine sagas,
reflect some of these tendencies. These are suggestive of “the degree to
which common people themselves share in the very desire that they
condemn and participate in the very transformations they find so trou-

bling” (164). Chapter 6 engages the political instrumentalization of non-

state policing outfits — vigilante groups — making them become
anti-the-people they were supposed to protect, underscoring the role of the
state in the process. Smith illustrates this with insights from the Bakassi
Boys of the South East, with their painful legacies of excessive violation of
human rights and corruption. The last chapter analyses how forces of iden-
tity, particularly ethnicity and religion, have been deeply embroiled in the
war against corruption, possibly as a result of the helplessness of the
people. This inclination, Smith argues, has been counterproductive
because it “tends to deflect attention from larger political structures that
are most directly culpable in producing and reproducing social inequality”
(219).

Without any doubt, Smith’s account of everyday encounters of ordi-
nary Nigerians with corruption is an outstanding work of thorough schol-
arship. The book merits special commendation for its theoretical
sophistication, extensive data base, and illustrations including
photographs, analytical rigour, and clarity of expression. Certainly, Smith
has profited from his first hand experiences, first as a researcher, then as an
NGO worker and more importantly as an in-law in south eastern Nigeria.
The comprehensiveness of the coverage of its subject area is astonishing.
Smith’s dispassionate capabilities, even when and where Western inter-
est, which he represents are at stake, manifest in the balanced analysis of
the book. However, while the logic of his arguments is clear and convinc-
ing all through, critical readers are likely to feel certain unease with an
important issue to which Smith did not pay due attention: the dilemma of
the measurement of popular perception of corruption. How, for example, are we sure that the media representation and humour that Smith relied on so heavily are the true reflection of people’s disposition to corruption? What degree of corruption in Nigeria can we attribute to Western complicity? These and related questions deserve more critical scrutiny. There are also a few typos, for example, “Odekunle” spelled as “Adekunle” (10, 252).

Nevertheless, Smith’s book represents one of the most authoritative and balanced analyses of corruption in Nigeria to have ever been written. The book leaves no hidden place for the complicity of ordinary Nigerians, let alone the political elites and their external collaborators, in the corruption enterprise. Indeed, *A Culture of Corruption* is an invaluable masterpiece that has advanced the understanding of the political economy of corruption in Nigeria and beyond. Policy makers, anti-corruption crusaders, donor agencies, civil society (NGOs), academics, and the generality of the people will certainly find the book very useful in their efforts to understand the attractions and disillusionments, production and reproduction of corruption in Nigeria and beyond. Its multidisciplinary approach will make it useful in both the social sciences and humanities.

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