

settlers significantly shaped the county's political trajectory. Such differences also had a bearing on racial etiquette.

Shutt provides a reconsideration of Southern Rhodesia's history for the 1950s and 1960s using a unique but convincing analytical framework. She questions the use of an exclusive racial code that discriminated against Africans and their use of public spaces such as courtrooms, offices, stores, stairways, elevators, hotels, restaurants, and, by the early 1960s, swimming pools (10). Chapter Four explores the different ways Africans challenged racial etiquette in public spaces as well as the ways that they registered their discontentment with 'the indignity of segregation and the humiliation of racial prejudice' (17). Chapter Five delineates how African nationalists moved beyond the politics of partnership and multi-racial cooperation propagated during the federal period. This shift was marked by an intensification of anti-color bar campaigns and a growing desire for sovereignty. The significance of racial etiquette is epitomized by the outcome of the 1962 election, which ushered the Rhodesia Front into power. *Manners Make a Nation* is surely an interesting read. It breaks new analytical ground by providing new dimensions for nationalist historiography as well as the emerging discourse of intra-settler relations in Southern Rhodesia.

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MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN BOTSWANA

Divination's Grasp: African Encounters with the Almost Said.

By Richard Werbner.

Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015. Pp. xii + 340. \$85.00, hardback (ISBN 978-0-253-01881-6); \$35.00, paperback (ISBN 978-0-253-01889-2).

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Key Words: Botswana, southern Africa, ethnography, religion, ritual.

Divination's Grasp: African Encounters with the Almost Said presents Richard Werbner's professional and personal archive on divination in Botswana, using extended case studies of a small group of rural, older Tswapong men, some of whom have worked with the author and his wife Pnina since the early 1970s. *Divination's Grasp* covers divination in wisdom and charismatic forms using sociolinguistic and interpretive-symbolic analyses. It is a long form treatment of ethnographic material in the tradition of James Fernandez's *Bwiti*, or, importantly for Werbner's analysis, E. E. Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. The second chapter interestingly resurrects Evans-Pritchard's theoretical approach as one grounded in researchers' empathy for informants' 'idioms of belief' to show how divination in Tswapong and elsewhere is ultimately a moral project.

The text opens by introducing a Tswapong moral philosophy of self, one that centers on a person's dignity, *seriti*, which is a penumbral formation symbolic of the ability to see oneself reflected in the eyes of another. This philosophy emerges in the local social world for

seekers, practitioners, and witnesses of divination, as well as in diviners' verbal art of séance and their perceptual engagement with thrown ('fallen') divinatory objects of dice, hooves, bones, and shells, 'lots' or *ditaolo*. These are very nicely illustrated in several photographic and drawn figures. The expressive, mimetic, and highly ambiguous poetic language used by diviners is, by its semiotic and linguistic properties, self-referential. It uses 'agitated' or repeated verbs, reversals of noun pairs (*chiasmus*), as well as imagery of mythic, animal, plant, human, and non-human beings. Diviners draw on this relatively standardized 'verbal archive' to interpret configurations of fallen lots which, as objects, operate as representative miniatures of persons and elements surrounding clients. Interpreting the lots is an exercise in reading the 'microdramatics' of client's social lives and the relations between lots as mythic agents. Clients face what Werbner calls moral perils of interpersonal wrath and nefarious forces like pollution and witchcraft. Yet diviners' work is to a degree 'anti-political' in tempering actual social accusations and indirectly compelling clients toward taking some degree of personal responsibility in remedying their situation.

The book's first part includes a helpful introductory synopsis of the intellectual project and fieldwork, a reconsideration of Evans-Pritchard's approach, and an overview of divining techniques. Throughout, Werbner also incorporates material from Isaac Schapera's original 1930s fieldnotes with Kgatla diviners. The book's second part focuses on the wisdom diviner Moatlhodi and his séances in the 1970s with his own and others' families local to his village and a few strangers from outside of it. It includes a formal semantic analysis of divinatory poetry. This poetry is made up largely of patriarchal metaphors that manifest in the mythic figures associated with the lots, the diviner's authority over his clients, and the clients' socio-moral networks. Disintegration in clients' networks often turns out to be a source of their afflictions. Cases that stand out as well described and arresting were 'the case of the guilty businessman and his amplifier [sound system]' (189–93) and 'the case of the granddaughter without wrath' (137–49). Chapter Five, 'Family Séances: Rhetoric, Deliberation, and Decisions', was the strongest in this section, and is a good example of the Manchester School's approach of finely describing social dramas and their corresponding rituals of mediation.

Morebodi, a charismatic diviner who uses an eccentric repertoire of techniques, is the focus of Chapters Seven and Eight. Werbner's description of Morebodi's divination in the late 1990s and 2000s here supplements several films produced by Werbner that feature this man and his practices. The combination of visual and textual ethnography used to document encounters between researchers, research assistants, and the diviner offers a useful case of how dialogical methods can produce knowledge about religious subjects in Africa. The concluding chapter considers cases of divination from across sub-Saharan Africa in comparative perspective, putting forth a typology inspired by Charles Sanders Peirce and arguing that divinatory systems trend toward semiotic principles of analogy, sympathy, and textuality.

Contemporary educated and urban Tswana may not find much of their older, rural counterparts' perspectives on *seriti* and its cultural symbolism to be empowering, as Werbner suggests that they might. Still, the philosophy presented in the book arguably informs part of the contemporary public sphere and moral imagination in Botswana. For some citizens, transcendent phenomena glossed as occult are only partially and

unnervingly perceptible. By employing diviners' grasp of esoteric religious knowledge, they might better understand that which upends their social world.

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THE HAMITIC MYTH REVISITED

The Lost White Tribe: Explorers, Scientists, and the Theory that Changed a Continent.

By Michael F. Robinson.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xiii + 306. \$29.95, hardback (ISBN 9780199978489).

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Key Words: Uganda, Central Africa, race, exploration, science.

In 1876, Henry Morton Stanley claimed that he encountered a tribe of 'white Africans' in Central Africa near Gambaragara. Despite voluminous biographical works devoted to Stanley, none remark on this shocking assertion, ostensibly since it appears to be a relic of a more superstitious and less enlightened era. Michael F. Robinson seeks to unravel the truth behind this mysterious claim and, more specifically, the idea, the Hamitic hypothesis, which undergirds it.

To tell this story, Robinson deftly moves between the straightforward history of Stanley's exploration and the twisting tale of the Hamitic hypothesis. The latter began its life as a rationale for Jewish domination over Canaan and it was based on the biblical narrative that Noah cursed his son, Ham, to a life of servitude to his other two brothers. Centuries later, Christians and Muslims applied the story to justify their domination of Africa during the Atlantic slave trade. The hypothesis gained new life in the nineteenth century when polygenists adopted and narrowed it to account for Caucasian origins. Robinson underscores the malleability of the hypothesis as it conformed to accommodate Western belief in white racial superiority. More importantly, he demonstrates the powerful role the theory played in shaping scientific observations as they were being made (161). As the myth of massive, world-scale Aryan invasions was gaining prominence through the field of linguistics, scientists and explorers kept finding 'lost white tribes', such as 'Blond Eskimos' and 'white Africans', who had allegedly been cut off from their Aryan ancestors.

Robinson convincingly argues that the Hamitic hypothesis amassed an extensive following because it offered Westerners a window to explore and define whiteness. His chapters on literature and psychology reveal the reach of the hypothesis and the allure of Stanley's purported sighting. H. Rider Haggard's bestselling fiction featured 'lost white tribes', and Stanley's writings clearly influenced *King Solomon's Mines*. In that work, the plucky British protagonists free the 'light-skinned Kukuanas' from despotic rule in a landscape that clearly resembles Gambaragara. Not only did Haggard provide readers with romantic adventure, but he also advanced a reassuring narrative about the superiority of white racial identity. In a fascinating connection, both Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung were keen fans of