

The hermeneutics in question is defined as a dynamic and adaptive critical practice among Yoruba societies that hinges on the complex relation between implicit social knowledge and political economy. Schematizing this hermeneutics of power through an analysis of the dynamics of Yoruba ritual organization and orisha worship, Apter draws out the cultural continuities between West African and African-American practices. He argues that the association of African gods with Catholic saints among populations in places such as Haiti, Brazil and Cuba developed as a strategy of cooperative empowerment. This revisionary formulation informs the rest of the book, with the subsequent chapters exploring different trajectories and modes of Yoruba cultural transmission throughout the Yoruba-Atlantic.

In Chapter 2, Apter applies Yoruba revisionary strategies to the dynamics of creolization in the New World in order to interrogate the problematic notion of origins that continues to haunt research into the African diaspora. Elaborating on the revisionary logic of deep knowledge and ritual modalities within socio-political structures in Yorubaland, the scholar reveals the West African origins within Haitian Vodou. The third chapter delves deeper into the association between politics and orisha worship by analysing their manifestations and mediations in two northern Ekiti Yoruba kingdoms. Comparing the different historical transformations within the Ishan and Ayede kingdoms from around 1845 to the present, Apter reveals the connectivity between orisha clustering in West Africa and the Americas, casting Yoruba religion as a growing transnational phenomenon.

The final two chapters add further conceptual vectors to Apter's account of the Yoruba-Atlantic. Chapter 4 explores the transposition of West African female gender constructs among American plantation societies, while the final chapter argues that a distinctive semantics of quantification has contributed to Yoruba ethnogenesis as a transatlantic phenomenon. These analyses not only contribute greater detail and clarity to the earlier chapters, but demonstrate the efficacy and urgency of research that foregrounds African origins in the Black Atlantic and explores their multiple instantiations and locations.

A book that is at once recuperative and reflexive, *Oduduwa's Chain* revivifies scholarly approaches to Yoruba culture while offering a fascinating insight into its author's own critical life. Navigating the rich resonances and transformative trajectories that constitute this complex terrain, Apter makes a powerful case for the primacy of Yoruba cultural modalities within the vibrant history and analytical field of the Black Atlantic.

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Gregory Smulewicz-Zucker (ed.), *The Political Thought of African Independence: an anthology of sources*. Cambridge MA: Hackett Publishing Company (hb US\$89 – 978 1 62466 541 7; pb US\$34 – 978 1 62466 540 0). 2017, v + 280 pp.

There has been a marked shift in African historical knowledge and teaching since the turn of the millennium. Compare the absolute reliance of students on the revered knowledge of professors and authors up to the 1980s with the wide range and diversity of ideas and opinions that now populate historical scholarship. While it is easy to blame postmodernism and postcolonial deconstructions for what many see as disruptions to historical scholarship, they reveal the need to

overcome the power of many uninterrogated claims that previously passed for historical knowledge. From the ashes of this uncertain moment must evolve a new historiography capable of producing more accurate historical accounts. Conscious of the power and imperialism of dominant knowledge, such accounts may yield a more complete picture of African historical experience. This is no mean task (as current researchers can attest). It must begin with a fresh look at historical sources. As digitalization makes archives more accessible, so too has the demand risen for teachers and students alike to fully substantiate the historical claims they make. Yet historical sources are varied and often scattered, and it is difficult to determine what source applies or may be discounted. This dilemma mainly explains the increasing number of anthological volumes of primary sources now being published. By redirecting scholars and students to original writings, these ontologies anticipate the methodological innovations capable of producing more accurate historical interpretations.

Gregory Smulewicz-Zucker's anthology brings together many scattered works relating to the subject of emancipation in Africa. It includes the political thoughts, ideologies and reflections expressed by Africa's political elites, nationalist organizations and political parties (p. xv), which the editor states are crucial to understanding the political trajectories of emancipation and independence. The actors whose writings and ideas are included here will pass for a who's who of modern history, nationalism and postcolonial state building in Africa. Collectively, the book is a veritable handbook of political thoughts and statements on the origins and challenges of the modern state system across the continent.

Organized chronologically and thematically in four parts, the introductory part comprises writings that reveal how an evolving African elite, including Samuel Crowther, James Africanus Horton and Edward Blyden, interpreted their social and political conditions to generate ideas about emancipation from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. Marcus Garvey is a surprising addition to this section because, unlike the more locally based intellectuals, his ideas were more transregional and revolutionary. As this part serves as a background to the book's main focus on nationalism and independence, the addition of Marcus Garvey by the editor raises concerns about his conceptualization of the intellectual roots of modern Africa. Garvey's vision of a global *blackism* transcended independence from colonialism, which was the main concern of continental intellectuals.

Part Two comprises various articulations of self-determination by nationalists, and their understandings about the end of colonial rule and the form that new states would take. A few articles stand out. Excerpts from George Padmore's book (p. 47) challenge common assumptions that Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah surrounded himself with communist intellectuals and advisers. This avowed communist in fact advocated Pan-Africanism and cooperation as the preferred strategy of emancipation and development for African states, while cautioning against the duplicity of American imperialism. If the purpose of this section is to capture how African leaders imagined and planned for the postcolonial state, Charles de Gaulle's statement (pp. 55–7) that sought to redirect Guinea away from its vote for total independence towards a proposed Franco-African Community stands out as a sore thumb. Similarly, the inclusion of Hendrik Verwoerd's racist 'Response to Harold Macmillan's "Wind of Change" Speech, 1960' contradicts the book's claim to be a narrative of African emancipation, especially when placed beside the thoughts of Patrice Lumumba (pp. 83–6) and Sekou Touré.

The remaining parts are devoted to expressions of the challenges of nation building and development. Julius Nyerere's '*ujamaa*', Senghor's 'African

Socialist Humanism' (pp. 241–6), Nkrumah's 'Consciencism' and Kanaka Mutesa II's *Mind of Bugandai* were not simply narratives of emancipation; they are more appropriate as celebrations of nationhood and as ideologies of identity and political mobilization behind the new states. Even centrifugal statements by Danquah (pp. 251–4) and Ojukwu's 'Ahiara Declaration' should not be read as reversions of emancipation, but rather as discourses and debates of nation building.

The meanings and themes of African emancipation are as yet unresolved. This ontology promises to re-energize the debates and will be valuable for class discussions and scholarly seminars. Readers will have to determine whether Africa has always been – and remains – in an endless struggle against domination, as this book claims. They will have to resolve what statements and intellectual thoughts ought to fit into an ontology of African political ideas, and which should be excluded. Readers must also resolve the author's criticism of postcolonial theory over whether 'racism ... colonialism and imperialism are embedded in European Intellectual traditions' (p. xiv). Smulewicz-Zucker's claim that African intellectuals 'extracted' emancipation ideas from Europe racializes 'freedom' as though it belongs to Europe and was alien to Africa. As such, the main strength of this collection is the scholarly debates it promises to unleash.

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C. Patrick Burrowes, *Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea: a history of the Liberian people before 1800*. Bomi County: Know Your Self Press (hb US\$50 – 978 0 9983905 1 2; pb US\$25 – 978 0 9983905 0 5). 2016, xxxi + 413 pp.

This ambitious book draws on a wide range of sources, from oral history to anthropology and documentary history, to review current knowledge about the people who lived in what we now know as Liberia from the earliest times up to the nineteenth century. Intended as a corrective to a historiography of Liberia that has focused disproportionately on the written history of Americo-Liberian elites, it aims to create 'a new, more fully embracing understanding' of the country's past and its national identity looking forward.

A second aim is to tell this story from what Burrowes calls an African perspective, which in this case is defined as avoiding periodizations based on European history, and also self-publishing the book based on a Kickstarter campaign to avoid editorial interference by foreign publishers or funders. The majority of donors were Liberians from a range of different backgrounds. The author writes that 'no people can expect to get a full history of their ancestors' trials and triumphs until they are prepared to write, pay for and ultimately read that history'. The preface roots the origins of this book in the author's upbringing in Liberia, as well as his long career as one of Liberia's leading historians. This book should thus be read as a personal journey as much as a work of scholarship.

The organization of the book is roughly chronological. The first six chapters rely primarily on archaeological and environmental evidence, along with oral histories, to outline the broad trends of West African history from before the desertification of the Sahara. It reviews the histories of the people who came to occupy Liberia, including the Gola, the Dei and the Kru, and their migrations from other regions between the fifth and eleventh centuries. Depending on the evidence