

By watching John put his model into practice, the reader can reengage the previous chapters with a stronger sense of how it can best be utilized (of course, it helps to have seen Mehta's work).

John's overall organization is so clean and concise that the contents page could easily substitute for a course outline in a syllabus (one that would include time to screen or assign a screening of the Elements Trilogy). His effort would serve as a sufficient text for any film-related program that offers or wishes to offer a course related to world cinema, or any theology program that offers or wishes to offer a course related to film. The only stumbling block one might encounter when adopting this text would be the application of VPO, which requires extensive fieldwork that might not be practical at the undergraduate level. Therefore, its most likely home is in a graduate program.

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Born from Lament: The Theology and Politics of Hope in Africa. By Emmanuel Katongole. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017. 314 pages. \$30.00 (paper).
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Faced with endless regional wars, economic inequalities, political instabilities, ethnic hatreds, religious unrests, and ecological crises, Africa has been termed a hopeless continent. When one looks at most of the Western media, all one sees is a miserable continent. Many Africans continue to be held captive still by a colonial-generated sense of inferiority. Even with these bleak narratives on Africa, Katongole does something unique in *Born from Lament: The Theology and Politics of Hope in Africa*: he seeks to tell the untold stories of life in Africa while leading his readers through the narrow springs of life and hope. By doing this, he grounds the journey in the fertile land of God's grace.

This book seeks to center Africa's story in Christian hope. Unlike many theological works that speak of Christian hope using only propositional claims or, at best, a spiritualizing of a hopeful vision, either utopic or eschatological in nature, this book deliberately presents Christian hope as existential and incarnational in the memories, bodies, stories, and environments of African peoples and cultures. To achieve this, the author employs the "portraiture" methodology. The choice of this methodology is aimed at telling the stories of Africans in ways that the theological motif is reclaimed while also reverencing the sacred space and bodies from which these stories

originate. As Katongole notes, the duty of a portraitist “is not simply listening to stories, she is listening for a story” (34). This bias of a portraitist approach makes his book an active theological tool for birthing a new Africa that lets go of all the tears of sorrow and chains of deprivation that have held the continent’s people back in the global community. Also, Katongole seeks to challenge theologians to become active agents of life in ways that do not just carry out descriptive analyses of communities; rather, they are to become active in their agency for holistic expressions of life.

This book stands out as one of the best interdisciplinary works that seeks to explain the content of political theology as shaped by an ongoing dialogue with sociology, cultural studies, political science, and economics. It sheds light on Africa’s problems as well as presenting concrete solutions. The author intentionally locates and defines lament as a biblical and theological motif for addressing the issues dealing with theodicy in order to make sense of the seemingly endless sufferings faced by Africans today. The radical nature of Katongole’s preference for the biblical and theological motif of lament as the pathway for bringing forth a new vision for Africa becomes clear when one reads, “The cry of lament is not simply a prayer but a social ethic—a passionate, pastoral, and practical engagement on behalf of the crucified of history. Consequently, the notion of a vulnerable/hidden/crucified God needs to play a far more central role in African theological exploration than it has played until now” (120).

Katongole retrieves one of the rich heritages of Africa that makes concrete the enduring power of Africa’s hope, the hermeneutics of naming. Naming a person in Africa goes beyond the existential demands of social encounters. It has the power to give birth to new and holistic visions that will lead to the flourishing of all lives. Names point to individual and collective destiny. They are anamnestic, prophetic, and eschatological. The author has done an excellent job of showing how these three layers of African understanding of name can help bring forth a new Africa. The stories of Africa’s martyrs point to Christian hope. They call “our attention to everyday forms of living and peaceableness that constitute the shalom of God’s love” (252).

Finally, this book is easy to follow. It employs the use of vibrant stories, a key pedagogical tool for theology. It will be a relevant text for students, academics, pastoral workers, and those interested in understanding how theology that is both global and contextual can be done.

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