of Bok Rae-Kim's chapter is perhaps too ambitious and a closer focus on a narrower context could have yielded a more nuanced account. In Chapter 9, Pauline Pui-ting Poon examines the situation of the *mui tsai* in early twentieth-century Hong Kong, revealing the tension between the Chinese government's unwillingness to displease those who benefited from the institution and humanitarian organizations fighting to protect the rights of the girl victims of this system. Chapter 10 by Pierre Boulle is a richly researched enquiry on non-white child slaves and servants in eighteenth-century France. It reveals the scarcely studied strategies of resistance of African children and youths enslaved in Europe. Kenneth Morgan's Chapter 11 gives an insight into the sad fate of children in one of the most brutal models of slavery, that of British Caribbean society. The chapter lacks originality, however, and advances some unwarranted generalizations on the customs of 'traditional' African society and the habits of 'African mothers'. Chapter 12 by Calvin Schermerhorn focuses on antebellum slave orphans in nineteenth-century Chesapeake. By demonstrating the capacity of these children to substitute the family ties they lost with new ties that they managed to forge, the chapter provides evidence of slave children's ability to overcome exploitation through their own agency and ingenuity.

This excellent collection of studies on children in slavery leaves one looking forward to the second volume, which one hopes will provide a broader discussion of what the study of enslaved children can tell us about slavery (and childhood) more generally.

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KRISTEN E. CHENEY, *Pillars of the Nation: child citizens and Ugandan national development*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press (pb $21 – 0226102483). 2007, 320 pp.

This book confronts the rhetoric and realities of childhood in contemporary Uganda. A rich ethnographic portrait, it should be of welcomed not only by those interested in Uganda, but also by readers engaging with its broader themes of education, identity, culture, democratization and globalization. Cheney ties together these areas by examining 'childhood' as a discourse from multiple perspectives: its universalization in international human rights regimes, its deployment in the service of Ugandan post-colonial nation building, and its use as a local imaginary of future prosperity, cultural cohesion and generational continuity. What lies beneath these discourses is the day-to-day lives of children who struggle to meet the dreams of their elders while forced to make their own way in a rapidly changing social and economic landscape.

Drawing on the life histories of children in many parts of Uganda, Cheney reminds us that, despite these challenges, young people assert their own agency in creative ways. To make this point, the book is organized into two parts totalling seven chapters. An introductory section places Cheney's central characters, a diverse group of young Ugandans from different regions and classes, in historical context by reviewing Ugandan colonial and post-colonial

https://doi.org/10.3366/afr.2010.0318 Published online by Cambridge University Press

history. She provides a vertical perspective on contemporary childhood in Uganda through an examination of international human rights discourses, the mechanics of national cultural and economic development, and local conceptions of childhood. Cheney demonstrates how international rights discourses, like the right to an education, are translated by youth into social practice which often confounds international definitions of vulnerable children.

The chapters in Part 1 together paint a detailed portrait of children's understandings of themselves as Ugandan citizens. Continuing her examination of life histories, Cheney shows us some of the formative events in young people's lives that shape their perceptions of what citizenship in contemporary Uganda means. Educational attainment plays a central role, and this is attributed in large part to the Ugandan government's commitment to universal primary education, part of the UN Millennium Development Goals. While the importance of educational attainment is generally agreed upon in Uganda, actually accessing and then completing an education remains difficult, much as in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Cheney subsequently shows how a limited education system plays a key role in class formation as well as how children come to develop 'schooled identities', whereby the wearing of school uniforms and carrying textbooks as identifiers of an educated individual have equal importance to learning itself. Children are upheld by the newly revised constitution as 'pillars of the nation'. Yet despite national rhetoric to the contrary, children are all but invisible when it comes to political participation – upheld as the future, yet denied any formal opportunity to have a voice in shaping it.

Part 2 presents what Cheney calls 'sites' of childhood discourses, including the dichotomy of 'the city' and 'the village', national music, dance, and drama festivals, and northern Uganda's large population of child soldiers. In each site, she applies the principles of ideal childhood discourses developed in Part 1 and describes in rich detail how children skilfully negotiate them. For instance, she details a shift in urban children's conceptions of village life from backwardness, a common theme in many African ethnographies of rural–urban migration, to an 'integral imaginary space of both children's identity origination and their fulfilment of development trajectories' (p. 146). Later, she compares normative childhood categories with the experience of child soldiers and argues that these universalized categories espoused by international humanitarian aid organizations and focused on this population 'serve to further alienate repatriated child soldiers from citizenship and civic participation in their communities' (p. 144). Indeed, the invisibility of children themselves, and the strategies they employ to navigate the contradictory messages of adults, are evident in the lives of the children Cheney portrays.

Cheney skilfully navigates the very delicate and challenging waters of doing research with children, relying heavily on life histories and school- and family-based ethnography. She rightfully challenges the notion that children are in transition to, or in formation of, cultural competence, a Western notion that has severely limited research on childhood to those from adult perspectives. Combined with her vertical orientation, *Pillars of the Nation* ultimately provides us with young people's understanding of local childhoods in a global milieu. Readers are ultimately pushed to think in new ways about African culture – not in terms of the juxtaposition of local versus global or the eclipsing of tradition by modernity, and certainly not in terms of 'multiple', 'hybrid' or 'post-' modernities. Rather, Cheney conceives of Ugandan childhood as the product of a historical convergence of African and international systems of codification

https://doi.org/10.3366/afr.2010.0318 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that together create new semantic structures constituting a single world, albeit one that is experienced differently in different places, even within Uganda itself.

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BAYO HOLSEY, *Routes of Remembrance: refashioning the slave trade in Ghana*. Chicago IL and London: Chicago University Press (pb $21.00, £11.00 – 0 226 34976 4). 2008, 272 pp.

Routes of Remembrance focuses on how memories of the slave trade are constructed in the coastal Ghanaian towns of Cape Coast and Elmina. These towns, once busy ports of commerce through which the trans-Atlantic slave trade operated, have now developed into popular tourist destinations for those interested in the history of the trade. The towns' castles, dating from the early European presence, and their dungeons, the final point of departure for slaves sold into the Middle Passage, attract many African-American visitors who see an opportunity to search for, and celebrate, their African roots. The public discussion of the slave trade amongst African-Americans contrasts sharply with the silence of the local residents of these towns. Slavery is seldom discussed in these coastal communities because the subject is perceived to hold a potential for de-legitimizing the positions of descendants of assimilated slaves and threatening family and community cohesion. The development of diaspora tourism has placed the local residents in an uncomfortable position: they are now forced to confront their ancestors' agency in enslaving and removing people from Africa, and it is the descendants of those removed who have placed them in this bind. This has drawn them, reluctantly, into a dialogue on the subject, which for them was normally not approached directly. *Routes of Remembrance* seeks to uncover how the slave trade is now understood by these local residents in the light of both this dialogue and the active promotion of this form of tourism by the Ghanaian government.

The last decade has seen much scholarly literature concerned with how information about slavery and the slave trade has been transmitted over the generations in various West African societies. For example, Rosenthal, Shaw and Baum detail how associated anxieties are articulated amongst the Ewe (Togo), Temne (Sierra Leone) and Diola (Senegal) respectively. These and many other studies focus mainly on African agency, but Holsey prefers to look at the subject from 'within the geographies provided by theories of postcolonialism as well as those provided by theories of the black Atlantic' (p. 14). This allows for an examination of how both colonialism and the slave trade may shape contemporary African subjectivities, producing a refreshingly new angle. Holsey then moves away from interrogating the workings of collective, public or ritual memories, through arguing that information on the slave trade has been 'sequestered' spatially and temporally, producing a multiplicity of often conflicting discourses. For the local residents, knowledge about the slave trade is gained from a number of institutions, as well as from social experiences. These include: a government-sponsored Pan-African event (PANAFEST) that celebrates the homecoming of Africans in the diaspora; visits to the castle museums; conversations with African-American tourists; Ghanaian history text books, and family histories. The book is broadly divided into two parts: the first – chapters 1 to 5 – looks at certain arenas which local

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