

have been, and where they are heading' (158). How pleasure fits into such dynamics is sometimes less clear. Although Dave does not seek to articulate a 'total theory of pleasure' (3), a more overt framing of this slippery concept would bring further clarity to her claims about how it matters in Guinean politics and public life. Her skillful analysis of the Mande musical practice of naming forwards a specific understanding of pleasure (*Maninka sewa*) as 'pride in self-recognition and the fact of knowing' oneself, but this is not the exclusive conceptualization used within the book (13). The importance — and limits — of the musical pleasures cultivated by Touré's government in the 1960s would also benefit from additional discussion of the challenging circumstances in which they took root. The corporeal and epistemic violence of French colonialism receive no attention, nor do the everyday economic difficulties that Guineans faced throughout first few decades of self-rule. Finally, the assertion that Touré's revolution was an 'ever-present counterpart' to subsequent regimes, would gain further traction were the book to give more attention to that of Lasana Conté, which lasted from 1984 to 2008 (49).

All told, *The Revolution's Echoes* is a skillfully written and richly documented analysis of how Conakry musicians and musical audiences position themselves in relation to structures of authoritarianism. In addition to advancing our appreciation for the relationship between popular music and state power in Guinea and beyond, it excels at carefully conveying the many complexities that inform artists' decision-making and modes of action. 'How', Bob White asks, 'can we write about the relationship between politics and popular culture without reproducing a narrative that ends up blaming the victim?'<sup>2</sup> Dave's book offers a superb answer that deserves wide reading and close consideration.

doi:10.1017/S0021853721000633

## An Archive of Colonial Propaganda

### *Visualizing Empire: Africa, Europe, and the Politics of Representation*

Edited by Rebecca Peabody, Steven Nelson, and Dominic Thomas. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021. Pp. vii + 200. \$55.00, paperback (ISBN: 978-1-60606-668-3).

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**Keywords:** Africa; arts; colonialism; museums and memorials; popular culture; Western images of Africa

Understanding racial perceptions in contemporary societies requires understanding how colonial empires shaped the image of both colonized and other 'others' during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and earlier. This edited volume defines how France incorporated Africa into its visual culture through photographs, maps, magazines, posters, and even toys, mainly from the 1870s to the 1970s, and primarily using materials collected by the Association Connaissance de l'Histoire de l'Afrique Contemporaine (ACHAC) and acquired by the Getty Research Institute in 1997. But the volume is much more than a scholarly presentation of artifacts. At its best, the volume's authors

<sup>2</sup>B. White, *Rumba Rules: The Politics of Dance Music in Mobutu's Zaire* (Durham, NC, 2008), 228.

demonstrate how art objects played a part in the formulation of knowledge, in this case about Africa, which was a form of power that normalized the colonial process.

The volume is edited by Rebeca Peabody, Steven Nelson, and Dominic Thomas, and its contents can be understood in two parts. While the first three chapters deal with the aforementioned collection, the remainder addresses French propaganda through visual and historical analysis. Frances Terpak, Pascal Blanchard, and Patricia A. Morton provide a solid basis to understand how these artifacts are both a consequence of the French propaganda and a counterpoint to this initiative, or a 'counter-archive'. While most of visual materials are part of the production of colonial power, this book focuses on artifacts from popular culture, which provides a complementary perspective. Furthermore, this rich approach from materiality focusses on Africa in a clear trans-imperial perspective, which is valuable for general historians. Despite such wide geographical context, conclusions seem reliable, considering how the colonial practice of employing visual tools was widespread.

Within this framework, the book demonstrates how French propaganda and racial thought were deployed to the public in different ways, depending on the age of the recipient. French children were invited to contribute to the *mission civilisatrice* via textbooks, games, and toys, as the three chapters by Charles Forsdick, Peter J. Bloom, and Dominic Thomas, respectively, make evident. For example, Forsdick's chapter considers a class of cut-out toys that were used to build a visual narrative of colonial superiority by providing examples of vernacular architecture, local costumes, or the use of animals by indigenous populations, to be compared with the modernity of the European colonizer, which was symbolized by trucks. Young Europeans were also addressed as military recruits, as Lauren Taylor considers through an examination of poster designs.

Older generations required more age-appropriate materials, in this case those published in illustrated magazines, as David Murphy and Steven Nelson show. Cartoons, they assert, were not merely leisure pursuits but also moralizing tools. As the chapter by Bloom demonstrates, readers followed the adventures of the Mbumbulu family, where it is shown how the protagonist learns 'to appear metropolitan'. Even 'objective' representations such as maps were designed to support French *grandeur*, with their capability of controlling threatening spaces. The desert was no more a mysterious and exotic space, but a promising area into which young generations of Europeans might expand. As a consequence of this newly normalized knowledge, the French developed the idea of the Sahara Desert, as demonstrated by Michelle H. Craig.

This volume focuses on French imperial culture, but it is clear that its chapters could be instructive on similar cases. Other colonial powers in the continent developed their own parallel visual discourses. Subsequent research might include the Spanish experience, such as the Exposición Iberoamericana held in Seville in 1929. Being a reduced colonial power at the time of this exposition, it is interesting how games, maps, or films were used here and during the following decades. For example, as late as 1954, Spain's colonial history was manifest in a deck of cards celebrating its colonization of the Americas.

Second, it is likely that most of the resources used by French propaganda in the nineteenth century were based on visual strategies from the early modern period. For example, the general design of cartography related to a tradition starting in the sixteenth century. Furthermore, the interest in native costumes, architecture, or agricultural production evinced in many of the objects the authors consider here was very similar to the visual construction of the colonies during the early modern period. A good example of this is the African map, including pairs of local peoples, published several times during the first half of the seventeenth century by Willem Janszoon Blaeu under the title *Africae nova descriptio*. Connecting these previous attempts to build the image of the colonies with the ones identified in the volume will enable a broader range of scholars to identify how these images endured into the twenty-first century through the perception of otherness. Finally, it will be important to underline how these artifacts, very much aligned to popular culture, were present or adapted in other forms for other social groups, such as the materials

displayed at world exhibitions. At these events, colonial powers usually exhibited artifacts from African, American, and Asian cultures under their political control alongside, albeit to a different degree, the latest technical advances.

All this shows how *Visualizing Empire* is not merely a volume on a well-selected collection of artifacts. It is not even another book on colonial exhibitions from a fresh postcolonial perspective. The volume is a ground-breaking contribution connecting popular culture with political strategies, focusing on their impacts on different educational periods while providing a solid analytical framework that can be replicated.

doi:10.1017/S0021853721000682

## Child Trafficking after Abolition

### *The Persistence of Slavery: An Economic History of Child Trafficking in Nigeria*

By Robin Phylisia Chapdelaine. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020. Pp. 224. \$26.95, paperback (ISBN: 9781625345240).

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**Keywords:** West Africa; Nigeria; economic; slavery; slavery abolition; slave trade; colonial administration

Chapdelaine argues in this well-researched book that child trafficking, child slavery, and other forms of coerced labor persisted in Nigeria beyond the nineteenth-century antislavery movement; that there was neither a ‘pause . . . in slaving practices from two hundred years ago to today nor an absolute reconfiguration of [these] practices’. While this directly echoes E. A. Afigbo, Chapdelaine’s analysis links up to contemporary human trafficking and illegal dealing in children in southeastern Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> Less persuasively, the author also argues that the Women’s War of 1929, a series of demonstrations and riots by Igbo and Ibibio women against colonial policies, demonstrated women’s protest against increased loss of their children to enslavement. A consideration of studies of the Women’s War by Chimah Korieh and David Pratten, and a close reading of the 2012 study coauthored by Marc Matera, Misty L. Bastian, and Susan Kingsley Kent, might have dissuaded Chapdelaine from fielding this second argument — especially Pratten’s demonstration of how the colonially orchestrated depreciation of the local manila currency negatively impacted women in the precise provinces where the war occurred.<sup>2</sup>

That critique aside, Chapdelaine’s first three chapters successfully build off of extant literature on the privations that were linked to economic and political reorganizations following the era of legitimate commerce and the establishment of colonial rule. These chapters highlight how the colonial demand for the payment of taxes, court fees, and other government fees in newly-introduced pound sterling plunged women into penury. The author argues that these difficulties generated the

<sup>1</sup>E. A. Afigbo, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade in Southeastern Nigeria* (Rochester, NY, 2006), xii.

<sup>2</sup>C. Korieh, *The Land Has Changed: History, Society and Gender in Colonial Eastern Nigeria* (Calgary, 2010); D. Pratten, *The Man-Leopard Murders: History and Society in Colonial Nigeria* (Edinburgh, 2007); M. Matera, M. Bastian, and S. Kingsley Kent, *The Women’s War of 1929: Gender and Violence in Colonial Nigeria* (New York, 2012).