

The editors have divided the papers into four sections. Part I deals with 'Postcolonial state formation and parallel infrastructures'. It includes a chapter by Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatssheni on global technologies of domination, offering a very useful and incisive overview of the subaltern question, and another by Bettina von Lieres on citizen action 'from below', in which the author compares Angola and South Africa as case studies. Part II is called 'Embodied modes of resistance and the postcolonial state' and includes a chapter on how market and informal traders are re-making Nairobi, written by Ilda Lindell and Markus Ihalainen. The next chapter, by Basile Ndjio, is on 'hustlers' or 419-style entrepreneurs in Cameroon (the number '419' coming from the section of the Nigerian penal code dealing with fraud), followed by Susan Thomson's on everyday forms of resistance to the narrative of national unity in present-day Rwanda.

Part III, on 'Popular culture as discursive forms of resistance', includes a chapter on political commentary in South Africa, in which Innocentia J. Mhlambi pays attention to strategies of resistance and co-optation by formal and informal political commentators. Another, by Grace Musila, deals with racialized humour and the ways in which humour can, even temporarily, make taboo topics visible. The last chapter in this section is by Jendele Hungbo on the politics of Fela Kuti's music and his political activism. The final section is called 'Publics as everyday sites of resistance', and includes a chapter by Dorothea Schulz on local radio stations in Mali and their creation of affective communities, and a chapter on the heterogeneous audience reactions to political cartoons in South Africa by Daniel Hammett.

Through the essays in this loosely curated collection, there emerges a strong sense of new directions in African studies. The collection seems to favour certain regions (west and south), possibly as a result of the editors' local networks. The index includes the sort of entries one would expect from a book with such a title: 'accountability', 'colonialism', 'rebellion/insurgency'. But we also find as many indexed references to 'humour', 'laughter' and 'music', and the editors let us know that their collaborative work had a soundtrack – John Coltrane and Miles Davis. It is these references to the lived reality of the scholars writing this book, and the ordinariness of collaboration and friendship, that make reading this book an unusually enjoyable experience. The book's development over the period that saw the brief flowering of the Arab Spring gives it a particular date stamp. This does not mean that its conclusions are questionable; the qualified success of the acts of resistance associated with the Arab Spring is part of what this collection would want to theorize.

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FIROZE MANJI and BILL FLETCHER JR, editors, *Claim No Easy Victories: the legacy of Amilcar Cabral*. Dakar: CODESRIA and DARAJA Press (pb \$25 – 978 2 86978 555 7). 2013, 490 pp.

The assassination of Amilcar Cabral in Conakry in January 1973 was a tragedy on multiple levels, and its repercussions are still being felt today. For fifteen years Cabral had spearheaded the remarkable liberation movement in his native Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, a movement that, by the time of his death, saw the Portuguese dictatorship on the verge of defeat. During this time he had also

become a leading theorist and intellectual on decolonization and the movement to re-Africanize recently liberated nations. His loss has proved devastating not only to Guinea-Bissau, but also to a world in desperate need of theoretical tools to counter neoliberal hegemonies. Thus the book under review is a timely reassessment of Cabral as a revolutionary, as a thinker, and as a pan-African activist: today, Cabral's ideas still offer an important opening for challenging discourses of power both through their insistence on intellectual and cultural autonomy, and through the way in which they emphasize the importance of the relationship of unique historical experiences to knowledge, knowledge production and land use.

*Claim No Easy Victories* seeks to pull together a variety of important strands in Cabral's life and work to showcase his importance for contemporary concerns. Thirty-eight essays by historians, social scientists, activists and community organizers in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and the USA, including works by seminal thinkers such as Samir Amin and recognized experts on Guinea-Bissau such as Miguel de Barros, Brandon Lundy and Stephanie Urdang, are testament to the ambitions and scope of the book.

The book begins with chapters focusing on Cabral's life, work and thought. Several of these stand out in reconsidering how innovative Cabral's movement really was. In particular, Carlos Schwarz's essay on Cabral as an agronomist is an important piece of work. Schwarz illustrates that Cabral's recognition of the farmers' perspective was vital to his understanding of both the economic and ecological limits of the colonial cash crop economy. Another excellent essay is that by Helmi Sharawy, a prominent Egyptian pan-Africanist, who gives a fine reading of the theoretical importance of Cabral's work in building a cultural framework for anti-colonial resistance and postcolonial directions. Indeed, following Sharawy, many of the essays in the book place a strong emphasis on Cabral's work on culture. As many of the authors note, Cabral explicitly grounded the modus of resistance to colonialism and imperialism in cultural frameworks. By denying the colonial power's ability to deride African cultures, Cabral asserted the fact that resistance needed to be grounded in cultural and historical understanding. Far from being 'frivolous' or 'unproductive', work on culture and its historical roots is in fact vital in the formulation of resilient alternatives to the status quo.

Related to Cabral's interest in culture was his educational programme. An important chapter by Brandon Lundy reflects on Cabral's discussions with the seminal pedagogist Paulo Freire, who was asked in the immediate postcolonial period by the first president of Guinea-Bissau, Luís Cabral, to develop programmes that matched the country's cultural and social needs. A further fine chapter by Miguel de Barros and Redy Lima shows how, although forgotten by the political establishment of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, Cabral lives on in the lyrics of a new generation of rap musicians, who do the real work of historical memorialization in the countries today. Two further chapters assess Cabral's commitment to gender equality and his contribution to the transformation of gendered structures of authority in Bissau-Guinean society before his assassination; both these areas of activism were closely linked to his educational ambitions.

While most of the book focuses on the importance of Cabral within his homeland, its concluding part assesses his contribution to the broader movement of liberation of which Guinea-Bissau's struggle was a part. Several contributions are devoted to the relationship between Cabral and pan-African and African American struggles. Chapters by members of the board of the Walter Rodney Foundation, and by other leading figures in the struggles of the Black American left, draw lessons from the work of Cabral and suggest ways in which it might contribute to new forms of resistance to neoliberal hegemonies. These chapters place an emphasis on the individuality of Cabral's thought, on his use of new

perspectives grounded in cultural autonomy and African histories and practices to develop alliances, and on the similarities between his trajectory and that of another great pan-Africanist, Walter Rodney.

In an edited book of this type, with so many contributions, there are inevitably some chapters that are stronger than others, and also a degree of overlap between some entries. All the same, when taken as a whole, *Claim No Easy Victories* does a thorough job in representing Cabral's enduring importance both nationally and internationally, and in arguing for the importance of continuing to engage with the ideas and movements that he championed with such great flair and prescience. The abiding impression is that Cabral's greatest legacy is one of an enormous sense of loss. His assassination robbed both his country and the wider world of a vital figure in theorizing and challenging colonialism and its legacy. Curiously, one of the few gaps in the book is the real absence of assessments of the condition of Guinea-Bissau today, the nation that he was unable to lead once independence had been gained; had such assessments been included, the devastating nature of the loss of Cabral would have been even more apparent.

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GAURAV DESAI, *Commerce with the Universe: Africa, India, and the Afrasian imagination*. New York NY: Columbia University Press (hb \$50 – 978 0 231 16454 2). 2013, xiv + 291 pp.

As we head into the Asian century, the study of the Indian Ocean becomes ever more conspicuous. Whether from the perspective of area studies, oceanic or world history, the Indian Ocean arena and its deep histories of non-Western exchange are attracting increasing attention. However, the existing scholarship on the region has largely been dominated by histories of the early modern period on the one hand, and by security studies and international relations on the other. By contrast, literary and cultural study has been less prominent and has tended to be anglophone in orientation.

Gaurav Desai's prize-winning book makes a decisive intervention into the field and provides us with new genealogies of Asian cultural production in East Africa while drawing out their implications for an understanding of the Indian Ocean region more generally. Studies of Asian fiction in East Africa generally examine the recent past, examining the late colonial or early independence era. In some cases, M. G. Vassanji's novel *The Gunny Sack* (1989) provides a starting point; in Desai's text, *The Gunny Sack* appears in the final chapter. Leading up to this moment is a variegated literary history that sketches a range of genres: plays, ram-lilas, poetry recitals, radio, newspapers and literary journals in Urdu, Hindi, Swahili, Gujarati, Punjabi, Gurumukhi and English. Against this backdrop, Desai focuses on a corpus of little known autobiographies from 1905 to the early 2000s.

In tracing this literary domain, Desai stresses richness, complexity and ambiguity, complicating the 'flattened stereotype' (p. 170) of the Asian immigrant as exploitative *dukawallah* or philistine *banian*. Several of the autobiographies he discusses are by merchants and show the extraordinary diversity within this supposedly monolithic class. The book also focuses on Asian political figures