

**Brett Shadle.** *The Souls of White Folk: White Settlers in Kenya, 1900s–1920s.* Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2015. xii + 180 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. No price reported. Cloth. ISBN 978-0-7190-9534-4.

*Souls of White Folk* takes a fresh look at Kenya's settler community in its formative years before the Great Depression. While Shadle acknowledges the familiar externalities of racially privileged political and economic access that have shaped earlier histories of white settlement in Africa, his main focus is on the interior architecture of the settler community. Influenced by the rich literature on ethnicity, rather than on political economy, he breaks new ground: whites, it turns out, were as determined as their African neighbors to build meaningful and durable identities in a new world. Their identity, like that of others, was at once defensive, discursive, and disciplined. It created a community of argument pursued in district association meetings and Legislative Council debates, and, importantly, through letters and editorials in the local press—a rich but relatively untapped source that Shadle has exploited to the full.

Settlers notoriously believed in the power of the whip to enforce obedience: they also believed in the power of words to justify their position. They were anxious, seeing themselves as a beleaguered minority, faced not only with a vigorous African majority on which they knew themselves to be dependant and which was already established within the pale of white settlement, but also with a bureaucratic and unsympathetic colonial state, committed to a liberal “pro-native” imperialism that settlers thought dangerous and unrealistic and supported by the indifference of the distant Colonial Office. They were also threatened from within by wayward members of the community whose behavior undermined their self-image of hardworking and responsible paternalism. If settlers were to take the lead in holding Kenya for Empire and civilization, they would have to demonstrate their moral, not merely racial, fitness to rule.

How they did this through the articulation of a set of values and governing norms of thought and behavior is at the heart of Shadle's analysis of the “soul” of the community. His chapters cover some familiar ground—race and paternalism, “black peril,” corporal punishment, the dilemmas of gender and class—but his analysis brings out the interior logic—and the inconsistencies—of positions adopted and opinions expressed. Kenya's settlers, like all embattled communities, struggled with the inherent contradiction between the need to speak and act collectively and the fiercely defended right to manage one's own affairs. Settlers constructed images to live by and policed their boundaries assiduously, but, in Shadle's reading, they were a far more varied and divided community than the prevailing stereotypes suggest. Neither imperial heroes nor racist villains, they were simply men and women struggling to find a way to live decently—however defined—under circumstances not entirely of their own making.

Central to the settler project was the notion of prestige—not so much as an inherent quality, but one that was easily undermined by “bad behavior” and needed to be actively maintained. The transgression of moral and

behavioral norms, therefore, had to be punished. Transgressors had to be reprovved, disciplined, or even “defined out” of the community—though that raised awkward questions about the nature of “whiteness” and the distinctions of class and gender. Above all, prestige was the stuff and ground of argument, and its defense required demonstration. Identity is always performative, and Shadle shows how settlers developed codes of dress and address, rituals of sociality and mastery, to enact both belonging and difference and to project authority. As Shadle notes, however, performance necessarily implied an audience: settlers performed *to* Africans *for* whites. Officials did much the same and the stage could be contested.

Kenya settlers could not claim a providential history as part of their identity. What they did have, however, was English Common Law, which, they argued, guaranteed the “rights of all free-born Englishmen,” wherever they might be, for rights were portable. They used this claim to ground their identity, to denounce the tyranny of the colonial state, and sometimes—such was the compelling logic of rights—to defend Africans against officialdom, for rights implied obligations and the acceptance of obligation was a hallmark of prestige. As Shadle shows, official and “unofficial” views of law and order and the provision of justice, based on different interpretations of the role of law under colonial conditions, often clashed.

*Souls of White Folk* is not intended as a history of settlement in Kenya: it leaves out much of the formal political and economic infrastructure that supported the community and it ends, rather abruptly, in the late 1920s, before the shock of economic depression and war and before the final establishment of the White Highlands as a racially defined enclave. It does, however, dig deep, and it addresses two vital questions: who did settlers think they were? and why did they think and act as they did? Both these questions, especially when situated within the wider frame of ethnicity, have important comparative dimensions that a close reading of *Souls* reveals. Ironically, perhaps, for a book that deals with a community that emphasized difference, it encourages readers to explore similarities. Kenya settlers did not claim to be “white Africans,” but they did live in Kenya, and they necessarily interacted with, were influenced by, and in odd and unequal ways shared common concerns with Africans whom they otherwise excluded.

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doi:10.1017/asr.2016.99

**Andrew Hussey. *The French Intifada: The Long War Between France and Its Arabs*.** New York: Faber and Faber, 2014. xxiii + 441 pp. Introduction. Notes. Acknowledgments. Illustration Credits. Index. \$35.00. Paper. ISBN: 978-0865479210.

The “crisis of the *banlieues*”—the social and economic instability of (some) housing projects on the outskirts of large French cities—has preoccupied