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INTRODUCTION: PERFORMING CITIZENSHIP AND ENACTING EXCLUSION ON AFRICA'S INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL*

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Abstract

The Indian Ocean is frequently depicted as a sphere of seamless connectivity, characterized by fluid and wide-ranging exchanges between traders, sea-farers, clerics, intellectuals, and authors. We seek to nuance this depiction by highlighting the importance of specific, place-bound social concerns that tempered these cosmopolitan performances of citizenship with more exclusionary dynamics. Our goal is to emphasize the importance of context, contingency, and circumstance in shaping and breaking new forms and practices of citizenship and its twin – exclusionary politics – on Africa's Indian Ocean littoral.

Key Words

Historiography, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, slavery, Islam, trade, political culture.

This is the second special feature on Africa and the Indian Ocean by a major Africanist journal in three years, following *Africa*'s special edition of 2011.[1] Evidently, Africa has arrived in the Indian Ocean, despite the relative lack of interest displayed by some of the pioneers of Indian Ocean history. In fact, Africa-centric contributions to Indian Ocean history have been growing for years, especially in the historical work of Edward Alpers and Gwyn Campbell on the Mozambique Channel, Madagascar, and the Mascarenes, and in Kai Kresse and Edward Simpson's historically informed anthropology of Mombasa and Gujarat.[2] This work is adding to a burgeoning field of historical and anthropological studies of the Indian Ocean that includes several further regional, thematic, and theoretical foci, from early modernists' South Asia-centred work on commercial exchange to accounts

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1 *Africa: Journal of the International Africa Institute*, 81:1 (2011).

2 These introductory considerations are not a full survey of Indian Ocean studies. For a recent overview, see I. Hofmeyr, P. Kaarsholm, and B. F. Frederickson, 'Introduction: print cultures, nationalisms and publics of the Indian Ocean', in Hofmeyr, Kaarsholm and Frederickson (eds.), *Africa: Journal of the International Africa Institute*, 81:1 (2011), 1–22. H. P. Ray and E. A. Alpers (eds.), *Cross Currents and Community Networks: The History of the Indian Ocean World* (Oxford, 2007); E. A. Alpers, *East Africa and the Indian Ocean* (Princeton, NJ, 2009); G. Campbell (ed.), *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London, 2004); G. Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London, 2005).

Fig. 1. Africa and the Indian Ocean.

of the rise of European influence to studies of the movement of political ideas between East, South, and Southeast Asian cities in the twentieth century.

For the time being, then, invoking an Indian Ocean perspective is easy enough to justify. The maritime perspective implies an interest in connectedness, exchange (both commercial and cultural), and translocality that has characterized much historical scholarship over the last couple of decades.[3] But, as the studies mentioned so far make clear, this is an

3 The move away from spatially bounded or national histories has occurred gradually since the 1990s, influenced by concurrent debates on globalisation in the present. There is no single programmatic

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enormously diverse field. Moreover, even where similar notions are used, such as, in the words of Kresse and Simpson, the 'cosmopolitan figure . . . around whom much Indian Ocean scholarship has been discreetly arranged', the ways they are used and the valences attached to them are quite diverse.[4] The reader will wonder, then, where the present collection stands in relation to all that has gone before in Indian Ocean studies, and where the themes of citizenship and exclusion come in.

In order to explain what this collection aims to contribute, it is helpful to recall some of the political undercurrents of the rise of Indian Ocean history, and to assess how they speak to kindred concerns in less explicitly maritime subfields of African history. In works like Kirti N. Chaudhuri's *Asia before Europe*, the Indian Ocean focus helps to 'provincialize' Europe: to assert the vitality of a large-scale sphere of exchange independent of the technological and administrative props of European colonialism.[5] That this could be done with reference to a quintessentially European historical approach, Fernand Braudel's study of the Mediterranean, perhaps only made it more satisfying.[6]

African historians have long worked to write Africans back into African history from which colonial accounts had marginalized them, and responded to Chaudhuri's and others' relative inattention to Africa by exploring the presence of Africans in the Western Indian Ocean. They have demonstrated the long-standing presence of Arabs and Indians in East Africa, and of East Africans in port cities from the Persian Gulf to Indonesia's Bandar Abbas. They have shown that African shores were well integrated into the flows of goods that animated exchange across the Indian Ocean. At the same time, their work on slaves, comprising a strong African contingent, has highlighted a distinctive feature of the African presence in the Indian Ocean.

The present collection seeks to further pursue the paths broken by Alpers and Campbell, as well as chart new ones. It is driven by discomfort with a part of Chaudhuri's heritage that, it seems to us, remains relatively unquestioned in much Western Indian Ocean history. He defined the Indian Ocean with reference to four distinct 'civilizations' (Islam, Sanskritic India, Southeast Asia, and China), which were crucial in enabling interaction beyond any one site. The absence of the mostly orally transmitted cultures of Africa's littoral from this list suggests a fairly traditional understanding of civilization that privileges written over oral expression. What Indian Ocean historiography appears to have taken from him is a readiness to assume the existence of a malleable but ultimately ocean-wide 'meta-culture' that enabled exchange between culturally diverse settings, the maintenance of cultural ties over long distances, and the coexistence of different cultures juxtaposed in port cities.[7] This theory accounts well for what travellers report again and again from around

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statement, but see F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA, 1997).

4 K. Kresse and E. Simpson, 'Between Africa and India: thinking comparatively across the Western Indian Ocean', *ZMO Working Papers*, 5 (2011), 12.

5 K. N. Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1991).

6 F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* (London, 1972).

7 Sugata Bose's *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), which uses the term 'universalist aspiration' (p. 26) is evidence of the persistence of this notion.

Indian Ocean shores in the early modern period but also the precolonial and colonial eras covered here: the layered networks of different seafaring diasporas of traders, scholars, and seamen, each with their own dress styles, religious ties, culinary habits, and so on.[8]

But there are also significant problems with the reliance on a transoceanic culture as a neutral, conductive medium, or of cultures travelling, as if all of one piece, between the ocean's shores. The underlying assumption of a stable culture, functioning as an independent variable across long distances of time and space, has the potential to obscure instability, contestation, exclusion (frequently violent), change, and recurrence, all within the context-bound significance of apparently stable practices.

DIVERSIFYING THE INDIAN OCEAN META-CULTURE

The articles in this feature provide evidence of such instability. Indeed, our four main aims could all be labelled as variations upon the theme of underscoring both the diversity of Africa's Indian Ocean littoral, and its oft-noted ability to hold cosmopolitan practices in tension with exclusionary dynamics. First, in different ways, all the articles that follow problematize the notion of an inclusive Indian Ocean meta-culture. Second, by directing enquiry towards the place-bound variations in apparent commonalities, the authors represented here explore processes of collective and individual claim-making, which can be summarized under the term 'languages of citizenship'. Our aim here is to emphasize forms of citizenship that are not contained in legal or formal categories, but which rather appeal to linguistic or performative idioms. Put differently, we are working with a definition of citizenship very loosely construed, as entitlements claimed in a particular place (often while invoking allegiances further afield). We aim to enquire into the ramifications of the oceanic turn for understanding these acts of citizenship. Third, with their relatively recent temporal focus (with the illuminating exception of Patrick Harries's contribution), these articles raise questions about existing periodizations of Indian Ocean history, especially regarding the long-term effects of European colonisation. Lastly, we hope to add to the lively studies of travelling texts and ideas in the Western Indian Ocean, emphasising how texts – both spoken and written – could act as conduits for marginalization, as much as for the formation of readerships all 'on the same page'.

Some of the problems with the assumption of Indian Ocean cosmopolitan culture become apparent by taking the 'yokel's perspective'; by looking at maritime civilisation from an up-country, dry-land vantage point. In the case of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century East and Southeast Africa, the same expanding connectivity that reinforced cosmopolitan openness and urban refinement on the coast was conducive to warfare, disorder, and displacement away from the coast, as Harries graphically demonstrates in his account of Portuguese and French sea-faring traders' capture and transport of Makua, Yao, Makonde, and Maravi people from deep within the interior provinces

8 U. Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland* (Leiden, 2003); E. Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley, CA, 2006).

of Mozambique.[9] In keeping with ideologies of slavery, the coast-dwellers who participated in maritime networks tended to denigrate the interior and its people as born slaves and barbarians. In other words, it was only some cultural differences that were appreciated and not others; the apparent openness of coastal society experienced by those who arrived by sea coexisted with a brutally exclusionary face turned inland.

An attempt to explain this could draw on a contrast sometimes made between (open, cosmopolitan) maritime and (closed, local) terrestrian culture. In fact, the notion that the physical space of the ocean, with its countless shipping lanes, helps create the ease of (cultural as well as commercial) exchange characteristic of the Indian Ocean often seems implied in Indian Ocean history. But actually, networks of commercial and cultural exchange, connecting cities with diverse, partly diasporic, populations, and making specialized contributions to the networks, have existed also on dry land. Some phases of Central Asian history or the Ottoman empire provide clear examples and here, too, tension and rupture are as much part of the history of these networks as flow and exchange.[10] And as Harries's article most pointedly highlights, the ocean could itself – just as much as the interior – be a sphere of highly constrained exchanges, characterized by the most brutal forms of marginalization and exclusion undergone by African slaves during their traumatic 'Middle Passage' from the East African littoral to the Cape. The watershed, then, between the sphere of inclusion and that of exclusion is not simply a function of distance from the ocean; it reflects specific social interactions and processes. We are, then, thrown back on the insight that the interior was so despised at least partly *because* it was the realm of slaves and slavery; because it supplied the lowest strata of coastal societies and interacted with it in ways defined by unequal power relations and exploitation as much as by commercial or cultural exchange.

LANGUAGES OF CITIZENSHIP

If the present collection of articles is an attempt to keep Indian Ocean networks' capacity for exclusion in tension with scholars' tendency to emphasize inclusion, then it also seeks to consider the ramifications of this move for understanding citizenship in modern Africa. Indeed, the present collection is derived from a workshop we organized in Cambridge, United Kingdom in 2012, on 'Languages of Citizenship in Africa and the Indian Ocean'. Since the 1980s, scholarship on citizenship has emphasized how Africans strategically asserted their entitlements to particular places by cultivating – frequently with the assistance of colonial governments – detailed myths of origin, emphasizing above all belonging to a patria identified with a certain territory, often linked to a correspondingly specific language and reified notion of culture.[11] But inspired by a more recent turn away from

9 E. A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa: Changing Patterns of International Trade to the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA, 1975); J. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, 1979), 6–87; M. Wright, *Strategies of Slaves and Women: Life-Stories from East/Central Africa* (London, 1993).

10 S. F. Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Cambridge, 2010); P. B. Golden, *Central Asia in World History* (Oxford, 2011).

11 L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London, 1989). For an overview of the literature on 'created' vs. 'primordial' ethnicity, see T. T. Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism and the limits of invention in British colonial Africa', *The Journal of African History*, **44**:1 (2003), 3–27.

the self-legitimating narratives of early nationalist governments, attention has now turned to alternative claims that stressed delocalized belonging; individuals who invoked transnational or transoceanic allegiances often positioned themselves as rivals to the nationalists who sought to build up fatherlands.[12]

While inspired by this recent turn to the multiple sources of citizenship that Africans have historically drawn upon – both the autochthonous and the exogenous – the title of our original workshop was also an implicit nod to one of the participants represented in the present collection, Jonathon Glassman. We hoped that Glassman's term 'struggles for citizenship', with which he describes the activities of those on the receiving end of the exclusionary practices of East Africa's Indian Ocean ports, could help bring into focus the interdependence of connectivity and rupture in the types of citizenship under observation here: the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, the making and contestation of the statuses of cosmopolitan citizen and excluded yokel. Indeed, Glassman's own contribution to this special feature highlights the exclusionary implications, in the Zanzibari context, of an apparently universalist rhetoric of citizenship. Glassman argues that narrow and expansive forms of citizenship uneasily coexisted in the imagination of Zanzibari nationalists, telling a story of official Arabs who struggled to claim both cosmopolitan citizenship and assert political indigeneity at the expense of other groups on the island.

Overall, the articles collected here approach this interplay between place-specific and de-territorialized citizenship in varied ways. However, their main commonality is that – like Glassman's tiny Arab elite in colonial Zanzibar – they examine groups (and, in James Brennan's case, an individual) in minority positions, and especially the processes by which they attempted to claim entitlements within specific territories. For example, Preben Kaarsholm focuses on the efforts of former Mozambican slaves in Durban, known as 'Zanzibaris', to access land during apartheid, while Brennan studies the literary career of a Muslim East African colonial intellectual in Tanzania, underscoring his peripheral status by showing how out-of-step he was with more ethnically-focused racial nationalism in Tanzania. Moreover, these were people who, despite being propelled by their insecure status to make claims to local belonging, in different ways nonetheless remained marked by origins elsewhere. In this sense, the communities and individuals under discussion here fit typical Indian Ocean-centred narratives of ethnic enclaves.

But at the same time, the networks they invoked were often highly tenuous. In part, as in Kaarsholm's Zanzibaris, who positioned themselves within a transregional Muslim fellowship extending from Durban to Mozambique Island, these networks were highly improvised, occasionally existing more in rhetoric than in reality. Moreover, the groups examined here could even choose to downplay their quite factual transoceanic identities. As Harries shows, the prize slaves of the Cape in time invested in local identities for strategic reasons, thereby obscuring their commonalities with the neighbouring creole

12 S. R. Dorman, D. P. Hammett, and P. Nugent (eds.), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa* (Leiden, 2007); D. R. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, c. 1935–1972* (Cambridge, 2012).

Malay community, while in the post-apartheid era, the Durban Zanzibaris discussed by Kaarsholm leaned upon the rhetoric of the 'African Renaissance' to burnish their standing as indigenous Africans rather than exotic Zanzibaris. These translocal allegiances, then, appear even largely imaginary, and not nearly as far-flung as, say, Engseng Ho's Hadhrami diaspora.[13] They mattered less as providers of resources and opportunity, in the way of merchant networks, than as fonts of claims to identity, made with very concrete, place-specific aims.

These identities were also elaborated upon in ways conditioned by quite bounded, territorial, not particularly maritime concerns and constraints, and geared more towards parochial uses than a seamless, transregional connectivity. Moreover, the limited reach and patched-up character of the oceanic and terrestrial networks claimed by Glassman's political elites in Zanzibar or Kaarsholm's Durban Zanzibaris could be taken to vindicate a view of Africa's participation in the Indian Ocean world as shaped by constraints particular to the African continent. Certainly, other shores of the ocean had less destructive produce than ivory and slaves, and a less pronounced contrast in ways of life and livelihoods than that prevailing between, say, the African port of Kilwa and the places of origin of the slaves it exported. But neither was Africa the only place that exported slaves, or the only region where contrasts between coast and interior were marked.[14] The articles are not an attempt to establish notions of African citizenship as exceptional within the Indian Ocean.

In one particular way at least these articles make their African locations look very much like the wider Indian Ocean. This is the way in which origins abroad could be parlayed into claims very similar to those of nativists. The best way to be 'of a place' was often to be 'not only of that place'. In this regard, Kaarsholm's Zanzibaris would have much to agree on with Enseng Ho's Hadhramis, the different realities of their networks notwithstanding. Yet this line of reasoning can be derived in very different ways. Precedents can be found in African stories of (up-country, land-lubber) immigrants founding cities and dynasties, or in narratives of Middle Eastern or South Asian (elsewhere, Portuguese) settlement on the African coast.[15] But colonial governments, too, and as Kaarsholm shows, even South Africa's apartheid one, could provide material for those seeking to promote their claims in specific territories with reference to far-away origins. On the other hand, Jeremy Prestholdt's study shows how approaching independence made claims of belonging-by-foreign-origin harder to sustain.

COMPLICATING CHRONOLOGIES OF CITIZENSHIP AND EXCLUSION

This way of belonging by not quite belonging, then, cannot be used to construe a clear contrast between a precolonial period of 'flexible' and a colonial or postcolonial one of

13 Ho, *The Graves of Tarim*.

14 See John Bowen on highland Aceh and its relations to lowland, 'Indian Ocean'. Aceh. J. Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton, NJ, 1993).

15 For claims to local status derived from immigrant ancestry, see C. Velten, *Sitten und Gebräeuche der Suaheli, nebst einem Anhang über Rechtsgewohnheiten der Suaheli* (Goettingen, 1903); and for present-day Mozambique, see M. D. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (Bloomington, IN, 1995).

'fixed' identities. As Harries's contribution shows, notions and practices of innate ethnic difference (for example, Makua as hardy and combative; Yao as submissive and compliant) were being forged in the early nineteenth century. The overlap of these different modes of citizenship – the expansive alongside the exclusionary – over time is the third point we hope to draw out of these articles. As Glassman shows, there is a good deal of continuity in how identities were made, but their valences shifted as political stakes rose with approaching independence.[16] In this regard, the maritime and diasporic identities considered here are caught up in the same tide as the dry land, territorial ones discussed in classic Africanist literature on 'the invention of tribalism'.[17]

The articles collected here therefore help complicate (as well as elucidate) the periodisation of Indian Ocean history. Their accounts of malleable forms of belonging, asserted with reference to competing universalisms, and with the colonial state as an often under-informed interested party, chime with Sugata Bose's insistence that European domination did not extinguish long-standing cultural exchanges in the Indian Ocean. That said, in the present collection, the most crucial period of the ossification of formerly flexible political allegiances occurs not with the transfer of Indian-inspired models of pseudo-traditional rule in the early twentieth century, but in the lead-up to independence, as is evident in Prestholdt's, Glassman's, and Brennan's articles.

A major reason why decolonization smacked more of loss and less of gain on the coast is the strong presence in port societies of the transregionally connected elites so important in Indian Ocean history. For them, postcolonial, national boundaries policed by independent governments were a greater impediment to movement than boundaries between colonial territories had been. Concomitantly, decolonization was accompanied by more anxiety, and less expectation of coming into one's own. But Brennan's study of the exploration of national citizenship by diasporic South Asians shows that there were still compromises to be sought between territorial, national, and networked, maritime allegiances. The bounded and the networked forms of citizenship, then, do not succeed each other in neat chronological phases. Overall, it appears that citizenship – in the looser sense posited above – still remains a key concern amidst the current scholarly focus upon transnationalism.[18]

PERFORMING CITIZENSHIP

Moreover, as Prestholdt's article emphasizes, we are not faced with citizenship as solely a matter of codified rights. Rather, in his phrase, we turn to the embedding of 'legal or bureaucratic questions in the emotive idioms of culture and history'. The divergent forms of claim-making referred to in the following articles were informed by both Islamic (as in Brennan's and Prestholdt's case), and Western 'civilizational' universalisms (as in Glassman's article). Groups and individuals variously deployed these expansive

16 Glassman, *War of Words*.
17 Vail, *Creation of Tribalism*; Spear, 'Limits of invention'.
18 P. Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship and Exclusion in Africa and Europe* (Chicago, 2009).

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resources to imagine idiosyncratic, communal, affective, and personal rather than strictly legal forms of belonging. Moreover, many also owed something to African, place-specific ideas of how people belong, evident in the Durban Zanzibaris' Mozambican network. This entanglement of colonial and emic (not, therefore, necessarily local, as Islamic ideas show) categories of civic entitlement is of particular note in the forms of citizenship the present articles explore. More broadly, though, our point here is to underscore the performative aspect of citizenship: that claims to cosmopolitan and local entitlements were addressed by individuals and communities to specific audiences – colonial and postcolonial states, activist constituencies, and religious communities – while simultaneously shaping the contours of these audiences through narrative techniques and affective, embodied strategies.

In many cases, the medium for these claims-making performances – and the concomitant creation of receptive publics – was texts, both spoken and written. Here, we draw upon Karin Barber's suggestion that human practices of textuality embrace verbal and written forms: 'the universal human work of weaving with words ... orally as well as in writing'.[19] Indeed, there is an increasingly examined nexus of ideas clustered around texts, citizenship, and transregional African history, emphasizing the multiple printing cultures of the Indian and Atlantic Ocean worlds, linking geographically disparate individuals into common readerships.[20] Widely travelling texts, both spoken and written, invited audiences to imagine themselves united not by their common residence of a specific territory, but by membership of looser imaginary constituencies. The power of written texts to solidify claims to far-off belonging is integral to the following case studies. The internationalist vision of M. O. Abbasi, discussed in Brennan's article, was articulated through addressing the readers of his newspapers as global citizens of an expansive and cosmopolitan Muslim world. Glassman shows here and elsewhere that pamphleteering was integral to the myth-making work of Zanzibar's Arab elite, keen to portray themselves as part of an Omani diaspora.[21]

But spoken texts could also be key to performing these complex notions and practices of citizenship.[22] And while oral performance has often been framed in terms of indigeneity rather than cosmopolitanism (many have argued that African spoken traditions are regional phenomena, cementing claims to territorially-defined homelands), Prestholdt's and Kaarsholm's articles demonstrate the capacity of widely-circulating political rhetoric and preaching oratory to invoke overlapping notions of the indigene, combining appeals to the 'soil' with the 'sea'. And finally, even when not specifically textual, exogenous citizenship could still be construed as a performative act, as in the Durban Zanzibaris' use of ornamentation and dance during apartheid to signal their Asiatic, rather than 'Bantu', origins.

19 K. Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics* (Cambridge, 2008), 1.

20 I. Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of the Pilgrim's Progress* (Princeton, 2003); I. Hofmeyr, *Gandhi's Printing Press: Experiments in Slow Reading* (Boston, 2013); P. Larson, *Ocean of Letters: Language and Creolization in an Indian Ocean Diaspora* (Cambridge, 2009).

21 J. Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington, IN, 2011), ch. 5.

22 K. M. Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago, 2002).

With regard to the Indian Ocean in particular, much scholarship has highlighted its multi-layered and cosmopolitan literary character, a realm where African, European, Indian, Muslim, Christian, and Hindu languages, literary philosophies, reading styles, and printing techniques converged. The saliency of these insights for the present collection is clear: Abbasi, the subject of Brennan's article, nimbly held together a preference for Arabic as a universal language while simultaneously appealing to a Western-derived discourse of self-improvement through literacy. But the articles also challenge the assumption that Indian Ocean print culture fostered easy convergences between different textual styles and idioms.

Print and speech could be technologies of power and difference, as much as a site for the convergence of Indian Ocean cosmopolitanisms. Readers, writers, editors, and translators used the written page to foster marginality, as well as to unite constituencies into common readerships. This demarcatory power of texts is displayed in the printing work of Abbasi, aimed at least in part at derailing the Hindu-owned local newspapers of Dar es Salaam that the former despised. It is also evident in Prestholdt's discussion of the politics of exclusion in Kenya, centred upon a highly inflammatory rhetoric of ethnic territoriality.

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In conclusion, then, our aim is not to dismiss the proposition that the Indian Ocean was a cosmopolitan space. We do, however, hope to show that the cosmopolitan ethos was always bound up with more place-bound social concerns. We also aspire to contribute to a conversation that will hopefully arise between students of the Indian and the Atlantic oceans. In the Atlantic world, too, emancipatory opportunities occurred as the product of connections over space, not least between Africans and African Americans.[23] Yet, Atlantic creole identities shared similar ambivalences with Indian Ocean cosmopolitan ones, as Glassman argues in this collection. For both the Indian and the Atlantic oceans, while maritime geography and the transregional civilisations present in it contributed to openness and interconnectivity, they did not make it inevitable. Rather, different constituencies practised, asserted, and deployed different forms of connectivity, from marriage to epistolary networks, as they worked through their particular local contexts. Moreover, these connective, inclusionary moves could easily be turned into their opposite, with the *muungwana* (the cosmopolitan) and the *shenzi* (the yokel) constitutive of each other.

By paying detailed attention to these processes, we can go some way towards bringing out the discontinuities in the apparently seamless exchanges – textual and otherwise – within the enabling meta-culture of the Indian Ocean. This is not to deny the salience of connectivity in the Indian Ocean, but rather to underscore its contingency and complexity, the way it was constantly made and remade. From this perspective, the Indian Ocean social arena appears made up of a series of contexts that posed similar yet different dilemmas to groups strongly defined by their Indian Ocean antecedents yet simultaneously constrained

23 A. Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton, NJ, 2012); R. T. Vinson, *The Americans are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens, OH, 2012).

by local conditions. Likewise, it provoked among them similar yet different strategies and struggles. Concomitantly, the Indian Ocean cosmopolitan emerges as a more place-bound, more combative, less uniquely Indian Ocean and more contingent citizen than sometimes appears. Arguably, that makes these cosmopolitans' achievements not lesser but greater than if they had been less conflicted.

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