chapter. While aid never enabled the poor to escape poverty, Rossi argues that food-for-work programmes in particular enabled poor women to survive periods of scarcity and, for some, to pay the symbolic price of enfranchisement ('ransom') to the descendants of their ancestors' masters. The particular practices of the aid industry in Ader, therefore, partly displaced the vestiges of slavery as a mode of dependency in a way that colonial capitalism (such as it was) never had. This did not fundamentally alter social hierarchies – whether between classes or within households – but it did open up another possibility for creating and maintaining reciprocal (if distant and uneven) relationships.

Rossi approaches this dense yet dynamic weave of relationships through what she terms a 'perspectival' mode of exposition that privileges the viewpoints of diverse actors, ranging from *bori* adepts to labour migrants, colonial administrators, and development agents. This approach offers a holistic view on social and political change, but it also threatens at points to dull the thrust of the argument. Indeed, the innovation in Rossi's work lies in the framing of the question itself. The greatest of its many strengths – did I mention that she uses at least five languages? – lies in the depth of Rossi's research, and particularly in her ethnographically rich analysis of women's work. Any future history of labour, slavery and aid in the Sahel – or indeed in other ecologically marginal settings – would do well to engage with this landmark book.

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Christopher J. Lee, *Unreasonable Histories: nativism, multiracial lives, and the genealogical imagination in British Africa*. Durham NC and London: Duke University Press (hb US$94.95 – 978 0 8223 5713 1; pb US$14.95 – 978 0 8223 5725 4). 2014, xvii + 346 pp.

The history of the three colonial states that, for a short period of time, constituted the Central African Federation – Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia – is a fascinating one, and it often provides us with a particular lens with which to focus on specific issues in the history of colonialism and decolonization in Africa. In this book, Christopher J. Lee takes on just such a provocative viewpoint to trace the history of a group of people that did not fit into the racial and ethnic categories that the colonial state established and which left a permanent mark on postcolonial nations. In both Rhodesias and Nyasaland, Anglo-Africans challenged state and social relations in the colony by their mere existence, but soon also by organizing and campaigning for representation and legal status.

Lee connects intimate personal and family histories with the administrative and legal systems to trace the fault lines in the racial and ethnic divisions introduced into African societies. It was the colonial state that introduced fixed racial and ethnic categories, in legal, administrative and scholarly realms. The continuation of colonial categorizations in academic writing about Africa, Lee argues, glosses over complicated histories that blurred cultural and social distinctions.

To write the history of Anglo-Africans means to question these categories, because, at the intersection of histories of family and state, it shows how fragile and artificial they were. Anglo-Africans, Lee surmises, defied the separation of colonial subjects into 'native' and 'non-native', and continually challenged the state to deal with this obvious negation of one of the central tenets of colonial ideology. Lee traces this challenge over several social, administrative and legal

aspects central to colonial society: education, the judiciary, political activism, employment, and urban segregation.

Lee starts with a description of interracial sexual relations in the colony. He questions colonial archives and their complicity in upholding the established social categories in the colonial state, thereby imprinting them on postcolonial scholarship. Interracial relationships were common but problematized by the administration. A close reading of archival sources illustrates the fundamentally conflictual nature, the power imbalances and agency at the heart of Anglo-African family history. Interestingly, these complex circumstances do not seem to be reflected in the family histories that Lee has produced through selected interviews.

The second part of the book asks how the 'racial' and 'ethnic' state dealt with the problem posed by the existence of a group that defied its categories. As British citizenship shifted from *jus solis* to *jus sanguinis* in reaction to increasing mobility within the Empire, the education of mixed-race children and their rights to housing or jobs constituted problems for the state: 'Multiracial people continued to fall beyond the legal distinctions of native and non-native. They occupied a legal space between customary law and non-native entitlement, yet often remaining beholden to the power of each' (p. 109).

Anglo-Africans reacted to these policies in a way that might seem confusing at first: by adopting racism both as an outspoken element of policy and as inherent in the colonial situation itself. Lee titles this chapter 'Racism as a weapon of the weak', an apt expression of how Anglo-Africans employed the racist foundations of colonialism for their own gain. He also explains the underlying logic of their choice of discourse: 'This reasoning with blood signalled a transformation of the carnal knowledge that had resided in gossip and rumour into a political language intended to achieve non-native entitlement' (p. 168).

The third part of the book is dedicated to Anglo-African agency. Lee's discussion of the struggle to get rid of the designation 'Coloured' in favour of 'Eurafrican' or 'Euro-African', 'Indo-African' and so on is fascinating. Anglo-African intellectuals complained that they were 'non-Africans' only when it was to their detriment, but not when it would be an advantage. The terms Eurafrican, Euro-African and Anglo-African were supposed to provide a 'more precise indication of familial, cultural, and political affiliation' (p. 185).

Lee explores an important desideratum in African history that allows him to focus and critique some central tenets of Africanist scholarship. However, although he mentions some recent revisionist works that challenge nationalist narratives of postcolonial history, he does not provide a more thorough discussion of this literature and the context it provides for his project of studying 'the question of how this colonial multitude reflected and informed the making of African history under imperial conditions' (p. 11). In recent years, historians of Zambia including Jan-Bart Gewald, Giacomo Macola, Miles Larmer and Bizeck Jube Phiri – none of whom is included in Lee's bibliography – have argued for an analysis of Zambian nationalism that considers the political and social complexities of the country, be it the constant struggle between regionalism and nationalism, or the question of the relationship between British liberalism and Zambian nationalism. Also, chapters jump between the three colonies – family histories are based on interviews conducted in Malawi, but the chapter on commissions relies exclusively on reports from Southern Rhodesian lawmakers. Given the complexities and differences between the three territories despite the constitutional roof of the Federation, it is unclear how much these commissions influenced administrative and judicial behaviour in Nyasaland.

Nevertheless, this book remains an important and valuable addition to the ongoing discussion of late colonial ideology and its social, political and academic

consequences, and challenges readers to rethink their own categorization of African historical agents.

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Allison K. Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation: racial etiquette in Southern Rhodesia, 1910–1963*. New York NY: University of Rochester Press (hb US$110 – 978 1 580 46520 5). 2015, 260 pp.

A tidal wave of scholarship produced in the last twenty years or so has refocused attention on the porous nature of colonial boundaries. In particular, Fred Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler's 1997 edited volume *Tensions of Empire: colonial cultures in a bourgeois world* demonstrated the messy entanglements of empire, and, among other things, challenged the previously immutable categories of colonizer/colonized. Yet it is difficult to underestimate the importance placed on, and indeed the energy invested in, maintaining racial 'difference' and 'distance' in the context of European colonialism. Studying manners as a way to understand how people learned to 'behave' in colonial Zimbabwe, Allison K. Shutt convincingly connects studies of everyday interactions as a way to understand 'prestige, honor and governance' (p. 1). Structured by way of five main empirical chapters, which variously focus on insolence, deference, etiquette, rudeness and violence, and draw on legal records, newspapers and advice handbooks, Shutt argues that 'debates over etiquette reflected society-wide conflicts and confusions over race and status' (pp. 1–2). Although largely viewed from the viewpoint of the settler community, *Manners* also makes a serious attempt to understand 'the humiliating experience of racial etiquette' (p. 2) from the perspective of the African population. As well as understanding these issues through the analytical lens of race, Shutt's study emphasizes the complex ways in which 'generational ties, professional status, and gender roles' (p. 5) combined to inform ideas about manners and appropriate behaviour(s).

Read from the official record, Chapter 1, 'Insolence and respect', examines the ways in which government officials strove to classify and define insolent behaviour. In particular, it examines the role of Native Commissioners (NCs) as 'self-appointed experts in African customs' (p. 24) and their subjective interpretation(s) of insolent behaviour. As the twentieth century progressed, NCs consistently argued for greater judicial powers, to respond to what they perceived as the unruly behaviour of African youths. As Shutt powerfully demonstrates, 'etiquette was the foundation of an obedient population, not simply a sign of proper upbringing or quaint exotica' (p. 31), thus the passing of the Native Administration Act in 1927 saw the management of 'proper' racial etiquette becoming part of NCs' 'legal authority' (p. 32). Ranging from grins and laughter to the waving of hands and speaking in a loud voice, for Shutt 'insolence cases provided a map of official attempts to … blunt African resistance' (p. 49) in the context of growing African nationalism.

While, on the one hand, displays of African deference were equated with an obedient population, Shutt reveals the punitive treatment meted out to Africans who were considered to be overreaching in their performance of manners. Chapter 2, 'Dignity and deference', therefore offers two separate case studies of figures who came up against the confining categorizations of 'proper' behaviour.