The Emergency was triggered by the 'massacre plot'; this followed intelligence reports, based on dubious informants, claiming that there was a massive nationalistic conspiracy to murder Europeans from the governor down. The plot was allegedly discussed in the 'bush meeting' of the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) in January, and when the Emergency was launched on 3 March with a massive security operation, the murder plot was the main justification for the violent colonial action. In the second section of the book, from very different perspectives, Philip Murphy (working on the recently released Colonial Office intelligence documents) and Joey Power (who interviewed former nationalists about the 'bush meeting') confirm that there was no 'murder plot', although there certainly was violent rhetoric in the nationalist camp. For her part, Megan Vaughan studies the speeches and trial of Masauko Chipembere, a firebrand NAC figure. Vaughan highlights the difficult legacy left by the colonial laws of sedition, through which legitimate political expression could be criminalized and violently suppressed. McCracken explores colonial violence in the detention camps, and emphasizes the influence of the earlier Kenyan emergency.

Nationalistic connections and influences between Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe are studied in chapters by Zoe Groves (on collaboration in Malawi and Zimbabwe) and Ackson Kanduza (on relations between Zambian and Malawian nationalisms). Colonial regional connections, in turn, are discussed by Tim Stapleton in his chapter on the role of African security forces from Southern Rhodesia.

The final section of the book is an intriguing combination of recollections and scholarship. Rose Chibambo and Vera Chirwa, two remarkable women who were at the heart of the nationalist movement and who were imprisoned during the Emergency, provide important insights and eyewitness accounts of events and the experiences of detainees. The third eyewitness account comes from Terence Ranger, whose recollections, together with references from the journal *Dissent*, further highlight the connections between Malawi and Zimbabwe. The two final chapters approach the memorializing of the Emergency: John Lwanda provides a fascinating study of music, memory and the Martyr's Day (established by Dr Banda and the Malawi Congress party on 3 March 1960), while Bryson Nkhoma explores commemorations of the Emergency from 1960 to 2009. As Lwanda points out, Banda's regime invented, politicized and enforced a ritual of Martyr's Day, in which a narrowly selected group of heroes (notably John Chilembwe from 1915) were put on a pedestal and others (including many early nationalist leaders) were omitted.

This collection will be invaluable for scholars and students of Malawi, South-Central Africa and the British Empire with an interest in nationalism, decolonization, violence and memory. As McCracken notes, many important questions remain, but this volume clearly succeeds in its own aim of revisiting the significance of the Emergency through its sometimes forgotten complexities.

MARKKU HOKKANEN
University of Jyväskylä, Finland
markku.j1.hokkanen@jyu.fi
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GRANT HAMILTON, editor, *Reading Marechera*. Woodbridge: James Currey (pb £19.99 – 978 1 84701 062 9). 2013, 196 pp.

Grant Hamilton's collection of critical essays, *Reading Marechera*, demonstrates that Dambudzo Marechera's maverick work continues to inspire literary scholars

and to invite reassessment, comparison and re-contextualization. This is already the third critical book-length volume on the writer, who at the time of his untimely death in 1987 was regarded by many as an eccentric, a failed writer, and even a madman. Only after his death was Marechera's work reassessed as the product of a mind that was ahead of its time. The ground-breaking essay collection *Emerging Perspectives on Dambudzo Marechera* (1999), co-edited by Flora Veit-Wild and Anthony Chennells, offered readings of Marechera that drew on postcolonial and feminist theory, showing that he occupies an important place in the canon of African and postcolonial literature. Nevertheless, what these readings had to contend with is the fact that Marechera's work refuses to be categorized and contained. It was with this in mind that I co-edited, with Julie Cairnie, *Moving Spirit: the legacy of Dambudzo Marechera in the 21st century* (2012), a multi-media collection of textual, visual and audiovisual works inspired by Marechera, arguing that the singularity of Marechera's engagement with language demands an active, performative response. The present book of scholarly essays builds on this existing work, taking new angles, creating new contexts and sometimes making surprising connections. Rather than understanding Marechera as 'merely' a postcolonial writer, the book situates him as an exilic figure outside accepted modes of signification.

The uniting idea of the book is that Marechera was an outsider – an exile from history, from his country, continent and himself – and that his work can be reassessed in the context of other literary exiles, from Shelley and Wilde to Dostoyevsky, Miéville and Rilke, among others. Situating Marechera within this 'universe of literary thought' (p. 7), the contributors draw on Deleuze, Bakhtin, Barthes, Derrida, Kristeva, Baudrillard, de Certeau, Hardt and Negri for understanding and interpretation. Marechera emerges from these reflections not only as a romantic outsider, radical individualist and intellectual anarchist, but also as a quixotic idealist, existentialist, classical satirist, utopian writer, postcolonial modernist, postmodernist and avant-gardist, and yet as someone who never quite fits into any of these categories.

Tinashe Mushakavanhu reads Marechera alongside Shelley, another Oxford anarchist, arguing that what was perceived as their 'madness' was their ability to diagnose the psychological condition of their societies, as well as their utopian visions. Mark P. Williams compares Marechera with two radical contemporary writers – China Miéville and Darius James – arguing that all of them are part of an internationalist avant-garde, writing across cultures and forming an 'anti-canon'. Anias Mutekwa analyses Marechera's self-proclaimed 'intellectual anarchism' in *Mindblast* through Baudrillard's antirealist theory of simulation, giving a sophisticated reading of Marechera's short plays that have, so far, been neglected by critics. Anna-Leena Toivanen builds on work by Jane Bryce and Huma Ibrahim to read Marechera's grotesque evocations of the body and sexuality through the lens of Bakhtin and Mbembe's thought. Grant Hamilton's essay uses the Derridean trace to focus on the image of the stain in *The House of Hunger*, interpreting it as the 'absence of presence' that Marechera finds in the independent Zimbabwe. Bill Ashcroft focuses on the utopian and 'outlaw' aspects of Marechera's work through Bakhtin's notions of Menippeanism and heteroglossia. David Huddart reads Marechera alongside Fanon, interrogating the autobiographical strategies in *The Black Insider* and in *Black Skin, White Masks* and showing how the autobiographical becomes a form of political resistance. Madhlozi Moyo's analysis of classical allusions in Marechera's prose works foregrounds the writer's dialectic between the universal and the local, while Memory Chirere's essay considers Marechera's only work in his native language, Shona, the play *The Servants' Ball*, in the historical context of post-independence

Zimbabwe and positions Marechera in the debate on the language of African literature.

In the final essay, Eddie Tay announces that 'To speak or write about Marechera is to diminish his work' (p. 175). Tay therefore attempts to read Marechera 'unproductively' – that is, to read his work not for meaning, but to highlight the ways in which his texts cannot be appropriated for ideological ends. Marechera's poetry is elusive, Tay argues, 'because the discourse of poetry demands a self and identity his work cannot offer' (p. 176). His work can be co-opted to do postcolonial work only if one ignores the madness at the heart of it – which, for Tay, would be mis-reading it. This original approach to Marechera may yet inspire new ways of reading him.

The ten essays offer a diverse and enjoyable read. The search for the self seems to be a theme in many chapters, and suggests that Marechera's philosophical position is close to existentialism – the belief that human beings, through their own consciousness, create their own values and meaning in life. This fact could be highlighted more, but, oddly, existentialism does not figure among the philosophical tendencies with which Marechera is associated here. The fact that Marechera's poetry is the subject of only one essay is to be regretted, considering the critical marginalization of this important part of his oeuvre so far. Nevertheless, the book is an inspiring series of astute, informed readings that highlight the philosophical complexity and autogenous nature of Marechera's writing. In addition, the comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography will be a great resource to students and scholars alike.

DOBROTA PUCHEROVA
Institute of World Literature, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava
dobrota.pucherova@savba.sk
doi:10.1017/S0001972014000291

LINDA KREITZER, *Social Work in Africa: exploring culturally relevant education and practice in Ghana*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press (pb CA$34.95 – 978 1 55238 510 4). 2012, 270 pp.

Research that brings into discussion critical issues relating to the meaning and relevance of African knowledge vis-à-vis the so-called hegemony of Western knowledge forms in the curriculum is important to the study of African societies. Kreitzer's book, based on her doctoral dissertation, provides a well-researched background for addressing how the colonial and postcolonial context augmented Western hegemony and knowledge in the social work curriculum in Ghana. The two opening questions that Kreitzer raises in relation to this curriculum – 'How did social work evolve in Africa?' and 'What is African culture?' – signal the focus of her discussion.

Kreitzer's reference to herself as 'a privileged white western woman … challenged by my own racism' adds a cautionary note. But Kreitzer's previous work in Ghana, with the VSO and teaching social work, puts her in a vantage position to explore issues that concern Western knowledge and its practice in local communities. She traces the development of social work education within a generalized higher education framework, in different historical, cultural, political and economic contexts, and with a focus on Ghana. In so doing, Kreitzer enables the reader to contextualize the debate within a wider national (Ghanaian) and international framework. By working through the research methodology of participatory action research (PAR), Kreitzer constructs a