

This passionately argued and carefully researched book has much to recommend it. A meditation on how states (colonial, apartheid, and post-apartheid) use 'culture', it successfully demonstrates that colonial and postcolonial collections of artifacts have entangled histories that scholars have too often ignored. This said, the first two chapters are marred by the author's tendency to assert rather than critically analyze the content of her archives, to cite rather than to apply the insights of cultural theorists, and to fail fully to contextualize her fascinating material. Her portrait of Gubbins verges on hagiography. We are never told what exactly he collected, making it almost impossible to assess the nature of his antiracism. For all his laudable inclusiveness, Gubbins considered black Africans at an earlier stage of evolution, not as equals to white Africans. In these sections, Byala appears to rely too much on Saul Dubow's work on South African racism. These problems disappear in the other three chapters, where the documentation on the intentions of museum personnel is much richer. Despite these caveats, the author has done an excellent job tracing the history of one of the world's great collections of Africana. Counter-intuitively, she reminds us that yesterday's colonial museums contain not only the objects from which new framings of the past can emerge, but also the traces of earlier struggles against racism from which today's fracturing South African society can learn.

Alice L. Conklin  
Ohio State University

## POST-APARTHEID NEOLIBERALISM IN TANZANIA

*Africa After Apartheid: South Africa, Race, and Nation in Tanzania.*

By Richard A. Schroeder.

Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. Pp. xviii+227. \$75, hardback (ISBN 978-0-253-00599-1); \$25, paperback (ISBN 978-0-253-00600-4).

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**Key Words:** South Africa, Tanzania, apartheid, business, development, memory, mining, white settlement.

Dar es Salaam's overloaded infrastructure can be exasperating, but the city is bursting at the seams with entrepreneurial energy. As Richard Schroeder's insightful new book attests, South African capital contributed significantly to the economic rejuvenation that accompanied neoliberal reform since the 1990s. But the South African presence in Tanzania has been fraught with memories of former conflicts ensconced in Tanzanian ambivalence about the unequal social fragmentation produced by an era of deregulated capitalism.

Neoliberal economic policies were but one aspect of a traumatic transition coinciding with the end of the Cold War in Africa that included the explosion of the AIDS epidemic and brutal civil wars in every region of the continent. The end of apartheid in South Africa was an integral part of this transition and its traumas. It is a multifaceted history and Schroeder's study provides a lively glimpse into these larger forces. The end of apartheid brought an end to South Africa's status as a pariah state and a chance to invest pent-up

capital in a continent ripe with opportunity as broken-down state economies held vast resources and market potential. South Africans saw themselves as uniquely capable of taking advantage of this opportunity. This ambitious self-regard led to investment that dwarfed domestic capital in almost every economic sector. Schroeder's study seeks to explain what this investment meant in social terms in an illustrative case.

Tanzania provides an apt context for this study, not only because of its leading role in the anti-apartheid struggle, but also because its openness to racial diversity allows for a nuanced view of how the baggage of apartheid was unpacked in a new setting strikingly free of apartheid's bitter legacy. Because of the long and violent anti-apartheid struggle, for which they made significant sacrifices, Tanzanians monitored the influx of South African 'national capital' with a wary eye. Having grown up hearing songs demonizing the white *makaburu*, the arrival of almost exclusively white cohorts of South Africans tested the patience of many, especially as the privatization of industry left South African firms to 'do the dirty work of neoliberalism for the Tanzanian regime' (p. 60). Schroeder's survey of this 'awkward embrace' focuses primarily on the experiences of individuals whose voices we hear at some length reflecting on the interactions sparked by South African settlement and investment in Tanzania.

These voices are the book's strength, but they mask its weakness. We might accept these voices to be representative of broader processes and they are reasonably contextualized by broader forces and evidence of the on-going reconstruction of white identity and Tanzanian reaction. But the agreeable South Africans reflecting on their new lives are clearly the voices of people 'on stage', and Schroeder's ethnographic insights are more impressionistic than critical. At the other end of the methodological spectrum, the portraits of South African investment controversies documented by Tanzanian journalists seem to demand deeper investigation. Schroeder highlights public and private discussions, but rarely peers under the surface to evaluate whether these transactions were as nefarious as commonly thought or as successful as often portrayed. What was the truth behind the well-publicized 'purchase' of Tanzania's main commercial bank that left Tanzania paying the South African purchaser \$18 million? Is there anything more to say about a skyscraper construction that ballooned from an \$80 million initial estimate to \$358 million, other than the widespread suspicion that something smelled fishy in the state bank that employed the South African contractor (pp. 71–3)? Hard information about corruption or tax evasion whether by South African firms or Tanzanian parastatals is hard to come by, but hints in Schroeder's text leave the reader thirsting for more concrete information. One couple suggests that their South African employer moved into Tanzania with no clear business strategy other than moving capital out of South Africa for fear that the new government might start to confiscate white businesses (p. 128). Such strategies suggest directions for histories of business in Africa that would certainly be more complex than profit-and-loss statements might suggest.

Schroeder casts the voices he documents in tension between a government interest 'forgetting from above' for the sake of foreign investment and popular critique articulated in 'memory from below'. This analysis finds resonance in the text but little explicit exposition. This elision is probably a worthwhile sacrifice for the sake of a compact and readable text suitable for classroom discussions amongst undergraduate and graduate students alike. The book addresses economic, geographic, political, and historical issues and would

make an excellent tool for teaching about contemporary Africa and the social impact of neoliberal reform policies.

PAUL BJERK  
Texas Tech University

## CONJURING AGENCY

*Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History.*

By David M. Gordon.

Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 304. \$32.95, paperback (ISBN 9780821420249).

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**Key Words:** Central Africa, historiography, religion, social sciences.

There is always something mysterious about power in social relations: where it comes from, what it does, who has it, who does not. Max Weber was obliged to reach for an obscure theological term, *charisma*, to describe it. Since the Enlightenment ushered in the modern by telling us that we all are, or should be, 'rational', it has been difficult to know what to do with 'religion', inadequately defined as 'belief in spiritual beings', mysterious forces rationality says should not be there. To the believer, however, spirits are real, they are known. To paraphrase the anthropologist Jean Pouillon, 'It is only the non-believer who believes that the believer believes in spirits.' It follows that we would not be aware of our own beliefs as such. More and more evidence, from brain scans and even from economists, suggest that 'rationality' and 'beliefs' are closely entwined. The idea of exclusively rational man, David Gordon suggests, may be no more than 'the Enlightenment's publicity stunt' (p. 3).

From its nineteenth-century beginnings, historiography has been deeply committed to the idea that history is made by rational, goal-oriented actors. In African studies in particular, to suggest otherwise carried the embarrassing suggestion that Africans were to some extent irrational. Gordon's book is framed by the argument that 'Historians have imposed their own civilizing mission on the spirits that refuse to abide by the constraints of a post-Enlightenment historical imagination. They have separated out the spiritual from the secular, recasting spiritual beliefs as symbolic systems, statements about something else.' (p. 201) Historians of Zambia, he says, have explained away popular beliefs by reducing them to patronage politics, resentment of colonial rule, class struggle, and other supposedly material interests with which they feel comfortable.

Gordon retells the history of Zambia, restoring a sort of rationality to the actors, including missionaries and Christian converts, by taking seriously their belief in the reality of spirits. Missionaries and Africans agreed on the prevalence of evil, but whereas missionaries attributed it to sin and located their spirits in another world, Africans blamed most of it on witchcraft and on spirits firmly established in this world. Even as Christianity took hold, a series of popular movements attempted to rid the country of evil, each generation's struggle with evil 'built on several layers of previous spiritual discourses' (p. 189); the