AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA AND THE PACIFIC

REVIEW AND NEWSLETTER

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The AFSAAP Review and Newsletter now appears twice a year in June and December. Long and short contributions, correspondence and items for the News and Notes section are invited. Contributions on Africa-related research and teaching are particularly welcome. Material received by April 30th and September 30th will appear in the June and December issues respectively. Contributions should be sent to Cherry Gertzel, School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6001

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Letter from the President

As we reach the end of 1994, it's appropriate that we look back on AFSAAP's achievements this year, and look forward to 1995.

Our main activity during 1994 was the La Trobe Conference, which participants agreed was a great success. It was clearly focused and attracted a large number of delegates, including many who had never previously attended an AFSAAP conference - we hope they'll keep coming. The quality of many of the papers was outstandingly high, and African food combined with music and dancing from the Horn made for a most appropriate atmosphere. Warm congratulations go to the organizer, Sile Thomas, with most able assistance from Liz Dineck and David Dorward.

At the AGM at La Trobe a number of important decisions were taken, including one to change the title of this journal, and improve its format. Formerly the AFSAAP Newsletter, it is now the African Studies Review and Newsletter. The cover has been redesigned by Cherry Gertzel and myself, and we hope you like it. If you don't be prepared to say so and suggest changes at the next AGM in Sydney!

We are now turning our attention to 1995, which will be a big year for African studies in Australia. The Humanities Research Centre in Canberra is sponsoring three conferences, of which our annual AFSAAP conference will be the third. It will have the theme 'Africa Now', is being organized by myself and Deryck Schreuder, and will be held on 28-30 September 1995 at New College, University of New South Wales, within easy reach of inner Sydney.

The last Newsletter contained a call for papers, in the AGM minutes; this one contains the last call. Offers of papers, with 300-word abstracts, should be directed to me or Deryck Schreuder before January. It will be all but impossible to accept papers any later, so please don't delay - offer now!

The other two conferences I commend to you next year will be "Africa - Pro-Colonial Achievement", organized by Professor Graham Connah of the University of New England, to be held in Canberra in June 1995, and "Out of Africa - Texts for understanding the African Past", organized by David Dorward, to be held in Canberra in July 1995. Enquiries about either of these should be directed to the Humanities Research Centre in Canberra.

In short, 1995 should provide a feast of African conferences. Naturally we hope that all AFSAAP members will be able to come to ours: I hope for many offers of papers before the end of January, and look forward very much to seeing you at UNSW in September 1995!

Peter Alexander
President

FINAL CALL FOR PAPERS

"AFRICA TODAY"

AFSAAP CONFERENCE 1995

New College, University of New South Wales

28-30 September, 1995

AFSAAP's Annual Conference in 1995 will have the theme 'Africa Today', and is intended to focus broadly on any aspect of contemporary African life. It is being sponsored by the Humanities Research Centre, Canberra, which will provide funding to bring a range of major speakers from Africa, Europe and North America, but it is expected that AFSAAP members will provide the majority of the papers.

This is the FINAL CALL for papers: offers, including a 300-word abstract, should reach the organizers not later than 31 January 1995. Please send offers and abstracts now to

Associate Professor Peter Alexander
Head, School of English
University of New South Wales
SYDNEY NSW 2052

OR

Professor Deryck Schreuder
Vice Chancellor
University of Western Sydney
Post Office Box 1000
ST MARYS NSW 2760
Dear Flora,
do you know
how often
I have to admit to myself I miss you
these days?

Which these days,
is constant in hot arguments
in the classroom or out,
with neophyte
over indulged
under disciplined
much privileged
rather patronising
sadly silly
quite misinformed
non-African youths
the world over,

-we shall not mention the 'r' word just yet-

who insist to me
-to me-o, Flora,-
how Efuru is
'unreal'
'too independent'
'mythical'
not matching up to what
they know about
African women.

My Sister,
it would make you laugh,
or
smile so winningly the way only you knew how
comforting me with: 'don't mind them...'

Ah, Ama, what do they know?
Ah, Flora, what do they know?

What on earth would anyone know in
these places about
the women - and men -
you knew so well,
lived, loved and worked with:
the mothers who bore you
the aunts, the sisters you laughed with
the sisters you respected and
those you raised,
the students you taught
the ones who read you
whose kids you wrote for
whom you published and for whom
you published?

What on earth does anyone know
-young or old-
who never ever met you and now, never will,
no fat chance in this hell we call life?

II

And the youths at home?
Sure, they might be knowing what you know
but
what use is any kind of awareness
imprisoned in chaos or nothingness?

It's the same old different tale:
we have
abandoned them to grow on the world's
garbage: real, surreal, symbolic:
global castoffs hastily assembled
weasely wheat and expired drugs
and
they play with toys whose potential for
good or evil
they have not been schooled to grasp.

My Sister,
Africa's children have been abandoned by us
the so-called living
the dead
the indifferent
the greedy:
who dreaming or awake
don't see, hear or smell
Note from the Editor

This issue of the Newsletter should leave no one in doubt of the continuing links at the community level between Australia and Africa. In December both the Australian National University and Deakin University conferred Honorary doctorates on distinguished Africans for their service in the interests of peace both to their own people and at the international level, ANU on Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Deakin University on Dr Kenneth Kaunda. There is note (p43) on the Chris Hani Memorial Tour, and there have been other visitors as well from South Africa and elsewhere on the continent. COSATU's links with Australia were demonstrated by their participation in the conference of labour leaders from around the Indian Ocean held in Perth in November. At the end of November a group of Western Australians went to South Africa on a Work and Study Brigade which will be the occasion for a mutual exchange of skills, and about which we hope to have a report in the next issue. In ANU I understand there is now a small group of academics under the chairmanship of Professor Donald Denoon exploring ways of assisting South African universities. Other universities are also presently exploring possibilities of building new educational links with a number of African universities.

Thus while CARE has understandably and no doubt correctly dissolved itself at the National level (p49) Australian engagement with African communities and a range of programs concerned with building a renewed Africa will continue.

Ama Ata Aidoo sent her poem These Days to be read at the AFSAAP Conference in memory of Flora Nwapa. Participants all agreed it should be published in the Newsletter. We thank her for the poem.

Peter Alexander (see the next page) has explained the change of name and new cover of the Newsletter which like him I hope will meet with everyone's approval. I should add, and bearing in mind the discussion at the AGM, that the changes do not mean any change in the purpose and editorial policy that has applied in the past. The Newsletter began in 1978 when David Dorward and Tom Spear produced a typed, renumbered leaflet of about six or so pages to provide information about the Hedging African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific.

It has grown since then, as contributors have offered articles on a wide range of topics and areas of interest, and as I have received books for review. Clearly it is now a more substantial publication in all ways, but it remains directed at non-specialists as well as academics and professionals with an interest in and concern for Africa. I am particularly anxious to maintain the balance between "news and notes" and reviews, so please keep your contributions coming in.

Cherry Gertzel
arms, hands and fingers as you wove dainty gestures that hopefully
but barely gave strength to your quietly spoken words?

But it was the neck, Flora, it was.
That neck which made strong men weak and frail men brave.
a piece of contradictory African art
long on a short body and
ringed and ringed and fascinatingly ringed.

Then there were all those elegantly impossible feats.
 Only Flora would attempt to scale Heroes Acre in a tight skirt and
high heels!

but you did it.
My Sister, out of this imperial language that
we have to deal with, and which
so often fails us when we need to speak of ourselves,
our hearts and other spaces close to us,
someone has plucked
‘gracious’
to describe that woman that was you.

How odd to even think of you only
as a being that once was!

Our gracious lady of The Rivers
if it is true
that dead have powers beyond our mortal selves,
then
please, Flora
do not forget
what you so untimely left behind:
your belly-begot and
all Africa’s children whose future
lies under the boots of those
who have never wished our peoples well.

Flora,
for us now to stop yearning is to hope
you would add your intercession with the
Great Chukwu and Those-That-Went-Before
for that necessary but illusive power
to free ourselves and Those-Who-Come-After-Us.

Please, Flora?!
AFRICAN WOMEN'S FICTION AND A POLITICS OF THE EVERYDAY*

Pam Stavropoulos

In different ways, African women writers have contested modes of analysis which, while ostensibly redressing ethnocentrism, nevertheless replicate the biases and paternalism of established methodologies. In this context, Western feminist analysis sometimes found to be as complicit as that of white male critics (for example, in generalizing from Western cultural contexts, in failing to probe the complex intersections of gender, race and class, and in perpetuating stereotypes of African women as victims). How, if at all, can the diverse voices and experiences of African women be apprehended from "outside" without being appropriated, related to "large" socio-economic and political processes without losing their authenticity and specificity?

The question suggests the crucial need to address the lived experience of African women as it is expressed and articulated by African women themselves. It also suggests corresponding need to relate this experience to the different contexts it both influences and is influenced by. With reference to some short fiction by African women, this paper explores the possibilities and limits of a methodological approach which seeks to reclaim the "lost" dimension of lived experience - a 'politics of the everyday'. Since a 'politics of the everyday' is less concerned with formalized institutions of power than with (often covert) individual and group negotiations of them, the realm of fiction comprises rich terrain for exploration of the multiple layers at issue.

My approach is addressed to the challenge of combining different levels of analysis which are often (and artificially) kept discrete. Avtar Brah has suggested that there are two broad 'levels' through which diversity can be conceptualized - the social structural 'given' (comprising 'large' issues and processes over which individuals exert little direct influence) and the 'experiential' dimension of daily life (which is necessarily more personalistic, and variously, even contradictorily, manifested). While irrevocably intertwined and interdependent, these two dimensions cannot be 'read off' one another, and there exists a need for methodological approaches which can address both. I want to argue that consideration of a 'politics of the everyday' in the context of African women's fiction is extremely suggestive in this regard, even as there are also senses in which it is problematic.

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* Edited version of a paper presented at the African Studies Conference, 1994, La Trobe University


A 'politics of the everyday'

Attentiveness to the nuances and dynamics of everyday interactions is promising for several reasons. One of the most potentially enabling features of this approach - and particularly in the context of the charges of Eurocentricity made by African women writers such as Amadumwe1 - is its implicit revisiting of the 'insider/outsider' relationship. Here I would contrast the 'politics of the everyday' approach I am espousing with the current post-colonial emphasis on representation, which, though important in many respects, tends to be more concerned with exploration of 'outsider' than with 'insider' ones perspectives.

In suggesting the extent to which modes of portrayal are intimately linked to structures of dominance, the emphasis on representation is, of course, illuminating. Among other things, it affords valuable insight into what might be termed the 'nonofficial' exercise of power. But in light of the mutuality and (at least) 'two-way' dimensions of power relationships, it is surely insufficient to focus on representation per se, without corresponding consideration of the nexus between representation and resistance. Failure to explore the latter is not only to perpetuate Eurocentric approaches to a range of topics and encounters, but to deny the struggles over representation which mark the post-colonial period (and to which the critiques of African women writers attest). By focusing on the reception and uses of 'representation' - by problematizing consumption, which is viewed as creative and dynamic process rather than passive and static function - a 'politics of the everyday' circumvents, even dissolves, this dilemma.

The benefits of such an approach to a revisiting of 'outsider' perspectives towards African women seem to me to be considerable. In 'outsider' accounts, women are frequently and illegitimately regarded as (passive) 'consumers', and African women (despite diverse and even incontrovertible evidence) especially so. A revised conception of consumption - as active, creative and tactical - recognizes what should never be lost sight of, but which theories of 'representation' (in their focus on the mechanisms of imposition) often fail to recognize. This is that people do not passively accept their situations, and that such situations are themselves transformed through utilization of material at hand, ploys, strategies, and creative improvisation. The restoration of agency - via a focus on subversive capacity - is also in stark contrast to approaches which, in the course of exposing power disparities, are unable to forcut the notion of victimhood.

For these reasons, I want to argue that this 'politics of the everyday' approach is not only interesting, suggestive and potentially useful, but particularly so for cross-cultural projects. In addressing the 'actor' perspectives so often unexplored in traditional (and ethnocentric) methodologies, in exploring the 'space' in which subversion (and 'acceptance') of dominant practices occurs and is negotiated, and in preserving the agency of anonymous 'others' in whose names, even today, Western critics still unthinkingly speak, a 'politics of the everyday' has much to recommend it.
Fiction as forum

To the extent that a 'politics of the everyday' is attuned to a broad spectrum of practices which are marginalized by many methodological approaches, the realm of fiction becomes an especially suggestive one. Casual observations, gestures and spontaneous action are inadequately, if at all, apprehended via many existing methodologies (to which such practices as, for example, dwelling and cooking rarely apply). And while more dynamic, fluid and interactionist approaches are now well established within such disciplines as sociology and anthropology (thus contrasting with, and providing an overdue corrective to, the static functionalist approaches of an earlier period) many are still marred by ethnocentrism, a privileging of 'purposeful' action, and a failure to allow, as De Certeau puts it, for 'the logic of self-conscious thought to be taken seriously. It is interesting that De Certeau - who has influenced my own conception of a 'politics of the everyday' - sees the novel and short story as emblematic of the approach he explicated, and that he suggests narrativity to have 'a certain theoretical relevance...so far as everyday practices are concerned.  

The suggestive, though problematic, potential of fiction as an 'alternative' window on 'reality' was recognized long before it was theorized about. As Susan Rubin Suleiman contends, while it may be 'theoretically hazardous to draw neat parallels between fiction and life, in practice we often do read fiction as an illumination of, and commentary on, real-life predicaments'. Recent work - for example, social constructionist methodological approaches, feminist (and other) deconstructions of 'objectivity', and the 'new' genre of 'fiction' - has also considerably challenged (some might even say dissolved) the boundaries between 'fact' and 'fiction', implying the artificiality and reductionism of attempts to rigidly delineate them. A 'politics of the everyday' is thus far from the only approach to see in fiction a rich source of insight.

In cross-cultural projects, too, the potential of fiction is increasingly recognized (Bredella, 1988). One reason for this is that fiction can stimulate affective and emotional capacities in ways to which theoretical texts rarely appeal. To the extent that intersubjectivity has been called for in cross-cultural work by African women critics the fiction of African women writers thus assume further suggestiveness.

African women writers speak (and challenge)

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5 Ibid, p.70.

The short stories on which I will draw appear in The Heinemann Book of African Women's Writing, edited by Charlotte Bruner (1993). In organization and affordability, this paperback collection is readily accessible to Western readers. A wide range of writers from different parts of the continent are included, thus conveying something of the diversity which the broad category ('African women writers') conceals. Bruner also includes a broad introduction to each section of the book (organized according to geographical region, with different areas within each region clearly stipulated) and short biographical notes on each author.

Since I will refer to three of the stories in this collection, this obviously precludes detailed appraisal of any particular one. To the extent that the 'politics of the everyday' approach I am suggesting is explicitly attentive to diverse elements, 'bricolage' and creative use of materials at hand, brief reference to diverse fictional contexts is arguably more appropriate than the 'leisurely' consideration of particular stories which might otherwise be attempted. Yet as foreseen in my opening comments, I will also be as concerned with the potential limits of a 'politics of the everyday' approach as with its possibilities. The short stories of African women writers are suggestive in both these regards.

The first story to which I want to allude is 'Saltless Ash' by Nigerian writer Zayanb Alkali. Amsa, the young protagonist of this story, was betrothed at the age thirteen to a man 'almost as old as her own father', and, a year later, became second wife to the head of the Turabe clan ('an enviable position to many Turabe women'). By the age of thirty she has borne him eight children. But she has 'her foot squarely placed on the man's neck', as the saying of her people goes. For while Amsa is 'softly spoken and not given to expressing her opinions freely'; nevertheless 'her ways [are] quick and calculating, alert and cunning'. This means that she can frequently achieve her own ends 'through matrimonial diplomacy' and 'wriggle out of tight situations'; So, too, can Yabitu (the wife twenty years her senior) who has also employed ways of achieving her ends and protecting her interests - 'She had kicked aside all conventions in order to acquire economic independence. In different ways, the two women devised methods with which to fight for their rights as people, and none of the methods went down well with the old man.'

In contrasting ways, and often in collusion, both wives are subversive; able to accommodate and challenge the potentially constraining situations in which they coexist. The story revolves around the attempt of their husband to marry a new wife; an attempt which has been foiled by the two women in the past and which is foiled again in this instance. During the course of the story there are several references to the old man's foolishness (he 'stumped out of the room, more like a spilt child than an enraged adult', in response to which Amsa again has 'a good laugh'). Earlier she has laughed uproariously, thinking that 'men are foolish, empty idiots'). At one point her husband challenges her 'Can't a man tell his wife what to do without argument?...who is the master in this house?' While 'Amsa's insides rippled with laughter which she dared not express.'

9 Alkali in Ibid, p.29.
'Sailless Ash' amply and eloquently confirms the capacity of the female protagonists not only to manipulate their situations, but to make great play with constraints. Strikingly apparent in this story is the enjoyment of subversion in the circumventing of authority, not only on the part of the younger wife, but by the elder, less attractive and seemingly more vulnerable wife who is also able to influence events which concern her. The language in which this story is expressed is also significantly evocative of the 'politics of the everyday' approach I have outlined (Ama's ways are 'quick and calculating, alert and cunning'; she is given to 'manipulative strategies'). Interestingly, Akali's biographical notes suggest that her short stories (which often concern family affairs and differing views between family members) frequently depict 'children's rebellious schemes to outwit parental supervision, grandparents' squabbles for domination'. This is similarly redolent of a 'politics of the everyday', in which authority, while at one level (and necessarily) 'accepted', is simultaneously negotiated, played with and subverted.

The second story I want to draw on - 'Mother was a Great Man' - is also by a Nigerian writer, Catherine Obianuju Acholonu. In many ways this story is similarly celebratory of female agency. It also provides an interesting fictional counterpart to Amadiun's (1987) admonishment of Western feminists that sex and gender in (West) Africa necessarily correspond. Like her name, Oyiida is 'the woman that resembled a man'. For her husband, Nekwe - with whom she 'had almost exchanged roles' - was not the manly type: 'Was it not she, Oyiida, who had to stand on her feet and defend her family whenever another family challenged it? How often did she have to defend her husband against his fellow men?'

But Oyiida has become 'very old, and she had suffered a lot, chasing after male issues which always eluded her'. As the first daughter of an Igbo family, she had enjoyed position and status; in contrast to other girls of her age she had grown up 'with the exuberance and freedom that was allowed only to boys'. Thus there is great irony - an irony felt keenly by Oyiida - in the fact that 'she who had been a highly desired daughter' now risked forfeiture of anticipated privileges 'because she had no male issues'. The story relates her only partially successful attempts to acquire a son, for while she finally does gain a male child (via her second wife - Western feminists take note!) the boy is 'a cheat', a liar, a thief and 'a gluton', and is, at the time of the setting of the story, about to be executed for armed robbery. This induces great guilt in Oyiida, and shatters her peace of mind (she had 'indulged in excesses for which she was now paying... She, Oyiida, had gone too far. She had not accepted her lot. She had forced the hand of her chi. And now this is the result."

'Mother was a Great Man' is a complex and challenging story, conveying the vulnerability of some African women (in this case, first-born Igbo daughters) which yet does not absolve them from the cultural imperative of producing a son. How are we to view Oyiida, whose death signals the end of the story? Her expressed regret and suffering over 'not accepting her lot' are arguably more than counterbalanced by the determination and ruthlessness with which she has always attempted to orchestrate her family's fortunes. As one who exploited every avenue in pursuit of her goals - and who, if she 'lost' in one sense seems triumphantly defiant in another - Oyiida, like her story, defies easy categorization (certainly, for all her self-restriction, she is no orthodox 'victim').

I want to move now to a story which I feel to be more ambiguous in its affirmation of the insights of a 'politics of the everyday'. This story - 'Lakshmi's Gift' by Ananda Devi - comes from Mauritius, East Africa. It dwells in unremarkable detail on the hardship which has drained Shanti ('worn out' by 'endless cycles of pregnancies' and work in the fields) of almost all animation. Shanti's physical surroundings are a sad reflection of and contributory to her mental and bodily exhaustion - 'And the house, with its bare, austere interior, on whose walls no shred of fantasy hung, no breath of folly, where no secret double life, no caprice, could hide; the house that has become a prison, cramping her personality, curbing her smallest desires. A relentless routine with no place for pleasure or rejoicing."

This description is unequivocal: the possibility of 'subversive space' is precluded. There are references to Shanti's 'shattered illusions and spirits, dampened by her daily life'. Almost the only anticipation is that of old age, with its prospect of an existence as uniformly ugly, grey, colourless as a shower of rain, without a single well of happiness from which to drink deeply a strong desire to live. Wherever she looked, wherever she turned, she saw the same lowering horizons, drained of colour, cloudy, heavy with certainties too long recognised, with a lucidity too bitter for rebellion or rejection of the inevitable... To see in such descriptions any joy of subterfuge, possibility of ruse or capacity to mediate is surely to impose a reading that the text explicitly precludes.

And yet... Shanti does possess 'the certainty (produced by some quirk of her fertile imagination) that for once her prayers will be answered'. The fact that she has been consistently disappointed in her awaiting of a visit from the goddess Lakshmi - and that she may well be so again this time - is no impediment to her preparations for the coveted visit: 'This was her very own therapy: she recreated herself, leaf by leaf, greening her brusied branches, freshly curling her faded petals. Once a year, she renewed herself, and waited for Lakshmi's coming. Indeed, this time she finally does accept...Lakshmi's gift..."

It is surely possible to read this story as a tribute to Shanti's enormous inner reserves and the eventual rewarding of them. But while I can recognize this reading (and do not, at one level, want to contest it) I am nevertheless troubled by it. Instead I want to contend that this particular story illustrates the limits of an approach which stresses the capacity of individuals and groups to 'use' the contexts which constrain them. For me there is something qualitatively different about Shanti's 'resistance'; something which contrasts with the joyful manipulations and subterfuges of the two wives in Akali's 'Sailless Ash', and is a story that is far harder to categorize, more at ease with the situations it describes than most others in the collection.
with the robust ploys of Oyinda in Obianuju Acholonu's 'Mother was a Great Man'. Perhaps my unease stems from the feeling that to focus on Shanti's resistance and resilience is to come close to adopting such language and sentiments as 'the triumph of the human spirit', and a determination to recognize it that can only be sustained at the cost of the extremely high price exacted.

In a different context, Lila Abu-Lughod has criticized methodological approaches which risk romanticizing resistance. In her work with Bedouin women, Abu-Lughod herself considered ways in which storytelling, jokes, songs and poems comprised modes of resistance for such women. Yet she is also concerned about 'the implications of studies of resistance for our theories of power', contending that they often forget 'a tendency to romanticize' to read all forms of resistance as signs of the ineffectiveness of systems of power and of the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated'. As one level, the very dependence of 'spaces for games and tricks' on the repressive contexts which generate them limits the applicability of this criticism to a 'politics of the everyday' (which is concerned with negotiation of power disparities). Nevertheless - and as one reading of Ananda Devi's story 'Lakshmi's Gift' alerts us to - there are problematic aspects to a methodological approach which, if not losing sight of constraints, is also less overtly concerned with them.

Possibilities and Limits

As even brief reference to them suggests, stories by African women writers themselves constitute modes of resistance - for example, to the representations 'outsiders' construct of African women. They also constitute a rich forum for explorations of a 'politics of the everyday' methodology, which emphasizes indeterminacy, and which expressly sees fiction as revealing it. It is unnecessary in these closing comments to rehearse the ways in which the two 'genres' relate. More pertinent and potentially valuable is consideration of the varying ways in which a 'politics of the everyday' methodology is alternatively confirmed and challenged in the fiction I have drawn from.

Importantly, the deeply-rooted Western perception of African women as perennial victims is exploded in these stories. This in turn confirms the insights and emphasis of a 'politics of the everyday' approach which reverses the similarly prevalent Western fixation with the mechanisms of repression. As de Certeau puts it, while 'people have to make do with what they have', there are countless ways of 'making do'. By focusing on the creative improvisations of individuals and groups 'with the material to hand', a politics of the everyday implicitly challenges the illegitimate emphasis on perennial victimhood, and recognizes the extent to which the said 'victims' may actually be competent and inventive orchestrators of their own interests and affairs.

But reference to the extent to which people can 'use' - even 'play with' - constraints which might otherwise overwhelm them is also suggestive of the potential limits, as well as strengths, of the methodology I have discussed. And the limits, no less than the strengths, of this approach seem to be suggested by the diverse fictional contexts I have alluded to. The joyful ruses of Amma in Alkali's 'Saltless Ash' seem scarcely comparable to what I would call the residual resistance of Shanti in Devi's 'Lakshmi's Gift'. Equated of the two risks, I would suggest, not only a subsuming of significant difference, but an insensitivity to the nuances of power disparity which is implicitly coercive. In exploring the frequently neglected resistances and subversions of those who are illegitimately regarded as passive, there is a danger that a subtle process of overcompensation may occur. This can entail a blurring of, and shift of focus from, the real and continuing power disparities which, though not neglected by the methodology I have outlined, tend, as a corollary of this approach, not to be emphasized by it.

On its own terms, the fiction of African women is diverse and multifaceted. As such, it needs no theoretical supplement or external 'interpretation' (particularly from those in the West who are so unqualified to attempt it). But in the varying ways in which it both confirms and challenges a 'politics of the everyday' methodology, I want to argue that it is extremely suggestive for those who are rightly chastened by the methodological criticisms and challenges of African women scholars such as Hafiz Amadu and Nira Sudarkasa. There is no easy way of responding to such criticisms, much less of rectifying the problems they highlight. But the conscious interrelating of fiction by African women and a 'politics of the everyday' (which, notwithstanding its limitations, evokes some extremely promising areas of emphasis) suggests an evocative starting point.

Macquarie University
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD RESEARCH IN THE WESTERN RIFT VALLEY OF UGANDA

Graham Connah

Since the end of 1988 I have made three visits to Uganda, to conduct field research into the archaeological antecedents of the Kingdom of Bunyoro, one of the more important of the East African interclanstrine states of which so little is known prior to the earliest European contact in the middle of the nineteenth century. By April this year a total of nearly eleven months had been spend in Uganda on both fieldwork and data analysis, resulting in four published papers and a research monograph at present in press and due for publication in 1995 (see references). This research project has been supported by the Australian Research Council and by the British Institution in Eastern Africa (based in Nairobi, Kenya) and by the Department of Antiquities and Museums in Uganda. In 1989 I was assisted by Andrew Piper, now the historical archaeologist at Port Arthur in Tasmania, in 1990 by Christine Burke, now working for the Fiji Museum and in 1994 by Ray Fite, now a BA Honours student in my Department at the University of New England. On the second and third occasion I was also assisted by Beryl Connah, my wife, and throughout I was aided by Ephraim Kamuhangire and Peter Bissao of the Ugandan Department of Antiquities and Museums and by Gilbert Oteyo of the British Institute in Eastern Africa. Until his tragic death in 1993, Thadlayo Owoora, of the British Institute, also contributed significantly to the organization of the work.

Excluding the well-known earthwork sites of western Uganda, much of the archaeological evidence for the last two millennia in this region is limited to scatters of broken pottery, in stratigraphic contexts usually characterized by limited depth of deposit. My research has, therefore, concentrated on the construction of a chronological sequence for the pottery of part of this region. Site searches and surface collections have been conducted from the Ishasha River in the south to the Victoria Nile, downstream of the Murchson Falls in the north. A total of 50 sites has been located in this extensive area, attention concentrating on the eastern shores of Lake Albert, and on the western side of Lake George on the eastern end of Lake Edward, as well as the Kazinga Channel joining the two. Substantial excavations were carried out at the salt-making settlement of Kibiro, on the edge of Lake Albert at the base of the approximately 325-metre high steep escarpment that forms the eastern side of the Western Rift Valley. Here deposits up to 3 metres in depth had built up adjacent to salt-laden ground near a hot spring. A total of 22 radiocarbon dates indicated that these deposits had gradually accumulated over the last millennium, and over 2 tonnes of broken pottery, recovered by controlled stratigraphic excavation from these deposits, enabled the construction of a pottery sequence that can now be used as a control against which to compare the pottery collected from the surface of other sites in this area. Thus, using the Kibiro pottery sequence, something of the chronological and cultural relationships between the various sites that have been examined can be established.

A characteristic type of pottery decoration at Kibiro, and at many of the other sites in the region, consists of patterns impressed onto the outside of the vessels before firing. These impressed patterns were done with what are known as 'roulettes': short lengths of twisted string or knotted strip or carved wood which were rolled over the still-plastic surface. Such roulette-decorated pottery has been found in archaeological contexts across much of the central part of the African continent, from West Africa to Kenya, but does not occur in more southerly or northerly areas. In some places the term is in use down to the present time. It may have appeared as early as the middle of the first millennium BC in West Africa but in East Africa it seemed to occur first only about 1000 years ago. The decorations done with carved wooden roulettes are particularly distinctive and have sometimes been claimed to be later in their first appearance than the other 'flexible' roulettes, although at Kibiro both forms are found through the sequence.

Almost certainly, roulettéd pottery indicates the presence of people with general ethnic similarities, belonging, for instance, to related language groups. It is interesting to find, therefore, that at the site that I have examined in western Uganda there are geographical differences in the type of roulette that was used. At Kibiro the roulettéd pottery is dominated by knotted strip roulette and, to a lesser degree, by carved roulette. Twisted string roulette is absent but further to the south-west, along the Western Rift Valley, twisted string and knotted strip roulette are the most common and carved roulette is rarely found. When one looks north of Kibiro, however, along the eastern shores of Lake Albert and along the lower Victoria Nile, carved roulette is relatively common, although outnumbered by knotted strip roulette, and with twisted string roulette occasionally present. In addition, although there is a great variety of carved roulette designs, motifs identical to some of those at Kibiro occur about 110 kilometres to its north-east at Chobi, on the Victoria Nile, and even as much as 1900 kilometres to the north-west, at Nana-Mode and other sites in the Central African Republic. Furthermore, the stratified sequence at Kibiro has shown that carved roulette designs varied through time, suggesting that particular motifs distinguished specific groups of people at particular times. It seems likely that these carved roulette designs do have social information encoded into them, some of which might eventually be revealed by intensive archaeological analysis. As yet we cannot do this, but the appearance of carved roulette in the Lake Albert area about 1000 years ago does suggest the arrival of people from the north, who intermixed with the existing population.

The interesting thing is that in the Lake Albert area, at least, the roulettéd pottery is usually the earliest pottery that we find. A search for earlier material has revealed flaked stone artefact assemblages but little or no pottery of the types attributable to the first millennium AD in this part of Africa. The situation is different, however, further to the north along to lower Victoria Nile. Here, in addition to large quantities of roulettéd pottery, there are wares that are assumed to be of first millennium date. Furthermore, there is abundant evidence, in the form of stone artefact assemblages, of human occupation back to 100,000 years ago or more. This very early evidence is no surprise, because a French research team has in recent years found even earlier stone artefacts at both Kaiso on the side of Lake Albert and at a site in the Semiliki Plains at the south-western end of the lake.

The presence of first millennium AD pottery along the lower Victoria Nile, and its virtual absence along the eastern side of Lake Albert does, however, require explanation. The answer would seem to lie in the different environments of these two areas. The eastern shores of Lake Albert border a generally narrow plain, at the base of the escarpment, that lies in a rainshadow and has soils that in many places are stony and in some places salty. The principal resource of the area is fish from the lake, although the excavations at Kibiro have shown that from early in the present millennium salt-making and cattle and small-
stock husbandry became important. Even new lakeside communities at such places as Tonya, Kibiro, and Butiaba practise little or no cultivation and obtain most of their vegetable food from the adjacent plateau. In contrast, the lower Victoria Nile has a greater rainfall and has soils that are more suitable for cultivation. Thus early cultivators, who are thought to have been the makers of the first millennium AD pottery, were apparently attracted to the lower Victoria Nile but not to the eastern shores of Lake Albert. It was only at about the beginning of the second millennium AD that makers of rouletted pottery, moving down from the north, were able to develop the agricultural potential of the lake shores. This is almost certainly because they were the first to introduce pastoralism, particularly cattle pastoralism, to the area.

The origins of the Bunyoro state may be seen, therefore, in the context of interaction between indigenous and northern population elements, and of interplay between cultivators and pastoralists. In linguistic terms, this area was a meeting point between Bantu-speakers and speakers of Nilotic and other languages from further north. Given also the rich natural resources of this part of the interlacustrine region, it is hardly surprising that these circumstances should have formed the background of the significant social and political developments that must have led to the emergence of the Kingdom of Bunyoro.

References

Department of Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology
University of New England
Just three hours before leaving for the airport the newsreader's words reached my consciousness: "shooting in Johannesburg ... bodies on the streets outside Shell House ... the city silent and deserted." Nothing was mentioned on the TV news and nor, after take-off, did anyone on the plane seem to know it had happened. One month prior to the first democratic elections in South Africa nobody knew what was going to happen. There were four of a blood bath which seemed in some ways strange: the blacks had been experiencing long-standing bloodbath for decades but that was only "black-on-black violence." I had been chosen, through a "set of curious chances", to be one of 300 voluntary church monitors for the approaching elections. Australian Catholic Relief was generously sponsoring several delegates but I was the only one from Western Australia. Despite the uncertainty involved in such an adventure I had no doubts about going. Thousands of lives had been laid down in the struggle for democracy in South Africa and it was a privilege to play even a microscopic part in those momentous elections.

The Ecumenical Monitoring Program for South Africa (EMPSA) had been established in 1992 by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference and the South African Council of Churches. Our role was to be impartial monitors. Many other observers, representing the OAU, UN, EU and other international organisations were already in or approaching the country. EMPSA had a comparatively small contingent but with the unique advantage of grassroots contact, every team being led by a local black co-ordinator, often, though not invariably, a cleric.

Our program began in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, where volunteers from over twenty different countries were assembling before deployment to potential trouble spots. We were a motley throng, from places as far apart as India and Norway, Korea and Brazil. One lady from Zimbabwe had grown up on Sharpeville and remembered being thrown out of a bus window in her childhood - but none was from South Africa itself. The age range, too, was considerable - from a few in their twenties to some - well, I didn't ask, but - quite old!

Most EMPSA monitors had a significant story behind their involvement. Many had been touched by the lives of courageous South Africans who had paid high prices for working towards a truly democratic society - prices paid in deaths of family members, years in prison or loss of limbs. Others had come from struggles in their own countries - El Salvador, Namibia, a civil rights activist from America and Germans with memories of the Nazi regime. The atmosphere in Johannesburg fluctuated between excitement, hope and fear. The shootings near Shell House had brought the spectre of bloodshed right into the city. Sunday sermons in the townships were in Xhosa, Zulu or another African language - sometimes a combination of several - but, while understanding little else, we heard the words, "April ... ukuvela" and knew the days ahead were full of apprehension and anticipation, always combined with a determination to cast one's ballot, come what may.

My team was assigned to KwaNdebele, the tenth of the former bantustans, to the northeast of Pretoria. It had been created in 1977 and at its inception had about 25,000 inhabitants on 55,000 hectares of arid land. By the mid-eighties the population was believed to be around 465,000 and the area 300,000 hectares. This had been accomplished by forced removals from Bophuthatswana and Lephalale and the incorporation of Moutse with a view to making the homeland "independent."* Its history in the eighties had been a grim saga of terror in which vigilantes called Mhokodo (Ndebele word for a millstone for grinding corn) tried to quell popular resistance. Murders and tortures were widespread in 1986 but, at great human cost, the people of KwaNdebele successfully prevented the forced imposition of "independence."** I was shocked by the quietness of the area - so different from the more filled townships around Johannesburg. The streets were spread across an arid plain with pretty, rolling hills nearby in which we were accommodated. For most of the villagers there was acute water shortage, extreme poverty and unemployment. We were told that about 25,000 workers commuted daily to Pretoria by bus, a three hour journey. Unemployment was around 60%.

Our team of five included our local co-ordinator, a Dutch woman, a Namibian, a Swede and me. Three men, two women packed into a VW Golf which must have carried us hundreds of miles between the widely dispersed villages. We complied with local protocol by introducing ourselves to the Chief Minister of KwaNdebele and the tribal chiefs of both KwaNdebele and Moutse. We also visited the senior police who acknowledged our presence and peacekeeping role. The local branches of the Independent Electoral Commission welcomed us heartily as they prepared for their duties with limited supplies of equipment. Only three political parties were active in KwaNdebele - the NP, PAC and ANC. We presented ourselves to the leaders of each and they, like the police and chiefs, assured us that there would be "no trouble in this district". We received invitations to attend voter education sessions but never managed to find the mobile unit in action. It was a new experience to live in such an isolated region where miles could be covered without access to a telephone, post office or library. We were only about 100km from Pretoria but the contrast between that orderly city and most of the poverty stricken villages with their un-tarred tracks was stark. We were conscious of living in an almost forgotten land.

When April 26th dawned we were up and out by 5.30 am. This was the day on which only the old, sick and disabled could vote and on our arrival at the hospital and schools which served as voting stations hundreds of men and women, very frail and ancient, had already been waiting since 5am. The Independent Electoral Commission officials had their equipment set up perfectly and they, too, had been there since before dawn. There was just one problem - no ballot papers had arrived. These had been guarded by the police overnight and none reached the stations visited by us until after 10.20. The people waited in the glaring sun and their patience and good humour was impressive. It was extremely moving, after hours of waiting, to see each individual cast her or his vote with solemn dignity.

I was left with mixed impressions of KwaNdebele/Moutse. The voting stations, with only two exceptions, were efficiently run by the IEC officials. Yet it was daunting to notice that our appearance often made them stop and seek reassurance. We quickly dispelled their apprehension with a smile of assent (we had less idea of the rules than they) but one legacy of apartheid, in our region, seemed to be a sense of having to defer to the presence of whites. This was far from the case in city townships where observers found no such
sign. On the final day of voting, we discovered long queues of people still waiting to obtain IDs. They succeeded on that occasion but it raises a genuine source of concern regarding the municipal elections to be held in 1995. These will be significant in that, whereas the 1994 elections represented a moral and symbolic transfer of power, those in 1995 will reach into the practical and material resources of local government. The rules for obtaining an ID will be much more stringent and there will be greater resistance from those with vested interests. There is much more about which I could write but I conclude with one final reflection: the whole election process in 1994 went more peacefully than anyone could have hoped.

Perth, Western Australia
November 1994

A ZAMBIAN PARTICIPANT'S IMPRESSIONS OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE, MELBOURNE JULY 1994
Cecilia Malota

[Mrs Cecilia Muleri from Zambia was a participant in the First International Conference for Women in Agriculture held in Melbourne in July. Cecilia is a farmer and a teacher who runs her own school in Lusaka. Before returning to Zambia she stayed briefly in Perth where she met with postgraduate students at Curtin University of Technology to talk about Zambia and Africa issues (and was delighted to meet some eight Zambian postgraduates!)

Some 850 delegates including a handful from Africa attended the Conference from all over the world, for a busy and stimulating program that included workshops, forums and social occasions. Cecilia sent this note about her impressions of the Conference and some observations she raised in the meetings about some of the difficulties that face African women who enter commercial farming. Ed.]

Small women farmers
The small women farmers who are the mainstay of family feeding and major food producers in rural areas are constrained by the removal of price supports for key agricultural inputs whose prices have suddenly shot up making them unattainable for many small farmers. Bank loans if made available charge prohibitive interest rates pushing the women farmers to a corner of frustration, despair and poverty.

Although African women farmers can work in the field the whole day, with babies on their backs, growing cash crops like soya beans, cotton and sunflower, they still cannot make enough to feed their families. With the Resettlement Schemes and Back to the Land drive, the proportion of people working in agriculture grows high but with less and less growing food crops because the cost of growing is much higher than the benefits derived from it.

Resettlement Schemes and women farmers
Although government has provided resettlement schemes in many provinces of the country to defeat the city trekking trend, many young women illiterate and illiterate are driven off the land to the cities, (but) ... there are no green pastures in the cities. The resettlement women farmers have to overcome double barriers, firstly, the constraint of being a small farmer and secondly those additional hurdles faced specifically by women in society.

Although women are major producers yet institutional structures including ministries of agriculture, training, extensions and research services, even the major intergovernmental agencies dealing with food and agriculture, are totally under the male preserve, governed by the male perspective.

Women and the environment
Unfortunately and understandably too, women are the victims of and contributors to the degradation of nature in the sense that they are the drawers of water and collectors of fuel wood.

** Sparks, Allister The Mind of South Africa 1990, Knopf, New York.
I still clearly remember the lullaby my mother used to sing for my young brothers that ...

The hoeing of the day is done
The weary heat of the sun
The wood is gathered
The water is drawn
And now we can eat and rest
Till the coming of dawn my baby
Lala Lala mutwana wami Lala sanwilan

The environment and farming
Environment and farming are twins. One is a male twin an the other, female. I should liken environment to the female twin therefore the most important because once the environment has been seriously tampered with no viable agricultural production can be sustainable.

Permaculture
Women in Agriculture reminded me in very strong terms that permaculture is the environment's big baby-down to earth and pure common sense as it is defined as permanent agriculture which our ancestors engaged in. It is a design system which creates sustainable environments which can be maintained for centuries without losing soil fertility.

Australia-Africa relations
I will not do any justice to Australia as a whole if I do not mention the warm loving kindness of their peoples especially the women. It is no surprise that they planned, organised and convened the first ever global family of farming. Sisters well done, Mary Sale and your co-workers convenor of the Women In Agriculture Conference. Special thanks to Jean and John Breth of Martha, Melbourne and to Wendy Welland, of Somerset, one of the UK representatives, who hosted and treated me as a member of their families. Long live global sisterhood of Women in Agriculture farming for the future.

The Conference Resolutions
To develop a vision and strategies for local and international conferences of Women in Agriculture.

To enable participants to return to their own communities with new ideas and renew commitment to increasing local and world recognition of women's contributions to agriculture.

To develop strategies for women to increase their input into agricultural policy through agri-politics and farmers organisations and to encourage women in agriculture to have a greater voice at local, regional and even national levels within their industries.

To report to the Fourth World Conference on women at Beijing, China, in September 1995 and publish a summary of the Conference outcomes as past Conference proceedings.

ABOUT BOOKS, RESEARCH MATERIALS AND RESEARCH


A lengthy and wide-ranging work, Adjusting Privatisation is constructed in two parts. The first, almost one quarter of the 400-page length, presents an attempt to 'adjust' the economic arguments for privatization of state agencies in 'developing countries'. The second consists of seven country case studies, two of which - Kenya and Malawi - will be of particular interest to readers of this journal. (The other countries examined are Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka.)

Adjusting Privatisation is a significant book and deserves to be read because it examines in detail and outlines an important shift underway in thinking about the role of state forms of production and distribution in capitalism. Although parts of the argument are tute, suitable for undergraduate economic texts or the business pages of poor quality newspapers, the underlying message of the introductory argument is more consequential. That message, in brief, is that while neo-liberalism no longer rules, the only principle upon which economists can agree is efficiency.

Adam et al. challenge the previously dominant object of privatization as based upon (p.3) 'the perceived superiority of the private sector in the provision of goods and services (which) has become almost axiomatic'. They state: '...it is precisely this assumption we believe to be invalid, and it is therefore unsurprising that privatization in many developing countries has failed to meet expectations. Only through an explicit evaluation of the fundamental economics of privatization can a more balanced role emerge.'

That balance, unsurprisingly, is the balance of mild social democratic reformism, with the central objection to the earlier privatization drive simply being whether or not it was efficient in 'resource allocation'. The author's conclusion provides a good example of why a dubious argument in this case conceals a more significant point, specifically that while there is a political-ideological shift underway, the outcome is as yet undecided and uncertainty reigns. For Adam et al.: 'Privatization...can best be regarded only as a medium-term supply-side policy, a logical complement to a broad strategy of private sector development, rather than a panacea for the multitude of ills endured by developing countries'. Ideology is out, whether its corner-stone be monetarism, wage cuts, deficit reduction, entrepreneurial primacy, privatization or any other of the 1980s cures. Pragmatism is in, providing of course it functions to raise the rate of profit and reduce relatively preferably but absolutely if necessary - living standards for the broad mass of the population.

The "analytically correct definition of privatization" adopted by the authors (p.6) "covers the transfer from the public to the private sector of the ownership and/or control of productive assets, their allocation and pricing, and the entitlement to the residual profit flows generated by them." Such a definition of course glosses over one of the historically

critical questions about privatization which efficiency can not elucidate, specifically the matter of ownership. For privatization was not simply an idea whose time had come, in the manner of the wheel turning, despite what Adam et al. would like to believe with their almost cyclical claims (p.31): "It has been the rapid, and for long unchecked, growth in the public sector which has provided the seeds for privatization to flower as a policy."

It was an idea which came as part of the 1970s and 1980s neo-liberal/conservative political assault on forms of state production and distribution. The forms, including in the two countries, Kenya and Papua New Guinea, with which this reviewer is most familiar, were constructed on a basis which included an anti-capitalist, as well as invariably anti-Marxist social impulse. The question of ownership, crudely expressed as private or public, was part of that impulse and the precise object of the later reaction. That is, privatization should be understood in the constancy of class struggle and capitalist accumulation in both of which efficiency plays a more subtle role than is understood by the mainstream economists who have written this book.

One of the ironies of the case studies is that these reveal a more complex understanding of the political economy of the establishment of state agencies than appears in the analysis of the subsequent drive for privatization. That is, the further the analysis shifts from the economic model laid out in Part I, the more it improves. Where Kenya is concerned, even the one page examination of the "extent and origins' of the SOC (state-owned enterprise) sector is able to correctly emphasise the importance of indigenization or (p.327) "Kenyanization'-the rapid acceleration of the transfer of economic control from the hands of foreigners to Kenyans". The significance of Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965 on African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya for this transfer is rightly stressed.

The truism of nationality as an instrument nevertheless is soon revealed when the 1980s opposition to privatization also is explained in nationalist terms (p.337). Privatization has been opposed, according to Adam et al., because it appears to be a rejection of 'Kenyanization', with the likely beneficiaries the 'foreigners, Kenyan-Asians, and to a lesser extent, members of the Kikuyu tribe' who are economically dominant although politically marginal. Apart from the fact that there is no attempt to explain why Kikuyu commercial figures who once supported strengthening the SOC are now in favour of privatization, nationality is an inadequate basis for delineating the stance of particular sections of the capitalist class. Moreover, however, the political inactivity of the Moi regime to press forward with widespread privatization has not simply brought about by the difficulty of dividing the anticipated spoils between capitalists, whether foreign or not. After all, these can always strike a deal over shares of profits!

There has been a more fundamental problem for the regime which set out to marginalise the previous 'big men' and advance a Kalenjin-Maasai bourgeoisie. The regime has had to appeal to the 'little people' for support, in order to undercut Kikuyu and other business interests, in a period when living standards have been falling and the rate of increase in the rate of unemployment rising rapidly. Widespread privatization which sought to raise the rate of profit would have threatened important economic and political foundations of the regime's popular, even populist, position by further increasing the numbers of unemployed and reducing the living standards. At least Kenya's President Moi understands that efficiency has class determinations, even if the authors of Adjusting Privatization do not.

Scott MacWilliam
Curtin University of Technology, Perth


Africanists should be delighted by this meticulously compiled book, a third of a series that already has set high bibliographical standards. It is a useful bibliographical guide to a substantial portion of the African cultural heritage and is, as the title suggests, a catalogue of books written in African languages held in library collections of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, the premier library of African language materials in Europe.

The size of the book is impressive: more than 4,000 items, all unannotated. The scope includes over 300 major and minor African languages. It excludes Arabic, Afrikaans and Creole (the classical, literate language of Ethiopia) but these are covered in other works. The focus is "restricted in scope to published African language texts, and more precisely to texts intended for local readers." Dictionaries and grammars, also listed in other works, are excluded. An interesting short introduction explains the history of the SOAS collections and the role in collecting and developing literatures of the International Institute for African Languages and Cultures (founded in 1920) and the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa (founded in 1929). There is also a short guide on how to use the book. There are five indexes - short title; author; languages by country; classified languages; and language - all of which are generous in size and cross-references, enhancing user satisfaction. The book is enlivened by the use of many special symbols, such as cross references for Biblical literature. The compiler and publisher have coped well with the particular demands of a work in so many languages and even in different scripts. For instance, the Amharic characters, and the diacritics in the Yoruba section, are clear and appear accurate.

The work does not seek to be comprehensive and the compilers note a few weaknesses in coverage, such as with Catholic publications from Zaire. Entries are listed firstly by language, which is correct for literatures, and then by title, which means that works by the same author are scattered, and although this is obviated by the inclusion of an author index, I would have preferred the secondary entry under author. The chronological range is, unfortunately, only up to 1983, prompted by the history of the library's catalogue. The old saying "always something new out of Africa" applies also to languages, as indicated by the adoption of a new Somali script in the 1970s. Indeed there is much newer material that also needs treating in a sequel. Some purists - and, I might add Africans - may quibble about spelling - such as "Tasambeq" for "Tasamzaq" (better known by the vulgar European corruption "Berber").

Nevertheless, this book is a significant contribution to bibliographic control. It will delight specialists in linguistics and literature, and the inclusion of religious items also makes it relevant to the disciplines of theology and comparative religion. There are, for instance, a large number of Zulu hymn books cited. It should also interest historians, because there is often a close connection between literature and history. In South African history, more research needs to be undertaken into the role of writers such as R R R
many not easily accessible in standard periodical and newspaper indexes or on CD ROM. The task is not getting any easier. Since the 1988 publication the volume of scholarly and popular literature has increased significantly without a complimentary increase in bibliographic control. One reason for the task being so difficult is that many of the articles, popular rather than scholarly, originate in African newspapers and magazines which are not indexed.

The majority of the entries are for popular articles about such matters as filmmaking in progress, interviews with the directors and actors, the relationship between film, video and television and the problems of distributing African films in a continent where film distribution is controlled out of Africa. Film festivals generate much of the literature with FESPACO (Festival Panafrique du Cinéma de Ouagadougou) very prominent in the index. The most inaccessible material, that written inside Africa, is often the most interesting. Schmidt notes: ‘A wide range of African opinion is expressed in African publications which is not reflected in articles written outside Africa or by non-Africans’. For me it is the monitoring of film journalism on the African continent which makes Schmidt’s work so valuable. I still remember the thrill of opening the 1998 volume and discovering a wealth of source material tucked away in African newspapers and magazines. (Getting hold of it is another matter!).

The corpus of scholarly literature is small but growing. Since 1988 two filmographies have appeared as well as more book length histories and books that develop critically perspectives for analysing film. More Africans are doing theses in African film at American, European and African universities. ‘Yet’ Schmidt regrets, ‘the scholarly literature, like the journalistic literature as a whole, focuses on relatively few Sub-Saharan African filmmakers, and generalises from what little is known about the continent without providing substantiation’.

A flaw in this bibliographic labour is its limited scope. Most writing about the colonial period is excluded:

Materials on colonial filmmakers and recent films about African by non-African filmmakers are included only if Africans had a major role in the production of the film as co-director or a lead actor, for example.

Much of the material about film production ventures and film distribution infrastructure and about patterns of filmmaking established in the colonial period, all relevant as background to the post colonial activities, is hereby excluded minimising the value of the bibliography to many researchers on Sub-Saharan African film. For example, a partial explanation for the much greater interest in feature film production in former French colonies is the differing colonial policies towards film production. Patterns of documentary filmmaking and organisational structures that began with the setting up of colonial departments of information in English-speaking Africa during World War II and with the British Colonial Film Unit after the War persisted in English-speaking African countries long after the exit of the raj and the disbandment of the Colonial Film Unit in 1955.
reminding readers of why the book is so good for its target audience. The graphic presentation is outstanding. Maps and illustrations abound on almost every page. Many of these are drawn from nineteenth century engravings which imbue the text with an aura of historic romance. The chapters and subheadings are clearly set out. Notes and bibliography are useful without being overwhelming.

A great deal of care has been given to the revised sections, the first of which introduces the Khoisan peoples. In the first edition, the San are presented as 'the most ancient of southern Africa's surviving peoples' - 'a hunting and gathering people who practised no agriculture'. In the second edition, they are 'some of South Africa's most ancient peoples' who 'were originally foragers practising no agriculture'. Through such subtle changes Omer-Cooper incorporates the revisionist scholarship of Ed Wilmsen and others who have demonstrated the malleability of San technology and culture. Hunting and gathering are thus not fixed cultural markers but economic strategies pursued or abandoned according to historic circumstances. Viewed from this perspective, sharp dividing lines between Khoi and San dissolve. Whereas in the 1987 version, the San co-existed with a related people known as the Khoi-Khoi, in the new edition, the Khoi-Khoi are identified as 'among the San communities which did adopt pastoralism'. Omer-Cooper fully accepts the proposition that movement from foraging to pastoralism and back again could and did occur. Consequently, the new text is purged of at least one survival of nineteenth-century thinking about fixed stages of development.

Other important alterations in the second edition concern the pre-colonial Nguni and Sotho-Tswana societies. Once again, Omer-Cooper alters phrasing to convey a sense of change over time. Those familiar with his cautious approach to the claims of Julian Cobbing about the mfecane, will turn with considerable interest to his treatment of conflict in the first decades of the nineteenth century. While admitting the influence of trade and outside disruption, Omer-Cooper generally stands his ground. There is still an mfecane, Shaka is still a fearless innovator. However, in contrast to the first edition, which identifies the wars as 'associated with the birth of Zulu kingdom', the text now reads, 'The Zulu kingdom itself, thought not the origin of the mfecane but just one of its products, was the prime example of this revolutionary development.'

The final section of the revised edition carries us considerably forward from the postscript of the 1987 script which described South Africa as 'clearly at the crossroads'. The township rebellions are more clearly centred as the beginning of the end for apartheid. The last chapter, wistfully titled 'Order or Anarchy?', begins with Mandela's release from prison and ends with the fixing of the date of 27th April for the 1994 elections.

From beginning to end, Omer-Cooper sticks pretty much to the high ground of political, economic and military history. Though he admits in his new preface that he would have wished to say more about women and social history, he realises that to do so would have required a root-and-branch revision which would have taken far more than the time at his disposal. One suspects as well that he hasn't the taste for it. Why should such a master of narrative discard his trump suit?

A graduate of South Africa's premier journalism school, at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, Rich Mkhondo has worked for domestic newspapers such as the liberal Rand Daily Mail, which ceased publication at a crucial point in the anti-apartheid struggle, and the centrist Star, and for the international news service Reuters, covering the insurrection of the 1980s and the transition to a new political dispensation in the 1990s. In one sense at least, the title of his book accurately portrays its contents: it is a journalist's survey of the period he has reported, crammed with intensely graphic anecdotal material, viewed first hand in the townships of the Rand and, less often, elsewhere in South Africa, overlain with an analysis, again in journalistic vein, of the wider political frameworks and contexts of the period.

It is a book that cannot be ignored, if only because it is so far unique, bringing together as it does the experiences and perceptions of an anti-apartheid black reporter, at home in the townships, but trained in a white journalism school to know the demands and boundaries of the print media. Beneath the political analysis, which is informed by a township perspective but which otherwise is unremarkable, given that the market now is awash with both analyses benefiting from hindsight and speculative and predictive crystal-ball gazings exercises, there lies the anger of the schoolboy of 1976, whose passion for the anti-apartheid cause was not diminished by his worldly success during the 1980s. His passion is most evident however when he writes of the violence of the early 1990s, of the devastation wreaked on his own home township of Katlehong and the other townships of the East Rand by the intermittent struggle for control waged by the ANC and Inkhatha. Much of this is moving beyond words, and those who know these townships and who have shuddered at the endless cycles of violence that have destroyed once-thriving communities will recognise the despair that informs the reporter's skill that Mkhondo brings to his description of the killing of a friend or the tension that fills the townships at night as the residents wait for the attackers to come.

The assumptions which underlie the work are those of the political majority - and Mkhondo's sympathies are always clear, if not overtly expressed. They manifest themselves in a dozen different ways, a lack of sympathy for the position of Buthelezi and Inkhatha, the briefest of mentions of the role of the ANC-aligned self defence units, an attempt at the blindness of naivete in a confrontation with extreme right-wingers at the World Trade Centre. Such assumptions do not detract from the worth of the book overall, however. They represent a particular point of view and one which too often has been overlooked as academics and white journalists have attempted to make sense of the struggle for power in the south townships of the Rand.

In terms of its capacity to convey some aspects of at least of that struggle, Reporting South Africa should be read alongside Heidi Holland's recent Born in Soweto, and Peter Magubane's various books of photographs, as well as the autobiographical work of women such as Emma Mashinini or Ellen Kuwwayo. At another level, that of political analysis on a national level, it is perhaps less successful since, like many other works in the journalistic genre, it does not move far from the direct narrative of events. That it contains no listing of other printed sources that might have been consulted during the writing thus comes as no surprise, although usefully, it does contain a chronology of events and an index.

Nonetheless, it is an essential book for the South Africanist's shelves, and would be of great use for undergraduates, conveying as it does a dramatic, colourful and moving reality that all too soon will be romanticised and eloborated by the myth-making process.

Joan Wardop
Curtin University of Technology
School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages


Even before Nadine Gordimer won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991, her work had attracted close and copious attention from reviewers in this country, Europe, North America, and, of course, in her native South Africa. Her career has been a long one - she began publishing in 1937 - and it is by no means over. Since the 1950s she has had a devoted following in the United States, where the New Yorker published much of her shorter work, and her readers in Europe and elsewhere are very numerous. For over thirty years she has been that rarity, a writer whose books are hugely successful with both critics and readers.

Nor surprisingly, then, the body of writing she has produced is large, and the volume of critical writing about her work larger still. A good bibliography of primary and secondary Gordimer sources is a long-felt need among Gordimer scholars, and it is a need which this volume fills admirably. The work was begun by the South African writer Dorothy Driver, who provides a shapely and lucid introduction, and ably finished off by a team at the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown.

Gordimer has invited critics to see her writing in terms of her own changing perceptions of the world: I have to offer you myself as my most closely observed specimen, she wrote in 1982. This bibliography responds with a detailed chronology of her life, in which political developments, marriages and children are interleaved with her production of articles, books and stories. Gordimer's earliest work, published in ephemeral publications such as the children's sections of newspapers, has been painstakingly identified, in itself a formidable task of research, and her increasing output over the years is fully covered, up to the end of 1992. This output is sensibly divided into long fictions, short stories, drama, translations, non-fiction, reviews and interviews, and I can find no gaps in it.

There follows a listing of the mass of critical material written on Gordimer, divided into critical writing including Gordimer, critical writing specifically on her, theses, reviews of
individual works, reviews of criticism, films, biographies and previous bibliographies. Driver and her co-workers have done an admirably thorough job; I carefully checked the listing of Gordimer criticism published in South African and Australasian magazines and literary journals, and again could not fault this volume. Items that have not been personally verified by the research team are asterisked, a cautionary and honest technique too rarely used in bibliographical work.

Well-designed and thorough indices are vital to a reference book like this one, and these are exemplary: no fewer than eleven are provided, listing the material by titles, review, authors, critics, translators, journals and so on. Because Gordimer continues to write, and critics to pour out new criticism, this volume is already (and increasingly) incomplete, but within its inevitable chronological limits it is a most valuable tool, highly recommended.

Peter Alexander
School of English
University of New South Wales

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This is a valuable book which should be read by all concerned with the issues facing governments in Africa in the era of the (weakening) movements towards democracy, and of post-apartheid transition in Southern Africa. Judging African governments can be a perplexing business. ‘If they are to be judged by their own high minded and moralist rhetoric they fail miserably. By those standards the Zimbabwe government’s record in the legal protection of human rights is poor. On the other hand if they are judged according to the very difficult political circumstances of securing viable political orders out of colonial and racist pasts, their record could be much worse. Perhaps all western Africanist scholars need to remember to apply the same critical scrutiny of African governments as they would to those elsewhere, and that (if they speak for anyone) it should be for the victims of human rights violations, and not their rulers, whatever revolutionary credit the latter may have banked.

The brutal war fought in Zimbabwe in defence of white rule ended with the acceptance by the revolutionary victors of a constitution containing a Declaration of Rights. But to go with this new government maintained for ten years the state of emergency it inherited. In its early years it experienced violent internal challenges to its authority, and destabilising pressure from the apartheid regime in the South. A paranoid style of politics and a vocal hostility to judicial nitpicking about rights resulted. Detention without trial, and torture, continued to be practised by the security forces. Judicial rulings, and criticisms, were frequently brazenly rejected by the new government. But while Government avoided a political destruction of the judiciary such as that orchestrated in Kenneth Kaunda’s Zambia, tensions were very real. Court orders to release detainees were
defied by the Executive, threats were made, Mr Mugabe, then Prime Minister, openly affirmed that his Government could and would take “extra-legal” actions (134). Judicial activism in defence of human rights could be accordingly muted. The book gives a detailed account of the ‘rights’ cases which came before the Courts in the decade after the defeat and disappearance of Rhodesia. (It also usefully prints the Declaration of Rights and the Emergency Powers Act.) The story is well told and while it is not an inspiring story it could have been worse. What is depressing is that there is no sign of an augmenting respect for the rule of law. As Hatchard points out Zimbabwe, along with most other Commonwealth African countries has not ratified the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. Hatchard has chosen not to focus on individual judges which is probably correct. Nonetheless the unsuccessful efforts of Justice Zumbusha (now in political opposition) to establish a ‘rule of law’ culture should not go unmentioned.

In South Africa the new constitutional dispensation is to be mediated by a Bill of Rights and a strong Constitutional Court. The political classes, unlike those in Zimbabwe, are vocally committed to the building of a ‘rights culture’. On one level there are reasons to hope that this will be more successful than elsewhere in Africa. If it is, (and it will have to survive much political instability) perhaps one might hope that it will be a lesson for the rest of Commonwealth Africa, a better lesson, at any rate, than Zimbabwe has to offer.

Martin Chanock
School of Law and Legal Studies
La Trobe University
NEW BOOKS FROM WEST AFRICA


All distributed by African Book Collective, 27 Park End St Oxford OX1 1HU

W. E. F. Ward combines an historian's perspective with trappings of a colonial official's good fortune to "penetrate the African life." *My Africa* is a fascinating, if at times curious, reflection on his years at History Master at Achimota College, Ghana, 1924-1940. He also gives his thoughts on colonialism.

Ward's earlier works include *A Short History of the Gold Coast* (1935), *Government in West Africa* (1965) and *A History of Africa* (1960-68). The latter (a copy of which I have retained for years, perhaps out of sheer masochism born of inescapable hunger for collecting Africana) is written in a somewhat patronizing question and answer fashion that typifies expatriate attitudes: "so you think that the Mau Mau had something to complain about? ... It believed in killing." Does he escape from this ex-colonial mindset in his new book, *My Africa*?

Ward shows how, with an admirable feel for indigenous oral traditions, he developed a history syllabus at Achimota. Some people might even accord him the honour of "discovering" aspects of Ghanaian history - but of course that history was never "lost". Most colonialists find it vital, if only for strategic reasons, to record ethnography. Although he [unconvincingly] rejects the label of autobigraphy, *My Africa* is more a collection of anecdotes and memories than history or ethnography. There is more about frogs and toads and funny stories than serious history. Ward states at the outset that he "cannot compete with Governors ... who write their memoirs." Perhaps it is the fate of history teachers forever to be locked out of the seamy boudoir of colonial administration.

On the other hand, he pays a good deal of attention to cultural contact. But if the book is a useful source on inter-war educational history and cultural contact, there is too little analysis for it to pass as history. Colonial governors were "far-sighted and idealistic" (p.3) but many Ghanaians saw them as little more than dictators. Ward's heroes are colonial teachers and missionaries who inculcated change and paved the way for independence in the face of more conservative officials (pp.244-5).

The author does not leave the orbit of the colonialist paternalism so ably analysed by Pen Hetherington. Whilst he admonishes the excesses of colonial colour-bars and exploitation.


Ward concludes that "Africa could not have been brought into the modern world without [a] colonialism" which did not involve "a deliberate policy of oppressing the colonial people in the interests of the ruling power." The nostalgia is at times embarrassing: "My Africa ... was a good country, they were good people." Moreover, as Richard Rathbone observes in *Journal of African History* (no.2 1993), Ward has little to say about his students, many of whom became key political leaders, or their critiques of colonial ideas. Still, this book may interest historians and educationalists.

Onyeka Nwanubobi, a lecturer in sociology at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, provides a broad outline of Africa prehistory, history, society and culture that will serve as a useful introduction to students of social sciences and general readers. It claims to differ from other accounts by relating the ways Africans adapted to their environments to the contexts of their societies. Social welfare should be the basis of social life, he argues.

After outlining the origins of African social institutions, he presents chapters on kinship, on economic, political, legal and religious institutions, and a final perspective on colonialism and Africa. There is an index, and a fairly detailed, interdisciplinary bibliography that is slanted somewhat to Nigerian sources and which included very few items from the late 1980's, but gives a reasonable mix of works on other countries. There are a few spelling mistakes.

Nevertheless, examples from many countries are used to illustrate the diversity and inner-workings of African societies. Many recent academic debates are mentioned, such as the role of women in labour, the fate of kitho-san peoples, and causes of conflict. Instead of viewing African wars as "tribalism," the author presents different theories of conflict resolution strategies. The problem of land in the Zimbabwe conflict is one case. Particular attention is paid to both "adjustments" and continued resistance to colonialism. This is a book free from rancour, which clinically concludes that colonialism was "a major exogenous source of change and constitutes the main context which conditioned the changes in the recent history of Africa." The discussion of largely urban voluntary organisations, including religious groups, engages with a number of theories. The efficacy of recent rural development strategies, so vital in everyday survival and directly bearing on the lives of the majority of Africans, are outlined. Urban and rural development strategies should be closely related, not separated, in "a unified comprehensive approach." But "as long as the local masses remain less powerful than the elite of the various African nations and their foreign partners, the ideological basis for this comprehensive strategy will remain a remote hope" he warns in conclusion.

This thoughtful book gives an Afrocentric approach which still is refreshing in the 90's.

In general, it is a useful introductory text, especially for sociology and anthropology students. Its price should make it more attractive in Africa. Australian libraries also should purchase it for their collections as an encouraging example of recent African scholarship and publishing.

The recent presidential election of Jerry Rawlings in the first open elections in Ghana for many years was hailed by some as another triumph of democratization in Africa, by others as an example of government manipulation. *Political Parties and Democracy in Ghana's Fourth Republic*, a collection of scholarly articles edited by Kwame Ninsin and F K Drah (Assistant Professor and senior lecturer, respectively, at University of Ghana) surveys political parties in Ghana, which helps explain this election. The articles are proceedings
of a seminar at the University of Ghana in July 1992, with all but one of the contributors are from that University. The printing and production is of good standard.

The book is divided into four sections. The first outlines the legislative and constitutional basis of democracy. The second gives Ghana's socio-cultural context, and discusses civil society and the transition to pluralism, and a case study of women in Ghanaian political parties by Sandra Pepenu. Section three discusses parties and representation, with case studies of the District Assemblies, electoral system, and “democratic ethos and internal party democracy.” The final section has chapters on the role of the opposition, prospects for national stability, and the financing of parties. Tables illustrate results of the 1978 election, the share of votes cast against the number of registered voters, and the occupational distribution of assembly members (33% agriculture, 32% teaching, 15% civil service).

The book is a very useful mine of data and opinion. It presents some of the best recent research on politics in Ghana. It is particularly rich in its use of local sources, such as newspapers and party documents. It should be a compulsory acquisition by libraries and academies interested in African politics and Ghana.

Whilst Ghana was able to carry out an effective national election, military rulers decimated similar attempts in Nigeria. Professor B O Nwabueze's Military Rule and Constitutionalism in Nigeria is thus most timely and grapples with the causes of the persistence of military rule. It is a critical analysis of the impact on political and constitutional systems, for more than twenty years, of military rule in Nigeria. He discusses the impact on: government institutions, structures and instrumentalities; administrative processes, procedures and practices; public service personnel; and the constitutional framework, including the federal system and the presidential system. He also examines the influence of military rule on foundations of the system: national unity, legitimacy of government and political culture itself, as well as on the civil and political rights of the individual. This is volume one of a two part work. This volume focuses on military rule and civil liberties - volume two on military rule and social justice.

Nwabueze concludes that military rule is not compatible with civil society and democracy, with any government freely chosen by the people and limited in its powers by a democratic constitution. He provides suggestions on how to mitigate governmental excesses. Suitable traditional objects should replace or be combined with the Bible or Koran for the swearing of oaths of office. More affirmation of an oath was no longer sufficient, and there should be criminal punishments for violations of oath of office. Stage-by-stage transition from military to civilian rule has certain advantages such as instilling discipline among officials, but an absolute military government cannot co-exist with a "supreme constitution."

The study is a scholarly, detailed and convincing refutation of dictatorship. It is recommended for libraries and academies interested in Africa, especially West Africa, and in comparative legal studies and political science.


A highly educated Japanese friend of mine tells me that about one hundred years ago, the nova ceo rich Japanese farmers used to take long sea-cruise to Europe during the summer months. On board, these money aristocrats used to divest themselves of suits and kimono and bask on deck in their pyjamas, move about in their clogs and generally make themselves comfortable in their feudal and peasant ways. The European passengers used to laugh at these antics in people who, judged by the lengths of their purses, should have been better cultured. Western-educated Japanese used to be embarrassed by the incongruous ways of their uncles, parents and grand-parents. But the way my friend tells it implies that he wished this chapter was forgotten. Peter Enahoro is equally embarrassed by the way his fellow Nigerians behave (or misbehave) in offices, business and particularly abroad.

After reading The Complete Nigerian, one also recalls Thomas Hardy's poem "The Ruined Maid". This is the story of the encounter of two girls from the country. One had left early for town. When they next meet, the 'raw country girl' was amazed at the transformations that had taken place on "Mella" who now wore "such fair garments" and showed "such prosperity" that the "raw country girl" was all in admiration of her. Whenever the country girl pointed to some form of 'sophistication' in America, she was told that these were the results or outcomes of having been "ruined". The poet Hardy was making is clear: from country innocence to town sophistication one suffered ruination. Though one need not necessarily share Hardy's morally judgmental view about the effects of town life on country girls one still acknowledges that some changes do take place in regard to morals, lifestyle and profession. When one meets the Amelias of this world, especially the ones from one's village or country, how then does one regard them? That they are "ruined" and then one dissociates oneself from them as Peter Enahoro prefers? One laughs at them from the high horse as Peter Enahoro has done in two books? Or one notes their entry and passage as a sociological phenomenon (as one should) in these fluid brave new days?

The satirist is an aristocrat at heart. He has, more probably he thinks he has, monopoly of knowledge on what is proper etiquette as the noble aristocrats had established it, as they practice it, and as society should follow suit. Peter Enahoro, as the blurb of the book tells us, was "born into a famous political family" in Nigeria. He therefore considers himself an aristocrat by birth. This background made it easy for him to "become the youngest national newspaper editor in his early twenties," and to commence to harangue his countrymen and women in his guise as Peter Pan. But when he realised that he was wasting time by casting his pearls among swine, he left Nigeria in 1966 for Europe where he thought he would be amongst equals.

In the good days gone past, only aristocrats by birth, or aristocrats by intellect or scholarship ever left Africa for 'cultured' Europe. And, after acquiring the golden fleece, they came back famous as cultured beem-tes. In Europe then, one was sure that any African one met was a student, a gentleman, a man of culture. But, alas, those days are over. The poor cousins Peter Pan had run away from because of their uncouth manners came by some money and one of them even managed to seek out Peter Enahoro in the
small German town of Quadrath - Ichendorf. And there (the town may be fictitious) not finding Peter at home he accepted the hospitality of one of Peter's next-door German neighbours. Asked whether he wanted tea or coffee, he answered there no rice? Told to make himself at home he rests his roughshod feet on the host's treasure tea-table. When, in order to boost the local tourist industry, the town council toyed with the idea of building a statue of the African whose guest rested his feet on the tea-table, Peter Pan or Enahoro decided it was time he no longer exiled himself from himself. Peter Enahoro then returned to Nigeria, wrote The Complete Nigerian and became a Federal Minister in one of those short-lived civilian interim governments the Nigerian generals permit to exist whilst they sort out which Northern General should take over power.

The Complete Nigerian as his/her episodes are chronicled in this book, despite his/her crude ways, is a person on the move, or is perched in an unfamiliar territory. If he is an office worker, strict office regulations could straighten him out. If he is a bureaucrat, then a memo from the Head of the Civil Service or Chamber of Commerce could make him wake up and receive his friends after hours. And if he would like to become a more prosperous businessman, then a regime that comes to power has better gear itself as an economic war-footing ready match trick with trick, brain with brain, resourcefulness with the fast-developing economies of South-East Asia.

An astute politician is reputed to have said: "Nigeria is a geographical expression." Peter Enahoro amended that by saying: "Nigeria is an expression." And, as a neo-nationalist, Mr Enahoro has been filling her up with contents. It is for that reason that one commands him for his endeavours in national-building. To hold the comic mirror to the nation so that it may laugh at itself once in a while is also a national responsibility.

Taban lo Liyong
Curtin University of Technology

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**African Newspapers in Australia: New Acquisitions**

Microfilm copies of a number of pre-1950s newspapers, some of them organs, or in other ways closely related, to the African National Congress of South Africa, have personally been acquired by Peter Limb.

The newspapers are:
- Abantu-Batho 1930-31 (the organ of the ANC).
- Tsala ea Bantu (Kimberley; edited by Solomon Plaatje, first Congress Secretary).
- Isokeli wa Bantu (Cape Town, 1940-41).
- Iwe LaBantu (1903-11; edited by Allan Soga, an early Congress figure).
- The African World (organ of the Cape ANC, edited by "Professor" James Thabele).
- [All the above have sections in English as well as Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Tswana].
- The Hammer (African Federation of Trade Unions, 1931). In English only.

Bona fide research students wishing to consult the newspapers may do so in the library of the University of Western Australia. Contact Peter Limb, Reid Library [email:plimb@uniwa.uwa.edu.au].

The Reid Library holds the following related newspapers/journals:

- The Guardian/New Age/Clarion
- Umsebenzi
- Inkundla ya Bantu
- Inkutukule

The University of Melbourne Library has acquired a microfilm set of Bantu World, a moderate white-owned newspaper editor by ANC leader R V Selope Thema.

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**New book on Namibia**

Cynthia Cohen, Administering Education in Namibia: the colonial period to the present.

Dr Cynthia Cohen has written this volume on education in Namibia which is published by the Namibia Scientific Society 1994. Her book focuses on educational administrative structures and staff and analyses the potential of externally trained administrators, and highlights problems and strategies relevant to the currently changing South African situation. If you would like to order this volume send your order and cheque to Cynthia Cohen, 28-32 Avenue Marcoux, 92400 Courbevoie, France. Fax 33(1) 47-88-77-89. The price is £15.00, postage and packaging £2.00.
NEWS AND NOTES

The 6th International Conference of Africanists of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Archbishop Tutu awarded Honorary Doctorate at ANU.
Dr Kenneth Kaunda awarded Honorary Doctorate at Deakin University.
Chris Hanl Memorial Lecture Tour
1994 Marjorie Smart Lecture.
African Liberation Support Network laid to Rest: Yale Care
Malawian Scholar wins 1994 Noma Award
10th Congress of the Pan African Association for Prehistory and Related Studies

Africa: Problems of Transition to a Civil Society -
The Sixth International Conference of Africanists of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 16-18 November, 1994.

"Africa: Problems of Transition in a Civil Society" served as the central theme of the 6th International Conference of Africanists in Moscow, 16-18 November 1994. Held every five years, the conference was organized by the Scientific Council for African problems of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the National Institute for African Studies in Moscow and the Russian Association of Africanists. The conference attracted participants from across Russia, the Confederation of Independent States, various African and other overseas countries.

The opening address was delivered by Professor A Vaililiev, Director of the Institute for African Studies. Non-Russian participants were provided with headsets for simultaneous translations in English or French. The conference then broke into 13 sections under the chair of co-presidents.

Section 1 - Economics: State and development perspectives of African economies -
The section addressed trends in modern African states and regional economic development, the impact of changes in world economy and politics and trends and methods of economic reform in Africa. Changes in development strategies, including reorganization of the state sector, market economy controls and the role of transnational corporations and state capital, as well as the social and economic consequences of structural adjustment, were discussed. There was also a sub-section on South Africa which examined commercial-economic and scientific technical cooperation with South Africa, Southern Africa and other African sub-regions.

Sections 2 - Russian-African economic relations
This section discussed priority directions in Russian-African economic relations following the collapse of the USSR, African countries' external trade policies, investment codes and the particularities of African markets for Russian interests, possibilities of common ventures with South African business, and possible forms of reimbursement of old Soviet credits and debts of African countries.

Section 3 - Productive forces, development and economic geography
The section focused on civil economy, territorial techico-economics, institutional structural formation and development: the concept of civil economy, the changing role of the state, the role of labour, the internationalization of production and transnational corporations, the consequences of territorial shifts in productive force location and integration processes in agroindustry and mining.

Section 4 - Socio-political, ideological and law problems
Participants analyzed processes of modern political culture formation and the roles of political elites, parties, ideologies and their function in Africa, multipartyism, the relationships between ruling and opposition parties, the roles of the judiciary and

* Dr Dorward presented a paper at the 6th conference of Africanists on "Ethnicity and national culture in Rwanda and Burundi"
religious institutions, traditional and modern social structures, cultural nationalism and political reform, federalism, regionalism and local government, political psychology and mental transformation, socio-political class formations and rationalization of social relations, marginalization, the role of the state constitutionalism and the law in the transition to civil society.

Section 5 - Political and International Relations
Russia's national interests and priorities in Africa, foreign policy, problems and perspectives on Russian-USA-African relations, EEC role in Africa's international relations, experience and possibilities of Russian, Chinese cooperation in Africa, Russian-South African relations, refugee problems, ethnoconfessional problems and conflicts as destabilizing factors of international politics interaction, of Russian and African diplomatic services on the international level.

Section 6 - South African problems
Social process in polyethnic society, class and ethnic factors in democratization, Afrikaner ethnicity, the results of the South African elections, foreign investment and new tendencies in South African economy and the integration process in Southern Africa.

Section 7 - Problems in African Arabic countries
Socio-economic stratification and the impact of Islamic fundamentalism on the formation of civil society was a major theme, as well as Arabic-Arabic links, social development programs in stabilization and global problems in the transformation of political and economic life in Arabic countries.

Section 8 - History
Under the theme of "three centuries... from pre-civil to a civil society" the section addressed such issues as the role of the English and French revolutions in shaping the principles and values of African civil society, various aspects of the colonial experience, from the role of taxpayers' associations and the judiciary to newspapers, education and missionary evangelism. The world wars and decolonization, law, civility and parliamentary culture, and "... obstacles in the way of transition from the perceived to a civil society" were also addressed.

Section 9 - Civilization and Cultures
Colleagues may be interested in the tone and structure of deliberations as captured in the following headings:
'The problems of establishing a civil society in Africa in the context of the civilizational approach, mono- and polyethnic civilisations'.
'The social dynamics in African civilization. The ratio between the classo-and poliogenetic peculiarities of state forming in the pre-class societies of Tropical Africa, correspondence and successiveness of tribal and civil society, institutions in the colonial and modern Africa, multilinearism of the patrimonial and tribal system development'.
'Peculiarities of manifestation of the tribal and post-tribal mentality in modern socio-political processes'.
'Spiritual and religious dynamics of African civilizations'.
'Cultural and ideological rationalization of civil principles and values in modern Africa'.

'African societies, self-perception as a factor and an obstacle in transition to a civil society'.

Section 10 - Ethnoconfessional relations
Traditional African religions, Islam, Christianity and Afro-Christian churches were examined, as were the comparative analyses of the African experience with the ethnoconfessional relations in the former Soviet Union.

Section 11 - Ethnocultural problems
The section heard papers on subjects relating to ethnocultural problems, from the philosophy of personhood as the basis of African civil society and the role of traditional political institutions in modern civil society, to case studies on Ethiopia, Rwanda-Burundi, Congo/Gabon, Zambia, Guinea, the Hausa of Nigeria and South Africa. One of the major themes was what could be learned of ways and means of solving ethnocultural problems in Africa and elsewhere.

Section 12 - Literature
One of the major themes was African writers' exposition of post-colonial realities, the quest for moral reference-points, personality and power, mass-consciousness, 'Muslim fundamentalism: a reaction of the esthetic conscious (sic) and the image of socialist choice and of dictatorship as addressed in African literature'.

In Section 11, in which I participated, papers were tabled and presented in English, French or Russian. Out of deference to Professor David Parkin (SOAS, London) and myself, simultaneous translation was provided for those who elected to present their papers in Russian. We were also given written English summaries. Discussions were mainly in English. The conference provided an important opportunity for Russian academics to publicly present their research and participation is a significant element of their professional career profiles.

On the final day of the conference the chairperson of each section reported to a plenary session on the contents and conclusion arising from their sections. As at the opening, non-Russians were provided with simultaneous translation. While the more subtle element of the political sparring were lost in translation, the presentations provided a forum for the on-going debate over ideology and interpretation in the light of recent changes within Russia and the former Soviet Union.

The parallels between Russia and Africa was an underlying refrain throughout the conference. Many of the sections focused on aspects of the African situation as a means of understanding the plight of Russia and as a vehicle for attempting to think through alternatives. With a few exceptions, debate within the Ethnocultural Section was not coloured by the same degree of ideological division as appears to have been the case in the more political/economic sections. Nevertheless, while Marxist-Leninism has been rejected by many, assumptions regarding the 'scientific' nature of knowledge and a linear almost evolutionary model was all pervasive. Even those familiar with Western literature were accustomed to reinterpreting such work within Soviet intellectual paradigm, almost subconsciously.

The African Institute
The closing luncheon, as well as all sessions, were held in the African Institute, an impressive late 19th century mansion on Alexey Tolstoy Street in central Moscow. Members of the Institute are justly proud of the building's lofty, elaborately-decorated
ceilings and original murals, albeit the Institute is under economic pressures to surrender the premises to foreign corporate occupancy.

The history of the African Institute and African Studies in the Soviet Union and Russia has been addressed by Dr Tikhomirov (AFSSAP Newsletter XV, 1 June 1993). As in Australia, Russian academia is characterized by a greying, predominantly male, population. However I question Dr Tikhomirov's observation that only the old and the less able remain. There are few alternatives within African Studies. Many of the better scholars find they cannot easily change careers, particularly those involved in cultural research. Moreover, Russia has a long-standing intellectual tradition and scholars carry on even under the current difficult circumstances.

The Institute has a large library and has had an active program of publishing and translation of foreign research. The proceedings of the 6th Conference are to be published in early 1995 but there are fewer resources available for publication. I acquired a sizeable collection of back issues of Africa, the Russian language publication of the Institute, monographs, and a number of annual bibliographic yearbooks of African Studies in the Soviet Union/Russia, should colleagues be interested.

The Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St Petersburg

Following the Moscow conference, I spent a week at the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St Petersburg. One of the world's great ethnohistoric museums, it houses the oldest and largest collection of African artefacts in Russia. Professor Mar'ev of the African Section secured permission for me to examine the vast hoard of artefacts in the storeroom. Despite its antiquity, cramped storage space and the increasingly limited resources, the material was in excellent condition.

The origins of the collection go back to 1714 and Peter the Great's Kansiskammer or Cabinet of Curios. The African collection, some 11,000 items, were mostly collected in the nineteenth century. Highlights include the Azande, Mangbetu, Kaluza and Dinka material collected by Dr Wilhelm Junker, a Russian scholar who explored the Nile Congo watershed in 1875-78. Bushongo, Baluba and Basongo are well represented, while the collection of Bari ancestral figures is one of the largest in the world. Many of the West African artefacts were from Leo Frobenius. There is also a sizeable collection of 17th century Benin 'bronzes' acquired from Germany in the 1930s. The East African collection includes material from the Baganda, Bakamba and Musaii. The core of the Southern African collection was acquired by the Czech explorer, Emil Holub, who travelled north of the Zambezi through Barotseland in 1885-6. The core of the extensive Ethiopian collection, some 3,000 items, was collected by the Russian explorers A Godzenko (1897), N Leonyev (1893, 1899-1900), A Koltchanovsky (1913) and N Gumilov (1913).

I also had an opportunity to examine the Oceanic and Australian displays. The oldest of the Oceanic material was collected by James Cook and entered in the Museum in 1780.

David Dorward
Research Institute
La Trobe University

Archbishop Tutu Awarded Honorary Doctorate at ANU

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by the Australian National University at a ceremony on December 6th. ANU's new Chancellor, Professor Peter Beunne, conferred the degree.

ANU's honorary degree of Doctor of Laws is awarded to recognise distinguished creative contributions in the service of society. Professor Deane Terrell, Vice-Chancellor of ANU said after the Council announced their decision that the world recognises Archbishop Tutu as one of its major peacemakers. "Archbishop Tutu is now a key figure in the process of reconciliation in South Africa.... His life and efforts as a peacemaker have been in the service of society, more particularly his own country but also to the world at large..."


... ...

Dr Kenneth Kaunda Awarded Honorary Doctorate by Deakin University

Dr Kenneth Kaunda, former President of Zambia, was awarded an Honorary doctorate by Deakin University on 29 November 1994. He was also the Keynote Speaker at the Conference on Ethics and Development jointly organised by Dr Joe Rementry, Deakin University, the Development Studies Network ANU and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, held at Deakin's Geelong campus 28-29 November.

... ...

Chris Hani Memorial Lecture Tour
26 September - 6 October 1994

Three top-ranking South African speakers recently completed a tour of Australia to commemorate the life and work of Chris Hani and to pay tribute to all who lost their lives in the South African struggle. Hani, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP), long-time leader of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and member of the National Executive (NEC) of the ANC was shot outside his home by a right-wing assassin on April 10, 1993. This action, intended to derail the negotiation process, instead set off a wave of strike action and protests that forced the de Klerk Government to agree to an election date. The three speakers, all close to Hani, are playing a major role in the development of the new South Africa. They are Charles Nqunka, General Secretary of the SACP and member of the ANC NEC. Thengile Mphisto MP, member of the ANC Women's caucus and SACP CC, John Gomomo, President of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions).

The purpose of the tour was to thank Australian supporters of the struggle for political democracy and to refocus their energies on solidarity in the struggle ahead for economic
and social democracy. The theme of the tour was Labour and Women in the New South Africa.

The Reconstruction and Development Program of the government of national unity (GNU), was central to all talks. To the majority of South Africans, the RDP means jobs, a living wage, houses, education, health and child care, access to clean water and electricity. To employers and capital RDP means greater productivity, profit and foreign investment. Workers believe the RDP must be ‘people-driven’, not something handed down from government structures, under pressure from business interests. “These conflicting viewpoints are not mutually exclusive,” say Nqakula and Komomo. “The people must be involved at all stage of the RDP; workers must participate in decision-making on the factory floor; they need training and skills development. Lack of skills and training are at the root of high levels of unemployment (47%). Capital complains about labour productivity, but labour productivity goes hand in hand with capital productivity. When wages rise and workers participate in decision making on the factory floor, and when they undergo thorough program of training and skills development, productivity will rise - and so will investment.”

The RDP is central to the lives of women according to.Thenjewe Nhlanganto “Take land issues as an example: the constitution states that land should be restored to those who had it before - but women were never permitted to own land! They were never permitted to own houses. When you talk of education you are talking about women because they are the most illiterate. Everything about the RDP concerns women. They have fought, suffered, side by side with men for national liberation but this has not brought liberation from patriarchy. Whether it be class, ethnicity, religion, race, union, workplace, the position of women as been right at the bottom. Even in the historic election victory with 35% women in parliament and 80% of these, African women, patriarchy ensured that only two of the 29 cabinet ministers were women - until women staged a noisy rally outside the President's home and this led to the appointment of three women deputy ministers! South African women need all your support.”

The message from the delegation was loud and clear: The Struggle Continues ... Australians Be In It. We want your help and Australian advice, but our model will be African.

Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Southern Africa July 1994
A six member Parliamentary delegation led by the Hon Ben Humphreys visited Southern Africa in July 1994. Other members were Ms Trish Worth (Deputy Delegation Leader), Senator John Coulter, Senator Dee Margetts, Mr Richard Evans and Mr Colin Holtis. Mr Peter Roberts was Delegation Secretary and Mr Alan Peuster was Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Adviser. The delegation visited Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. Their Report was tabled in Parliament on 5 December 1994.

1994 Marjorie Smart Lecture
The 1994 Marjorie Smart Lecture, “Reform or Revolution: South Africa’s Transition”, was delivered in the Prince Phillip Theatre, St Hilda’s College, the University of Melbourne, on Wednesday, 24 August at 8.00 pm by Professor Leonard Thompson. On Thursday evening, 25 August, in the St Hilda’s Library, a panel of scholars and public figures joined Professor Thompson in a discussion of the Transition.

Leonard M Thompson is Charles J Stille Professor of History Emeritus and Director (since 1977) of the Southern African Research Program at Yale. He studied at Rhodes University and Oxford (Natal Rhodes Scholar) and has been Professor at the universities of Cape Town, UCLA and Yale. His distinctions include Fulbright, Guggenheim and Leverhulme Fellowships and a Visiting Fellowship of All Souls. He served as an international observer of the South African election; he was assigned to the African Townships outside Durban.

Professor Thompson is a widely read author whose books have dealt with many aspects of South Africa’s past and prospects. Among his best known works are Survival in Two Worlds: Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, 1786-1870; The Political Mythology of Apartheid: A History of South Africa. With Monica Wilson, he edited The Oxford History of South Africa.

African Liberation Support Network Laid to Rest: Vale CARE
Last January 1994 the national CARE (Campaign Against Racial Exploitation, Inc) was dissolved by unanimous decision of affiliates, including Aboriginal land councils, trade unions, student groups, and anti-racist community and aid organisation. This does not mean that affiliated groups have dissolved. WACARE keeps the name alive and actively continues to be involved in support of ANC and Aboriginal groups.

CARE was forged as a response to the controversial 1971 Springbok tour. It took on a more organised form in 1973-74 and officially was launched by Bob Hawke. CARE campaigned ceaselessly for Southern African liberation from colonial, racist regimes. To this end it helped raise consciousness and political/material support for peoples in Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. It successfully lobbied government for SWAPO and ANC offices to be opened in Australia and, once opened, took the initiative in raising funds to support them. CARE was recognized by the UN as
the national anti-apartheid network of Australia, which it represented at international conferences in many countries, including France and Japan.

CARE was able to provide support to Africans living and studying in Australia, including future government ministers and officials in Zimbabwe and Namibia (the Jim Gale Memorial African Scholarship Fund, established to remember one of CARE's most indefatigable and outstanding leaders, Jim Gale), continues to support Africans studying here. In 1985 it organized a major international conference in support of Namibian liberation. It published a newsletter (later Viva, which recently ceased), the longest-running journal of record on African affairs published in Australia. It also produced stickers, posters, badges and sold anti-apartheid materials across the country. CARE provided speakers, liaised with churches and trade unions, organized pickets and boycotts of apartheid interests and, when necessary, took to the streets to oppose racism. As a national network it combined, in a loose but democratic fashion, a diverse range of bodies all dedicated to opposing racism.

CARE also was prominent in Aboriginal campaigns for land rights and justice in the face of racism and deaths in custody. Its dissolution is due to changing circumstances and a lack of resources but struggles against racism and in support of further African liberation will continue in Australia through the agency of interested groups and individuals. To get in touch with such groups readers may contact: WACARE PO Box 159 Mt Lawley WA.

Peter Limb
Perth

Malawian Scholar Wins 1994 Noma Award


The jury citation goes on to say that "the book is an exercise in historical reconstruction, and its strength and distinction lies above all in its bold and convincing challenge to hitherto accepted orthodoxies, terminologies, and interpretations, about the nature and development of African societies and economies. The book is an outstanding, pioneering work, destined to become highly influential, and providing such a wealth of information and detail as to elevate the study of African economic history to a new level. The jury considered a further achievement of the book to be its successful, continent-wide approach" and "its thorough accessibility. The very full documentary apparatus in the book, which also makes it an extremely useful work of reference", was similarly praised by the jury. The publisher, CODESRIA, was commended for "having shown great enterprise in identifying and supporting their author and finding him the necessary resources."

10th Congress of the Pan African Association for Prehistory and Related Studies

The 10th Congress of the Pan African Association for Prehistory and Related Studies will be held at the University of Zimbabwe in association with National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe from 18 to 23 June 1995. A large number of papers have already been offered, promising a lively and interesting meeting. Themes to be taken up include: Hominid evolution; paleoenvironmental studies; Middle Stone Age; Late Stone Age; Rock Art Studies; Early Food production; Information technology; Ethnoarchaeology; Cultural Resource Management; Early Iron working communities; Late Iron Working communities; Early hominid land use. The Chairman is Professor N Bhebe and the organising Secretary, Gilbert Pwiti, History Department, University of Zimbabwe, Post Office Box MP 167, Mount Pleasant Harare Zimbabwe.

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Visitors and People

Professor Taban Lo Liyong, Professor in the Department of English and Literature in the College of Education, University of Juba (Sudan) spent a 12-week period from mid-September at Curtin University as the inaugural Visiting Research Fellow in the Division of Arts, Education and Social Sciences. He worked with two Schools within the Division, Communication and Cultural Studies and Social Sciences and Asian Languages.

Professor Lo Liyong gave a number of poetry readings and seminars both at Curtin and University of Western Australia. He will remain in Perth in January to conduct a workshop in creative writing at the University of Western Australia Summer School.

Professor Bill Nason of University of Cape Town History Department, visited ANU for two months late in the year. He gave a seminar in the Research School of Social Sciences on The United Democratic Front in South Africa in the 1980s.

Professor I O Oruhobove, from Ondo State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria, was a Visiting Fellow to the Health Transition Centre, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the ANU in November.

Professor Angela Cheater, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology in the University of Waikato and formerly Professor of Social Anthropology in the University of Zimbabwe, paid a brief visit to Curtin University of Technology, Perth, in September. She was returning to New Zealand from England where she had attended the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom Annual Conference, on the "African Environment" and the Journal of Southern Africa Studies Conference, "Paradigms Lost, Paradigms Regained?" She spoke about both conferences to a small seminar group of Curtin and University of WA staff and postgraduates.
Professor Ali Mazrui will be attending a Conference on the United Nations that Professor Joe Camilleri is organizing at La Trobe University in July 1995. Professor Camilleri is anxious to hear from anyone who would be interested in having Professor Mazrui visit, please contact him at La Trobe.

Dr David Doxward presented a paper on Rwanda at a Conference of the African Institute of the Russian Academy of Science, on Ethnicity and Politics, held in Moscow in November.

Dr David Moore, formerly at Athabasca University, Northern Alberta, Canada, has taken up an appointment in the Politics Discipline at Flinders University of South Australia, where he will be teaching African politics and development. Dr Moore’s doctoral thesis was on “The Contradictory Construction of Hegemony in Zimbabwe”. He has recently co-edited a book with Gerald J Schmitz entitled Debating Development Discourse: Institutional and Popular Perspectives for MacMillan. The volume, which grew out of an International Development Research Centre project on the “genealogical” roots of “equity, participation and sustainability”, has a strong African focus. He writes regularly for the Southern African Review of Books.

First HRC 1995 Africa Conferences

African precolonial achievement

This is the name given to the first of a series of three conferences on African themes that will be organized by the Humanities Research Centre of the Australian National University during 1995. This particular conference will be held at the Centre in Canberra from 10-12 June. As its convenor my intention is that it should examine some of the broader issues of importance in the study of the last two to three thousand years of Africa’s past. In common with other conferences hosted by the Humanities Research Centre, the papers will be addressed to the wider academic community and to interested members of the public rather than devoted to specialized matters. Each paper will be a full-length plenary paper of 40/50 minutes, followed by discussion, each one will be presented by an invited speaker. Thus there will probably be no more than four papers a day and the final afternoon will be taken up with a discussion panel on the theme of possible future directions in research into African prehistory.

The details of the program are still being arranged but it is hoped that the speakers will include Professor Richard B Lee of the University of Toronto; Professor Bassey Andah of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria; Professor George Brooks of Indiana University; Professor Elizabeth Ichel of the University of Otago; Dr Joanna Casey of the University of Toronto; Dr Thomas McCaskie of the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom; Dr George Abungu of Fort Jesus Museum in Mombasa, Kenya; Dr Henry Mutore of the University of Nairobi, Kenya; Dr Alannah Segobye of the University of Botswana; Dr Kevin MacDonald of the University of London; and Dr Roland Fletcher of the University of Sydney. Several of these speakers will be in Australia as Visiting Fellows at the Humanities Research Centre and may be willing to speak at other institutions during their stay if invitations and finance are forthcoming.

The main emphasis in the conference will be archaeological and it is hoped that the subjects addressed will range from hunter-gatherers to urbanization, from climatic change to the influence of landscapes, from the exploitation of wild resources by agriculturalists to the role of cattle in later African prehistory, from the development of internal trading networks to the maritime contacts of Swahili cities. In addition, the role of oral tradition in African prehistory will be examined. Clearly, the theme of the conference is so broad that any program that is devised will inevitably be selective to some extent. Nevertheless, the aim will be to present a conference that has general interest for those wishing to learn more of Africa’s precolonial past. It is hoped that a full program will be published in the next issue of the Humanities Research Centre Bulletin.

Graham Connah
University of New England
The second HRC 1995 Conference

Out of Africa: Texts for Understanding the African Past

This second HRC Conference will be held from 3 - 6 July 1995 in Canberra.

The history of Africa is complex and diverse, raising fundamental questions about our understanding of the nature of culture and society. Colonialism and the incorporation into the global economy, the impact of Western education and law, the nature of religious conversion and philosophical changes, the roles and status of women, the 'blues' of the peasant and the poor, are but a few of the many areas of modern scholarship. The range and depth of historical linguistic and anthropological research over the past decade have profoundly altered perceptions of African past, in turn leading to a reappraisal of African in European culture. If Africa is part of "The Other" in European cultures, so Western societies and thoughts are also part of an African "Other".

Through its emphasis on texts of cultural transmission (written, oral and material records), the Conference will illuminate the subtle dynamics of African cultures and the methodological complexities of interpreting the African past. By focusing on the experience of African peoples and the development of their cultures within the context of increasing interaction with the wider world, the conference seeks to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes of Africa and its history.

The Conference will range widely over methodological problems and controversies in the use of 'texts', as broadly conceived, examining the ways in which African's history has been constructed, by whom, and to what ends. The juxtaposition of African understanding of their own cultures with the 'constructions' embodied in Western thoughts and writings raises issues which resonate within the broader corpus of academic inquiry. African readings of modern historical experience are a fascinating entry to the past. The philosophical and methodological issues to be discussed should prove of direct relevance and application to Australian scholars and scholarship.

David Dorward
African Research Institute
La Trobe University

African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at La Trobe University, 9-10 am 15th July 1994

The meeting was chaired by Associate Professor Peter Alexander.

Minutes of the previous AGM held in Canberra on 3 October 1993, published in the December 1993 Newsletter, were taken as read, and accepted as a true and accurate record.

President's Report

AFSAA's 1995 Conference. The President reported that planning for the HRC’s 1995 conference program on Africa is now well advanced. The conference to be held at Macquarie University, 28-30 September, will be in association with AFSAA and the Pacific. Titled ‘What’s Happening in Africa Today?’ this will be the AFSAA Annual Conference, and it is being organized by the President and immediate past President, Professor Deryck Schreuder. Offers of papers on all aspects of contemporary Africa are invited, and some have already been received. Further offers should be directed as soon as possible to Peter Alexander, School of English, UNSW, Sydney 2052.

Discussion about the 1996 Conference centered on Pal Ahluwalia's suggestion that Adelaide University should host that year's conference. It was agreed that Pal should be asked whether resources would be available for the conference, and if an organising committee could be set up. (Di Schwerdt from Adelaide University and Cecilia Moretti from Flinders attended the La Trobe Conference. It was suggested that these two be asked to assist).

Treasurer's Report

A statement of 1993-94 finances was submitted. Approximately 100 subscriptions had been paid during the financial year. There is still a shortfall between subscriptions and production numbers of the Newsletter. Costs have been reduced marginally because postage of the Newsletter has been borne by Curtin University since production was transferred there.

The President asked that Curtin University should be thanked for services provided in the production of the Newsletter, and for supporting postage costs.

It was moved that subscriptions should be computerised, and aligned with the mailing list in a new format, with a view to easier culling of the mailing list. The Treasurer will look into this prior to subscription reminders going out in 1995.

Moved: P Alexander, seconded: P Hetherington

Newsletter Editor's Report

The following suggestions were made by the Editor, Professor Gerzetic:

1. The Newsletter should retain its non-specialist, generalist focus and that it continue to be addressed to both non-specialists as well as academics and professionals with an African interest.

2. That we review the title which clearly no longer reflects the content. AFSAA Review and Newsletter has been suggested.

3. That the format be upgraded always bearing in mind. The existing format no longer does justice to the quality of (most of) material in it nor to Africa.
4. The AFSAAP State representatives be specifically asked to assume responsibility for sending information about State-located activities. The Editor will provide a form if necessary.

5. That we take up the question raised by Professor Alexander of having articles refereed.

A lengthy discussion led to the suggestion that two separate publications should be produced, one being a scholarly journal.

Jocelyn Armstrong moved, Professor Alexander seconded, that 2-3 people should be asked to research, cost, and write a proposal for founding a scholarly journal; this proposal to be presented at the AGM in 1995. Peter Alexander, Pen Hetherington, Cherry Gertzel agreed to be part of such a committee. Peter Limb is also to be asked.

It was agreed that the format of the Newsletter should, in the interim, be upgraded and other suggestions from the Editor should be pursued at her discretion. There was general agreement that there is need for the refereeing of articles to encourage the academic community to offer their best work for publication in the Association's publication. This will require the establishment of an Editorial Committee. The Editor has a list of academic staff, to cover a broad spread of disciplines, who will be asked.

Elections
The following were nominated and elected:
President: Associate Professor Peter Alexander
Vice-President: Dr Sue Thomas
Secretary/Treasurer: Ms Liz Dimock
Newsletter Editor: Professor Cherry Gertzel

The President expressed particular gratitude to Ms Dimock for her sterling work as Secretary/Treasurer over the past several years, and for being willing to carry the burden of both positions for a further year. The meeting agreed however, that it would be better and fairer if someone else could be found to act as Secretary from next year so that the weight of both offices did not fall on one person. The President also conveyed to Professor Gertzel the gratitude of AFSAAP for the excellent job she continues to do as editor of the Newsletter.

State representatives to remain unchanged, except that a replacement for Raymond Athorpe, who is abroad, is to be sought in NSW.

New Zealand: Dr Jocelyn Armstrong and Professor John Omer-Cooper
Queensland: Dr Richard Brown
NSW: To be announced
Western Australia: Dr Peter Limb
NT and ACT: Dr Bernard Leeman
Tasmania: Dr Derek Overton
Moved: Liz Dimock, seconded Cherry Gertzel.

Any other Business
Discussion concerning the use of accumulated funds made little progress because of shortage of time. It was agreed that we should continue to build up funds, and that only interest should be regarded as available for spending. The Treasurer will look into funds that might yield better interest rates. The President is willing to approach corporations for donations to boost capital funds, and Professor Gertzel offered to supply a list of likely supportive companies.

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**African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

**S1 Account**
Balance at 27th September 1993 1,192.32

Expenses 27th September 1993 - 30 June 1994
December 1993 Newsletter
printing 530.00
telephone 17.65
Float for La Trobe Conference 500.00
Secretariat expenses - postage 216.18
photocopy 17.00
office/Liz 58.18
Donations (to S2) 220.00
1559.01

Income 27th September 1993 - 30th June 1994
Sales, microfiche, directories 388.74
Canberra Conference part return of float 327.77
subscriptions 2,235.52
donations 220.00
interest 29.04
3,201.07

Balance at 30 June 1994 2,834.38

**S2 Account**
Balance at 27th September 1993 715.00
interest 31st March 16.97
donations 220.00
Balance at 30th June 1994 951.97

**S5 Account**
Balance at 27th September 1993 7,345.47
interest 31st March 254.07
Balance at 30th June 1994 7,599.54