AFSAAP ADDRESSES

President:
Dr D Pal Ahluwalia
Politics Department
University of Adelaide
Adelaide SA 5000
E-mail: palahlu@arts.adelaide.edu.au

Vice-President:
Dr Liz Dinock
African Research Institute
La Trobe University
Bundoora VIC 3083
E-mail: lizd@dure.latrobe.edu.au

Secretary:
Dr Tanya Lyons
Administrator, Globalisation Program
Flinders University of South Australia
GPO Box 2160
Adelaide, SA 5001
E-mail: tanya.lyons@flinders.edu.au

Treasurer:
Dr Mark Israel
School of Law
Flinders University
GPO Box 2160
Adelaide SA 5001
E-mail: mark.israel@flinders.edu.au

2000 Annual Meeting Convener:
Dr D Pal Ahluwalia
Politics Department
University of Adelaide
Adelaide SA 5000
E-mail: palahlu@arts.adelaide.edu.au

Editor, Review and Newsletter:
Cherry Getzeli
Adjunct Professor
School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages
Curtin University of Technology
GPO Box U1967
PERTH WA 6845
E-mail: getzelc@spectrum.curtin.edu.au

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The Treasurer, AFSAAP
School of Law
Flinders University
GPO Box 2160
Adelaide, SA 5001

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ISBN No: 1 86342 513 6

African Studies Association of Australasia and The Pacific
Review and Newsletter
Volume XXII  Number 1  June 2000

Contents

Obituary:
Michael Philip Cowen 1945 – 2000 1
Note from the Editor 3
Letter from the President 4
AFSAAP 2000 5

Articles
Institutional Response to HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Care for People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and Health Seeking Behaviour in Zambia. 6
JRS Malungo
African Studies in Canada. 15
Martin Klein
Why I gave Up African Studies. 21
Gavin Kitching
A Peripatetic's Perspective on the 1999 Perth "New Perspectives" Conference. 27
David Moore

Review Articles
Mapping North-East African Identities. 32
Christine Mason
Labour as the Starting Point of Capital Reforms, Naturally. 39
Scott McWilliam
Autocratic Elites and Enfeebled Masses. 44
Kenneth Good

Book Reviews
Suzette Hald, Controlling Anger: The Anthropology of Gisu Violence. 54
Michael Humphrey
Mark Israel, South African Political Exiles in the UK. 56
Lynette Simons
Obituary

Michael Philip Cowen (1945-2000)

Michael (Mike) Philip Cowen was born on January 16, 1945 in Johannesburg; he died suddenly and completely unexpectedly of an aneurysm on February 6 in Finland, where he was professor and head of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Helsinki. He leaves behind a wife, Riitta Launonen, and two sons, Adam and David, as well as many shocked and saddened friends.

Mike Cowen's best known contributions to African studies were his work on colonial and post-colonial Kenya, and the seminal Doctrines of Development, written with Bob Shenton. His detailed examination of rural Kenya, focused upon Nyeri in Central Province provided the first comprehensive rebuttal of the dependency theory proposition that underdevelopment was producing a peasant society. From this base, Cowen and close colleagues, including Nicola Swainson and Apollo Njonjo, proceeded to demolish several of the related arguments which were then so popular in African studies. Perhaps the most substantial line of demolition concerned the nature of the 'wealthy' who came to power in Kenya after Independence. Through extensive historical work Cowen and his associates showed that an indigenous class of capital had been formed during the colonial period, and that blocking the further advance of the class was a major objective of colonial policy. The peasantry of dependency's under-development was the expression of an agrarian doctrine of development, for which checking indigenous capital's expansion was a necessary condition.

In 1996, Cowen and I published Indigenous Capital in Kenya which sought to update the earlier work, as well as give it a deeper and wider location.

After spending nearly a decade in Kenya, Mike Cowen went to the UK in 1978 and successfully defended his PhD on the wattle bark industry in Kenya at Cambridge the following year. After temporary appointments at Sussex and Swansea, Mike became senior lecturer then reader at City of London Polytechnic, later London Guildhall University. For almost a decade and a half, he remained in the Department of Economics at LGU. While heavily embroiled in academic union politics, and the successful opposition to management plans to close and then relocate the institution, Mike began a highly successful collaboration with Bob Shenton. Many journal articles and working papers followed, before the 1996 publication of Doctrines.
He visited Australia twice, in 1988 and 1995, as a visiting fellow in the School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages at Curtin University of Technology. The last visit occurred shortly before Mike Cowen became Acting Director of the IDS, University of Helsinki. His last major publication, Quakes of Development, a critical review of James Scott’s Seeing Like the State and Collin Leys’ The Rise and Fall of Development Theory has been published in an early form as an IDS Working Paper. A revised version will appear along with an obituary in Issue No 5 of the journal Historical Materialism. An edited collection, Multiparty Elections in Africa prepared with Liisa Laakso and published by James Currey, will appear later this year. Two further books with Bob Shenton, Rise and Times of Colonial Fabianism in Africa and The Necessary Fiction of Community are in preparation. Since much of Mike Cowen’s earlier work on Kenya is hard to access, there are plans to publish an electronic form of his monographs and papers.

We first met in Nairobi in 1974, over lunch at the now-demolished Brunners. The friendship survived and grew over the next 25 years, with both of us keen snail then e-mail letter writers. I had journeyed to Helsinki to give a paper on recent research into tourism and indigenous capital in Fiji to a highly successful conference of the Finnish Society for Development Studies the week before he died. The conference was a tribute to Mike’s capacity for rebuilding development studies in Finland, a point made repeatedly by people who attended his funeral and cremation in Helsinki.

Mike Cowen’s death has produced many tributes, with none more moving than that sent by Michael Chege, who he first met in Nairobi in 1973. One paragraph from a lengthy letter sent in help in preparing the eulogy to be given at the funeral stands out. Chege said:

‘It was easy to misunderstand Mike Cowen, even in Kenya. He was an indefatigable worker. He was devoted to honesty and truth as few people are. He chose his friends carefully, and he remained eternally loyal to them. Mike hated publicity and intellectual posturing, letting his work speak for itself. He loathed hypocrites who studied Africa superficially for self-gain and who moved with the intellectual fads in order to remain on the donor gravy train. He had no time for intellectual superficiality regardless of who it came from. Kenyan studies have lost one of its true luminaries.’

Scott MacWilliam

Michael Cowen’s sudden death last February has deeply saddened all of us who knew him. African studies is also much the poorer for his loss. For many of us his best known scholarly work was that on colonial and post-colonial Kenya; but as Scott MacWilliam reminds us in his obituary printed in this issue of the Review and Newsletter there is much more of his work and especially his seminal study, Doctrines of Development, written with Robert Shenton, that is directly relevant to our understanding of the crisis in which Africa finds itself today.

There is rich diversity and food for thought in this issue as to the nature of this devastating crisis (the phrase is David Moore’s,) and Michael Humphrey’s observation (see his review of Suzette Haldal) that violence relates to “the political limits of managing the social world.” On the one hand Gavin Kitching and Kenneth Good, writing from rather different vantage points, both direct our attention to today’s ruling or governing classes. On the other Christine Sylvester’s review of Teresa Barnes’ new book on women in colonial Zimbabwe, shifts the focus to ordinary people, who as she puts it “rarely if ever had their names shouted from podiums or saw their names on campaign posters,” and the ways in which they counter the “tendencies of their times.” Christine Mason’s review article on North-East African Identities will be of particular interest to those of us concerned with the Horn of Africa. And, given current concerns for Zimbabwe, I would draw attention to the new Zimbabwe Human Rights Bulletin reviewed by Robert McCorquodale.

We are delighted to publish Jacob Malungo’s essay which was a highly commended AFSAAP’s 1999 postgraduate prize. Also Martin Klein’s essay on African studies in Canada which will I hope stimulate us to look more closely at how we in AFSAAP can contribute to a better understanding of Africa here in Australia. I draw attention to the publication of the first selection of papers from the AFSAAP ’99 conference, in the electronic journal Mots Pluriels.

Kitching draws attention in his essay to what he sees as “the low level of factual and historical knowledge of the continent and its problems” that is so often characteristic of the media and press reporting of contemporary events. I am once again grateful to contributors who make it possible for this journal to help remedy that situation. This is in fact the largest issue of the Review that we have achieved and that it has been possible is due entirely to their support. Last but by no means least I must thank Professor Joanna Barker, Executive Director of the John Curtin International Institute at Curtin University for providing the necessary support for the production of this issue; and Paul Nicol who has used his skills to make it more “reader friendly.”

Cherry Gertzel.
June 2000.
Letter From The President

In this issue of the *African Studies Review and Newsletter*, I would like to address a number of issues. However, I will begin by acknowledging the tremendous amount of work that both Peter Limb and Cherry Gertzel put into the Perth Conference which was not only our largest conference but also a resounding success. The conference was a major morale boost for us at a time when African Studies in Australia is all the more precarious.

I would like to draw your attention to our forthcoming annual conference, entitled African Identities, which is to be held at St. Marks College, Adelaide, from July 13-15. The conference programme includes our annual postgraduate workshop. Although I have previously made a call for papers, there is still room for more participants and I look forward to receiving offers and abstracts. Papers on any topic related to Africa are welcome. You will recall that Paul Nursey-Bray and I edited two volumes arising out of the last conference in Adelaide. There are plans afoot to publish a selection of the papers and I would encourage presenters to submit a disk copy of their papers to me at the conference for possible inclusion.

As you are well aware, I have been a keen advocate of AFSAAP mounting a refereed international journal which would raise the profile of the Association. To that end, in 1996, Paul Nursey-Bray and I mooted the idea of such a journal. While there was enthusiastic support for our proposal in some quarters, there remained considerable disquiet and we decided not to proceed. At last year's AGM, I once again raised the issue of a journal with much the same results. Although I was empowered by the AGM to begin negotiations with Carfax to mount a joint journal, I have, in the best interests of the association, decided not to pursue this proposal further. However, I have made arrangements for us to be associated with this new journal. Such an association does not entail any compulsory subscription to the journal. At this year's AGM, I intend to report fully on my discussions with Carfax. In the meantime, I urge you to read Cherry Gertzel's report on the Review and Newsletter in this edition. Cherry has made a number of important suggestions about the future direction of our publication which are encouraging. I look forward to seeing all of you in Adelaide in July.

Pal Ahluwalia

AFSAAP 2000

The African Studies Association's 23rd Annual and International Conference will be held at St Mark's College, University of Adelaide, from 13th to 15th July. This year's conference organiser is Dr. Pal Ahluwalia, who is also the Association's current President, and he looks forward to welcoming members in Adelaide (see his letter in this issue of the Review, above).

The theme of this year's conference will be African Identities—a theme of considerable interest at this time. The program will combine individual papers with a number of panel discussions and as is always the case papers on any topic, and across all areas of African Studies, are also welcome. It is not too late to send in a title and abstract. Papers in the area of critical theory in the African context, including consideration of gender and development, will be especially welcome. It is also hoped that one panel discussion will take up questions about the future of African Studies both in Australia and more widely. What direction should we be taking, those of us who continue to teach, research and write on Africa, to ensure Africa receives the attention and understanding that it deserves, in this new century?

The annual Postgraduate Workshop will take place immediately before the conference, on 12 July. This will be the fifth Workshop, which is an indication of the way in which it has become an integral part of the Association's conference activities AFSAAP is a cross-disciplinary organisation, which means perspectives can be heard on varying topics. The Workshop seeks to broaden awareness of African society, culture, politics and economy through the exchange of ideas and experience. Postgraduates are urged to participate if they can. Most important of all the Workshop has become an excellent meeting place for postgraduates in African Studies.

The Annual conference is AFSAAP's main event of the year, an occasion when we come together, meet old and make new friends, discuss our research, our work, and learn more about Africa. The conference brochure went out some time ago, but even so it is not too late to register and come along.

Dr. Ahluwalia's address for further information is: African Identities Conference, Politics Department, Adelaide University, SA 5005.

His email address is: palahuwalia@arts.adelaide.edu.au The conference website is: http://arts.adelaide.edu.au/arts-web/News/AFSAAP/
Institutional Response To HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Care For People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLHWA) And Health Seeking Behaviour in Zambia

J.R.S. Malungo*

The advent of HIV/AIDS across Africa has challenged the traditional familial support system for the sick as it increases the burden on the family at the same time that the epidemic threatens all efforts towards socio-economic development. Marginalising or blaming those affected assists only in disempowering them. This paper examines various institutions in Zambia involved in caring for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHWA) and those affected, as well as the type of care provided by each respective institution. The paper also discusses how HIV/AIDS has prompted family re-structuring.

Data Sources And Methodology
Both quantitative and qualitative data come from a survey conducted in the second half of 1998 mostly in Southern Zambia, the writer's home area. A randomly selected sample covered 549 households, capturing 3828 household members and 1000 respondents aged 15 years and above, who are the primary units of analysis. Of these, 524 were drawn from the rural and 476 from the urban areas and 525 were females. Area truncation (area survey), snowball sampling and various 'informal discussions' assisted in finding out 'who was who' in the society. Thirteen Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), 25 in-depth studies or narratives, and 10 case studies germane to the study were conducted. Participatory observations were applied in two respects. First, I used direct observation of events in the study area as when I visited orphanages and also attended drama group performances on the use of condoms and the effect of HIV/AIDS in the community and second, to a lesser degree, I put into context some past occurrences.

Ordinarily, focus group discussions are among small groups of people (6-12) with the researcher acting as the moderator or facilitator (Minichio et al. 1995:5). However, I successfully organised a 'congregation' of about 100 people under the auspices of traditional headmen and a local chief. The congregational technique was representative and insightful as people felt secure and freely spoke in the presence of their traditional rulers (Malungo, 1999a:42). Also, during selected focus group discussions I combined males and females in order to enrich arguments between sexes.

Information on AIDS-care in Zambia was solicited from respondents who had had AIDS-patients in their homes and various key informants and discussants.

Fifty-one per cent of the respondents went either to a government hospital or a health centre. Others went to private practitioners, mobile clinics and pharmacies. However, a significant proportion (18 per cent), consulted traditional healers and fewer than one per cent of each type of partner consulted relatives/friends, church and NGOs/CBOs (Community Based Organisations) officials. Respondents cited various reasons as to why they did not go to modern facilities including lack of confidentiality among the trained personnel; inaccessibility of facilities; shortage of medicines; poor attitudes of the medical personnel; and lack of financial resources by many people to pay for the services. The last reason challenges the government and other modern practitioners to re-focus the payment modalities to include material goods which may be available to the general and especially rural populace. Other reasons given suggest that the government has to re-train the health practitioners in order to change their attitudes towards people infected by STDs. They also challenge the government to incorporate other organisations that are readily accessible by the general populace...Against this background we look here at the institutions involved in providing support for PLHWA.

Institutions Involved And Support Rendered
Although AIDS is primarily a health issue, preventing HIV transmission and AIDS-care requires a multi-sectoral approach and commitment so as to provide more resources and skills. Furthermore the issues of sexual behaviour, injecting drug use (IDU) and parent-child transmission which are central in HIV transmission cut across many societal categories and involve diverse communities. Therefore, AIDS-care programmes need to involve the community, including a variety of sectors, especially education, religious and civic. As part of decentralisation AIDS concerns need to be actively understood at the local level to facilitate community commitment and the incorporation of AIDS into local culture and organisation (Ng'weshemi et al., 1997:23). AIDS-care and support facilities have to satisfy the various needs of PLHWA such as access to common drugs for opportunistic diseases; supporting their surviving children, spouses and friends; household assistance such as food, finances and clothing; emotional support; pre- and post-test counselling; moral and spiritual support and empathy - a comprehensive approach. Such care will not only lessen the burden of AIDS on the health system and the society but also improve the quality of life of the affected and infected. AIDS-care opens communication opportunities to strengthen prevention activities to identify opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis at an early stage and to properly manage them. In this process counselling, which must be confidential and by trained people (Malungo, 1999a), is a key element.
Table 1: Percentage distribution of institutions that support AIDS-patients by location of assistance, Southern Zambia, 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Location of Household Assisted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended family</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious organisation</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO/CBO</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community members</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government institution</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of respondents</td>
<td>112.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per cent</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed by author from 1998 Southern Province Sexual Behavioural Survey
Note: The total per cent do not add to 100 per cent because of rounding off.

In the Zambian case a number of different institutions are involved in AIDS-care (Table 1). In both rural and urban areas, nuclear and extended family members in most cases (about 60 per cent) cared for the AIDS-patients. About 12 per cent of the households in urban areas and 7 per cent in rural areas said that they had had AIDS-patients meaning that on average 9.3 per cent of the households have had AIDS-patients. Of those households that had ever cared for AIDS-patients, on average, more than two-thirds of the patients had already died. Some households (about 10 per cent) had lost more than three people to ARC. This makes it difficult for families to sustain themselves as human capital and possibly breadwinners die. The burden of care on these two institutions is heavier in the rural (62 per cent) than urban (56 per cent) areas, reflecting on the one hand the smaller number of hospitals admitting AIDS-out-patients and on the other hand the number of AIDS-patients who return from the urban areas to the villages when the disease reaches the terminal stage.

Other institutions involved include religious organisations (16%), government (10%), and community members (10%). Government assistance is more noticeable in rural than in urban areas, in the form mostly of food rations and medication channelled primarily through rural health centres and clinics or, in their absence, through established mission hospitals or, (more rarely) NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs). Mission hospitals also provide AIDS-care. Chikuni, Monze and Chikankata Mission Hospitals (some of the oldest and biggest hospitals in the country), for instance, run both HIV/AIDS preventive programmes and AIDS-care. A programme manager at Chikankata Hospital said:

We have home-based care in our programme establishments. When a patient is sickly and suspected to be HIV-positive, a test is ordered. But before that is done, pre-testing counselling, that is positive counselling, is done. When the results are given, whether found to be positive or negative, post-testing counselling or screening is done. If the person is found to be sero-positive, they go back to their homes and some assigned health personnel often go there to treat them. From 1987 to 1990 a typical home-care visit was to go to these people, weigh, examine and talk to [counsel] them. We would also talk to [counsel] their family members with their consent, and would then give them whatever things we had carried say medication or food. The problem, however, was that sometimes we did not receive the materials we used to give them from the ministry of health. What we now want to focus on is to have resident teams and carers, the community-based teams (CBTs) which we are calling the carer and prevention teams. These are carers who are based in the local community and patients on home-based care will be referred to this group in their respective localities. This group provides care and support. Us health personnel based at the hospital will be members of all the established CBTs and will provide technical, but not material support to the local CBTs. We will rather have the local group, community health workers that already have the drug kit from the government go ahead with the physical and material support. The hospital-based home care teams are the ones who will do the HIV testing while the CBTs will support them in the care and prevention programmes.

At Monze Hospital an anti-AIDS project manager said:

We run an anti-AIDS programme here within the hospital premises under its auspices. We have preventive programmes and also assist the orphans and the widows. We run educational programmes among different church and non-church members. Such people include truck drivers, bar girls, fishmongers and cattle traders. We also work through home-based programmes in line with various organisations and government. We give condoms to people who need them and also counsel them that they need to preserve their lives. Since we work in collaboration with the hospital, people infected with
STDs or AIDS-related diseases are given medicine. The home-based care aspect of our programmes support the patients at their homes. These are people who have T.B., patients with cancer and HIV/AIDS-related diseases. Because of these concerted efforts that various organisations have put together, we have seen some changes on sexual behaviours and quality of care among the infected and affected.

At Chikuni Hospital the AIDS department as in many other places is called the home-based care department in order to avoid the stigma. There:

The home-based programme runs prevention activities with community volunteers, and provide care for those who are infected with HIV. We also have orphan care where we again work with volunteers. In addition we have women projects which assist them raise some money to economically empower them. Some of these women are widows. We as the department run outreach programmes when we contact our volunteers who are based in the communities. We sometimes perform live drama, have role plays and discussions at various gatherings such as beer parties and teach the people about the dangers of HIV/AIDS (Project administrator at Chikuni hospital, 1998).

The organisations also educated people how to prevent infections when dealing with AIDS-patients. Different types of care provided by various institutions are shown in Table 2.

In urban areas, nuclear (33 per cent) and extended (23 per cent) families provided most of the assistance. Other institutions involved were religious organisations (16 per cent), government (10 per cent), and community members (10 per cent). NGOs and CBOs rarely assisted AIDS-patients (fewer than 2 per cent). The most common assistance provided was finance and material support. In urban areas, more than 40 per cent and slightly more than one-third of the households with AIDS-patients, respectively, received financial and material support.

This compared with 48 per cent for material and 27 per cent for finance in rural areas. In both urban and rural areas most financial support came from nuclear family members. In other words when a spouse was sick the healthy partner, possibly assisted by siblings, looked for financial resources. In urban areas all institutions involved in AIDS-care, to some degree, provided some financial resources. In rural areas, however, only the family members and government provided this. Other than finance, nuclear family members provided material, moral and all other needs.

\[\text{Table 2: Percentage distribution of institutions involved in supporting AIDS-patients and type of support given, Southern Zambia, 1998}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of residence</th>
<th>Type of support</th>
<th>Nuclear family</th>
<th>Extended family</th>
<th>Church NGO CBO</th>
<th>Cow/ry members</th>
<th>Govt. members</th>
<th>Other Total</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed by author from 1998 Southern Province Sexual Behaviour Survey

In urban areas, moral support (counselling) was provided by family members, church and community members, but not government which provided finance and material support such as medication and food rations. The study instanced cases, however, where because of the stigma attached to AIDS, HIV-positive people avoided or abandoned such food rations and medications which in turn increased their dependence on the family members.

In the rural areas few institutions, including the church organisations, could provide financial and moral support. This is indicative of the local churches' limited financial capacity compared to their urban counterparts. Despite this, the church, in both rural and urban areas, was regarded as the most supportive institution to the affected members outside the family circles. During their visits, church members offered prayers and other moral support (counselling) and provided a variety of material wealth. In addition, many religious organisations have established orphanages and assist in the education and training of the adopted orphans. They also assist widows. Many of the Non-governmental organisations and CBOs also provide a lot of material needs in the rural areas as well as counselling and peer education although this is not always recognised, perhaps because, in most instances, these organisations operate through or in collaboration with other established institutions, especially the church, schools and hospitals.

About two-thirds (65 per cent) of urban interviewees felt that the assistance was sufficient. Only a small proportion (10 per cent) considered it small and insufficient and the rest said it was moderate (25 per cent). In rural areas, however, close to a third (29 per cent) said that the current support is little and insufficient, 17 per cent said it was moderate and the rest (54 per cent) viewed it to be enough. Notwithstanding that there may really be less assistance in rural areas, the differences in assessments between rural and urban areas could as well be because...
most people in urban areas have better income opportunities than their rural counterparts, thereby being in a better position to sustain their families when the breadwinner was sick. It is also possible that this assessment was partly because most AIDS-patients in rural areas were provided with material, and not financial need. This financial constraint may have limited the people who wanted to pay for other things say medication or send their children to school. This may be compounded by the factor that many such disease-specific materials could not be easily sold for cash. Most institutions, however, indicated that their efforts to improve the quality of care and expand the 'catchment' areas were constrained by lack of financial and material resources.

Family re-structuring due to HIV/AIDS

The impact of AIDS has been to disrupt familial functions and to alter family compositions. In Uganda, for instance, Mukiza-Gapere and Ntozi (1995) observed that the effect of AIDS had been to introduce a new household structure whereby households were headed by widows, single women, children under 18 years of age and orphans. The situation is similar in Zambia. Widow and widower inheritance has generally been abandoned for fear of spreading the virus (Malungo, 1999b) which means that the widow becomes the head of the household. In view of continued property grabbing and sharing when someone dies, this leaves widows with little resources to run the homestead. A Zambian representative of Women and Law in Southern Africa (and this was echoed at the congregation) observed:

"People have become selfish! There is a lot of greediness. Instead of following the way the custom used to be, people now are using the death of their relatives to enrich their lives. In the past wulya zyina (the inheritor) took over total responsibility. He did not only take the property that was there, but also took over the responsibility of taking care of the wives and children. The relatives to the deceased could take some property but left the rest to zimilila zyina (inheritor) to help the remaining family members. But nowadays wulya zyina takes care of his interests and leaves the other people suffering."

When these widows die, as is often the case with people who die from AIDS-related illnesses, the children or other relatives such as uncles or grandparents are forced to take care of the relics of the households. The situation is more daunting where the extended family relationships are weak. A case to consider is a 33-year-old senior army officer, who retired from the service on health grounds, became sick and died shortly before receiving his pension. He was married to an uneducated and unemployed wife and had seven young children. Three of these children had been born to different mothers well before he married, as he had had numerous relationships before he became a 'born again'. After a protracted illness he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and meningitis, convincing the average person in the community that he had acquired the virus, though no tests were done to prove this. During the terminal period of the illness he had insisted on having unsafe sex with his wife. Just at the time of his death the pension money came through and as a requirement in Zambia the money and the property had to be shared among his wife, his relatives and the children. The wife built a house from her share and kept all her children. The other three children who were not hers were taken over by his father along with their share. As a Christian, and also as a preventive measure to avoid contracting HIV and other STDs, the widow refused to contract levirate marriage. Shortly after his death, however, the widow presented typical symptoms of AIDS-related complex (ARC) and often got treatment for various ailments both with traditional remedies and at the health services of the late husband's employers. She often expressed anxiety and pessimism over the future of their young children if she died. Within two years of her husband's death, she died. After her death her father-in-law came back from the village and demanded the house that she had built from her share of the pension, arguing that this was right since he was now going to look after all the orphans. This became a legal battle. But as issues of his having bewitched his son evolved, he was quick to argue that he 'knew his son's sexual behaviour well enough' and was convinced that the son had acquired the fatal disease from one of his previous sexual encounters.

These clients present numerous and vexing issues including morality of property grabbing when a partner dies, especially the breadwinner; need of writing wills on how to share family property at the death of a spouse; lack of government policy and support mechanisms for the disadvantaged widows and orphans; lack of information and legal representations of the disadvantaged groups in society; lack of health provisions for those with chronic and terminal illnesses; women empowerment; safe sex among the infected partners; mandates of auxiliary organisations (say the church and NGOs/CBOs) in HIV/AIDS-care; denial and stigmatisation of the epidemic and availability and accessibility of counselling services. As the number of deaths increases due to AIDS, the society in general and the nuclear and extended family members in particular, are bound to experience heavier responsibilities. Unfortunately, the heaviest burdens are likely to be on the old, often sick, poor and children. And because of a lack of understanding of the epidemic, most of the remaining dependants are not only going to be shunned, but stigmatised.

Acknowledgements

I thank UNFPA-Zambia and ANU for supporting the field work; Mr David Diangamo, Mr. Oliver Chinganya and Mr. Edgar Chani, all of Central Statistics
Office in Zambia, for providing me with research assistants; all research assistants: Sida Lweendo, Augustine Munema, Maambbo Kenny Musute, Bob Kaima, Gift Himmuya, Daniel Muyabi, Namaluba Namangala, Miriam Sime, Duntu Malyenkuku, Mutinta Tembo, Mutinta ChiInza, Lmita Mwiria and Eric Shimunwwe; Bernard Kiele; all respondents; Chiefe Uwenuka, Moonze, Mwanza and Chongo and their headmen; civic leaders; and Mrs Emeldah M.K. Malungo and Bob Malindi Kaima for transcribing the qualitative data. I must also thank the anonymous judges who awarded my essay the 1999 AFSAAP Postgraduate prize, and Professor Cherry Gerzeli for reviewing and editing this publication.

References

African Studies in Canada

Canada has had certain advantages in dealing with Africa. We have never had colonies. To be sure, there were a handful of Canadians who served in Africa as soldiers, administrators or missionaries, but there was no formal Canadian colonial presence. Canada also had few slaves, and in fact, in the 19th century, Canada received people fleeing slavery and racial discrimination in the United States. As a result, Canada had neither a large population of African descent nor a liberal intellectual community guilty about societies their fathers had treated brutally.

During the 1950s, most Canadians interested in graduate study went abroad, usually to Britain or the United States. There, many of them got involved in the excitement of African independence and a number of them took their first teaching position in American universities—Cranford Pratt at Makerere, John Flint and J.B. Webster at Ibadan, Douglas Anglin in Zambia, Douglas Kilmall, John Saul and Griff Cunningham at Dar es Salaam. When Tanganyika created its first university, Nyere wanted a vice-chancellor who was young and not a colonial. He chose Cranford Pratt. During Pratt’s years, Dar es Salaam was probably the most exciting university in Africa, innovative, radical and very much shaped by Nyere’s vision of the new Africa. Pratt also attracted a number of Canadians to Tanzania. Some, like Gerald Helleiner, Canada’s leading development economist, were already involved with Africa. Others did a stint and returned to other interests back home, but the Tanzania connection remained important in Canada and particularly in Toronto. Many Toronto Africanists have taught at Dar and Toronto has trained many Dar social scientists. A second Canadian, Douglas Anglin served as vice-chancellor at the University of Zambia, and perhaps for similar reasons. Canada also received political refugees from South Africa. The most important, Arthur Keppel-Jones, built a small programme focussing on South African history at Queens. Donovan Williams went to Calgary, Cecil Abrahams to Brock, John Shingler to McGill.

The 1960s were years of dramatic educational expansion as Canada committed itself to giving higher education to larger numbers of students. It was also a period of educational reform as an older, highly structured curricula gave way to the creation of more varied options. Immigration was changing the make-up of Canadian population. Canadians were becoming more conscious of the wider

*Martin Klein is Professor Emeritus in African History at the University of Toronto. He was in Australia from February to May 2000 as Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University.
Much of the development of African studies came from university expansion. Many good young scholars were interested in Africa and some taught in Africa. Development studies was growing, and many universities expanded the study of distant parts of the world. In 1966 Cranford Pratt left Dar es Salaam to create the International Studies Program at Toronto. He stipulated his funds to create positions in various departments, including the one I held for 29 years. By the time Pratt stepped down in the early ’70s, Toronto had the largest number of Africanists in Canada, about 16 to 18, not including scientists who have worked in Africa. This number included Richard Lee and Peter Carstens in Anthropology, Richard Sandbrook, Richard Stren and Jonathan Barker in Political Science. York, a totally new university in the northern suburbs of Toronto, also attracted numerous Africanists. Dalhousie in Halifax, Nova Scotia, hired John Flint and he brought Webster there. Joined by Tim Shaw in Political Science, they built an African Studies programme. Most of their graduate students were Africans funded by Commonwealth fellowships or Canadian development agencies. At McGill, the Centre for Developing Area Studies became a major focus for research. Small, but important centres of African studies also developed elsewhere: Peter Gutkind and Myron Echenberg at McGill, Douglas Anglim and Fraser Taylor at Carleton, Alf Schwartz at Laval, Joel Gregory and Victor Piche in the Montreal demography programme, Peter Shinnie in the Calgary archeology department, Bonnie Campbell at the University of Quebec in Montreal. Donald Weldon, an American at Alberta, wrote one of the first African history texts. Audrey Wiper at Waterloo and Patricia Stamp at York pioneered womens’ studies.

Formation Of CAAS
In 1969, The African Studies Association (US) met in Montreal. The meeting was shut down by a group of militant black activists from the US. Though most Canadian activists were sympathetic to the struggle of African-Americans for equality, they resented the export of American conflicts onto Canadian soil. The result was the formation of a separate organization, the Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS), which first met in the spring of 1971 in Quebec city and has met almost every year since then. The early 1970s were in some ways a good period for African studies, though many Canadians were envious of the support colleagues in the U.S. were getting. Our courses were popular and we were getting good graduate students, many of them from Africa, others veterans of CUSO or various volunteer programmes. Development support and anti-apartheid organizations appeared in many cities, often with church support. The major newspapers tried to cover events in Africa. Federal funding tended to go not to programme development, but to journals and to annual meetings. We still have no programmes for teaching African languages — Toronto teaches Swahili with a part-time teacher and
Carleton has a limited language programme, but the *Canadian Journal of African Studies* had a subsidy and for many years, was sent free to 250 addresses in Africa. Government grants underwrote the attendance of African graduate students and visitors to Africa to our annual meeting, which meant that we were always talking to Africans and not just about Africans. We had a skeletal organization, but in Fraser Taylor, a geographer from Carleton University, an able secretary-treasurer.

**Changing Constituencies**

In the mid-70's, the academic job market contracted sharply. From that time forth, our graduate students were predominantly African. Canada's generous immigration policies meant that we also began to get large numbers of political refugees and economic immigrants. The collapse of the Ghanaian economy led many Ghanaian students to stay in Canada. Toronto now has over 30,000 Somalis and 20,000 Ghanaians. These Africans and their children tend to be very education-oriented. There were also white and black refugees from apartheid, of whom the most important intellectually was Dan O'Meara at the University of Quebec in Montreal. The late 1970s also saw changes in student interests. Third World courses dropped in enrollment. Frantz Fanon was no longer widely read. At the same time, our constituency began changing. In the 1970s, students were very interested in dependency, underdevelopment and revolution. Some of that persisted, but focused not on Nyerere and Cabral, but on Mandela and South Africa. Increasingly, however, our students were interested in culture, race and history. We feel this more in Toronto because the immigration of Africans and West Indians has focussed in Toronto, where more than 40% of the population is now people born elsewhere and our students are between a third and a half what are now termed in Canada "visible minorities." Canada is, however, proud of its multiculturalism and there is always a significant group of white and Asian students interested in Africa and often influenced by the concerns of their Afro-Canadian peers.

In the 1970s, most of us were relatively young. We were also often seen as radicals. At several universities, there were efforts to marginalize scholars seen as Third World radicals. With time, however, the very passions that somehow threatened our more conservative colleagues brought us positions of responsibility in our Universities. Michael Stevenson is academic vice-president or York University, Myron Eichenberg was department chair and dean at McGill, Fraser Taylor was dean of the Carleton graduate school and Paul Lovejoy went from department chair to V.P. for research, and then vice chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Richard Stren became head of the Centre for Community and Urban Studies in Toronto and Rodney White the Centre for Environmental Studies. All of this led to a change in attitudes towards Africa within our respective universities. We were now often main-stream. When Fred Case was hired by the Toronto French department, he could not get his department to offer courses on African and Caribbean literature and had to set them up within a college programme. When he became Chair of his department and then Principal of New College, he had no difficulty hiring others to teach these courses. When I was hired in 1970, several colleagues asked if African history did not belong in the anthropology department. Today, it is not only an accepted area of study, but we have three historians of Africa, are adding two Caribbeanists, and many colleagues in other fields are interested in what we have to say about currently fashionable subjects like colonialism and post-colonialism. Queens started with a focus on South Africa, but eventually became a broad-based programme with the hiring of Bruce Berman and Colin Leys in political studies, Barry Ricklefs in geography, Robert Shenton and David Elts in history.

**Changes**

The 1980s also saw a swing to the right in Canada. This has involved trimming of budgets for education and research and often a scrabbling to maintain staff complements in different areas. CAAS, which was getting 3/4 of its funding from various federal grants, saw much of that funding disappear. This resulted in several changes. We now share our national offices with the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies and the Canadian Asian Studies Association. We have also changed the time and place of our annual meeting. We traditionally met in early May. This left the summer months free for travel to Africa. As it became difficult finding people to organize and universities to underwrite our meetings, we have shifted to Canada's spring spectacular once called the Learned and now, officially labelled the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities. Originally two weeks, this event is now down to eight days, during which 40 to 50 academic associations meet on a selected university campus. This is a bonanza for booksellers and valuable for people interested in more than one meeting. It also eases problems of organization. The meetings, however, often take place at universities where there is a limited African studies development.

At the same time, a generation is passing. Pratt, Flint, Helleiner, Anglin, Leys, Webster and Carstens have retired. Michael Mason and Jonathan Barker have taken early retirement. We have had a leadership crisis in CAAS because many younger scholars are involved in the struggle for tenure and the establishment of their careers. Some positions have been lost. Donovan Williams was not replaced by an Africanist at Calgary or Ray Beache of Waterloo. In addition, our numbers are down in French Canadian universities, where Africanist social scientists like Al Schwartz and Renaud Santerre are
the bar, African or European, protests. And this is not an isolated occurrence. In Ghana in 1980, in Kenya and Tanzania in the late 1970s/early 1980s, it is not difficult to meet older African people who will tell one – and totally unbidden – that “we were better off when the British were here”. I even hear it from middle aged men in the Murang’ a district of Kenya’s Central Province, men who had been Mau-Mau fighters.

Radical Perspective
Of course I had a ready-made radical perspective into which I could accommodate and by which I could explain away such uncomfortable experiences and observations – the dependency perspective. What after all was so surprising about all this? Had I not said, in my own book on Kenya, that the country was in the political grip of a dependent African ‘petit-bourgeoisie’ which, by its very dependent nature, was unlikely to be an effective agent of ‘real’ economic development in Kenya. And had not a raft of other scholars - European and African - said similar things about a raft of other newly-independent African states. So, in such circumstances, why was it at all surprising that popular disenchantment with such elites within Africa was so widespread - up to and including a retrospective nostalgia for colonialism?

Yes. But this same perspective had been predicated on the view that these ‘dependent’ or ‘neo-colonial’ governing elites were agents of ‘imperialism’ or of ‘transnational capital’ in Africa. And as the 1970s turned into the 1980s and the political fragility and economic collapse of many African states became palpable this notion itself seemed ever more questionable. As I put it in a number of public presentations in the early 1980s - “if the ruling elites of Africa are seen as managers or agents for Western capitalism or imperialism, one can only say that the latter should get itself some new agents. For the ones it has seem remarkably inefficient.” In other words, the decay of Africa’s production structures and economic infrastructure, the continent-wide slump in investment (domestic and foreign), the endemic inflation and balance of payments problems, the sharp absolute falls in real standards of living of the mass of African people and (accompanying all this) the massive levels of governmental corruption and persistent breakdowns in civil peace and order in so many states – all this seemed hard to square with a basically functionalist perspective which had the governing elites of Africa somehow doing the bidding of international capitalism. And it was all the harder to maintain this position when so many of the official spokespeople for that capitalism (the IMF, the World Bank, corporate executives with African investments) far from endorsing the activities of their supposed ‘agents’ were endemically critical of the failure of African elites to provide domestic environments in which any form of capital investment could be secure and profitable.

This is not to deny, of course, that there were powerful factors beyond the activities of Africa’s governing classes which also pushed Africa into political instability and economic decline from the mid-1970s onwards – everything from the oil shocks which brought an end to the post-war boom in the world economy and led to at least the onset of Africa’s debt problem, through the Cold War flooding of the continent with arms and various forms of military subversion, to the global arms trade and traders. But it is to say that such factors did not seem to account, either individually or even in conjunction, for the particularity of the African situation. For all these factors had impacted on other parts of the South or Third World too without effects as catastrophic as those to be observed in Africa. I came up with a hackneyed but useful analogy. The African ship of state was ploughing through heavy international seas, yes. But that only strengthened the need for an excellent captain and navigator at the helm and a well disciplined crew. But as it was the captain and all his officers seemed to be drunk or absent from the bridge and the crew engaged in various forms of mutiny. No wonder the ship had run aground.

So, and leaving aside hackneyed analogies, I was returned again and again to an overwhelming question, which can be phrased in various forms, but always remains essentially the same question. Why are some governing elites economically progressive and others not? Why are some ruling classes exploitative, selfish and corrupt but also genuine agents for national economic and social improvement, while others are just exploitative, selfish and corrupt? Why are some states ‘developmental’ and others not? Of course these issues have come to the forefront of African studies since I gave it up, even if they are dealt with in vocabularies remote from dependency theory (which was declining rapidly in popularity as I left the field). So now we hear a lot more about African ‘kleptocracy’ or ‘modern patrimonialism’, about ‘rent seeking behaviour’ among state elites and about ‘state failure’ generally in Africa and the need for market-led ‘structural adjustment’. But though the question may be posed in new forms and though helpful new descriptions of African state functioning (mainly derived from the public-choice paradigm) have emerged, I see no significant progress made in answering the question ‘why?’ Why have African governing elites been particularly prone to behaving in ways which are both economically destructive of the welfare of the people for whom they are supposedly responsible and which have led – at the extreme – to forms of state fission, (civil war etc) collapse or breakdown?

At this point I must make a confession. After over thirty years of studying this question (including the last ten years in Australia giving far greater attention to the ‘developmental states’ of SE Asia) my first and predominant answer to it is still that I do not really know (or not in any hard or definite sense of ‘know’). I have some
suspicion about where an answer might lie. The lack of economic or social ‘depth’
of the colonial experience over most of sub-Saharan Africa; the fragile and inexperi-
enced stratum of educated African people which that ‘shallow’ experience left
behind; the chronic lack of ‘fit’ between Africa’s indigenous structures of ethnicity
and the so-called ‘nation-state’ structures which colonialism bequeathed and
which the first generation of nationalist leaders (probably very unwisely) opted to
retain; the inability (probably derived from the above) of Africa’s governing elites
to identify themselves with, or as part of, an ‘imagined community’ of the nation
states which they nominally superintend; their consequent failure to manifest any
sense of loyalty or of a duty of care or responsibility to the people who make up
these entities; their tendency to restrict such a sense of moral duty only to some par-
ticular ethnic or other sub-group of their citizens (thus increasing both economic
and social polarities among citizens and the likelihood of the political fusion of the
state, especially in economically desperate times). I could add further suspicions to
the list if asked. But none of them are certainties or anything like certainties, and
again it is comparative study which muddies the water. Because, of course, you
could have said all of the same things about the post-colonial elites of Indonesia or
Malaysia and some of the same things about the elites of Thailand, South Korea or
Taiwan. This reflection only leads me — and rather flatly — to the conclusion that it
must be the concatenation of these domestic elite characteristics with the particu-
larly weak global economic situation of sub-Saharan Africa which was the fatal
two-sided recipe for developmental failure. And that may be true, but, as I say, I
still have no certainty that it is or about how precisely to weight the relative impor-
tance of the list of usual suspects above.

But why did all this lead me to give up African studies? Well it compounded the
depression. I was depressed, that is to say, both by what was happening to African
people and by my inability even to explain it adequately, let alone do anything
about it. And also, I was depressed by the polarization, within the world of African
studies as it was in the early 1980s, between those advocating what were called
‘internalist’ explanations of Africa’s problems and those who continued to favour
‘externalist’ explanations. I was depressed because advocates of the latter view
often charged advocates of the former with “blaming African people” for Africa’s
parlous state, a charge which seemed at once incoherent, even in its own terms (was
colonialism in Africa an ‘internal’ or ‘external’ factor, for example?) and, above all,
agonizingly hurtful. For of course the vast majority of African people are the vic-
tims, often the horrific victims, of Africa’s plight, not its perpetrators in any sense,
and I, at least, would never wish to deny that. But I would also wish to assert that,
though the political elites of Africa change their social composition (often quite sig-
nificantly and rapidly) their economically and politically destructive behaviour
mostly does not change with their personnel. And that certainly suggests — at least
to me — that there are broader social/cultural factors (in the mass milieu from which
such elites are recruited) continually making for, and reinforcing, this behaviour.
So, we do have to ask what it is about the history and culture of sub-Saharan Africa
that has led (at any rate in part) to its disastrous present. But that can only be con-
strued as “blaming African people” or, more broadly as “blaming the victim”, if a
guilt-ridden confusion is made between context and agency. That is, it may be in
the broadest historical and cultural context of African society that we find the clue
to destructive political elite behaviour: But that does not make that context an agent
of that destruction. Nor (therefore) does it prevent political and moral responsibil-
ity for their actions being shied home to narrow and privileged sub-groups or
classes of African people (and not ‘African people’ as a whole) classes which have
been the agents — even if not the sole agents — of that destruction.

Role for Australasian Africanists

In short, and to conclude, I left African studies because what was happening to a
continent and a people I had grown to love left me appalled and confused. But I also
left it because I felt that the emotionally stressed and guilt-ridden debate which arose
within the African studies community about the causes of Africa’s decline was itself
a powerful testimony to a fact even more depressing in its implications that any-
things that was happening in and to Africa. This fact is, to put it simply, that the most
damaging legacy of colonialism and imperialism in the world has not been the glob-
al economic structures and relations it has left behind nor the patterns of modern
‘neo-imperialist’ economic and cultural relations of which it was the undoubted his-
torical forerunner. Rather its most damaging legacy has been the psychological
Siamese twins of endemic guilt on the European side and endemic psychological
dependence on the African side, legacies which make truth telling hard and the adult
taking of responsibility even harder. Imperialism fucking up the heads of so many
people whom it touched — both colonialists and colonized (Frantz Fanon was
absolutely and deeply right about that) and until that — ultimately depressing — lega-
cy of its existence is finally killed, neither Africa nor African studies will be able
to make real progress. It was that conclusion which led me — very sadly — to leave both
behind.

An issue which arises from all this is what part the African Studies profession, and
in particular the profession in Australasia, might play now, given all this gloomy but
unchangeable history, to help Africa (and, by extension, itself) find a future marked-
ly better than its immediate past. Oddly enough, this may be an apposite moment
to raise this question. Recent events in Sierra Leone, the appearance of British
ground troops on African soil for the first time in nearly 40 years, the focusing of
UN and international attention on the continent through these events (and through recent events in Ethiopia, Congo, Rwanda etc) has led to at least a ripple of western press and media concentration on precisely the same question addressed in this short article – viz., why so much of the continent finds itself in such dire straits. In reading some of these editorials and lead articles or listening to radio and TV discussions however, one cannot fail to notice the low level of factual and historical knowledge of the continent and its problems which they so often display. And this is true even when the press or media journalists in question are obviously trying, at least, to grapple in some serious and thoughtful way with the issues. (This is yet another index, I think, of the almost total fall of the continent from the attention of even educated westerners in the era of supposed ‘globalisation’). On the face of it therefore, there does seem to be a vital potential role that the Africanist profession could play in raising the level and quality of public debate about this issue in the West generally and in Australasia in particular.

We should not delude ourselves however. The welfare of Africa and its people is a matter of remote concern for the governments of Australia and New Zealand and probably always will be. But despite this, Australasian Africanists, through the aegis of AFSAAP, could perhaps use this moment when the iron is, if not actually hot, at least moderately warm, to consider sponsoring - along with a number of sympathetic organisations and public figures (Ausaid, CARE, CAA etc) - a major, high profile Round Table on (say) ‘The Crisis of Africa’ to be held in Canberra and involving invited major figures from the African continent, UN agencies and senior Australasian Foreign Affairs politicians, as well as local Africanists and members of the Australasian African community. At the very least such a round table - which should of course seek the highest possible level of media coverage - might begin to shift Australian aid priorities a little. At best it might play its part in a wider international effort to get western governments in general - including governments which are far more significant to Africa than the governments of Australasia - to rethink their policies and strategies toward Africa beyond the familiar neo-liberal homilies around ‘structural adjustment’. The aim of such an international mobilisation of public opinion must be to try and produce a set of western policies toward Africa which at least do not actively hinder (even if they do not positively help) Africa’s own efforts at creating a better future for itself. For needless to say of course it is the latter variable which is the absolutely crucial one. The prime responsibility for making a decent future for Africa’s people lies, has lain for at least 30 years, and from now on always will lie, on the shoulders of the continent’s own governing elites. Simply to say that, to keep saying it, and to keep saying why it is true to any and all African people who will listen, this must be the predominant political objective of the Africanist profession at this historical juncture.

A Peripatetic’s Perspective on the 1999 Perth “New Perspectives” Conference

David Moore*

I have a problem with conferences. Just as I was beginning my PhD fieldwork I happened to read David Lodge’s Small World. I even referred to its jaded prologue – the one about conferences resembling medieval pilgrimages because they allow the participants lots of fun while apparently “nusterly bent on self-improvement,” but are worse because funded by taxpayers – in my first international conference paper (ROAPE 1984, at Keele). Such books make one rather too self-conscious (if not cynical). If even 30% of all other conference trotting academics have read Small World, the Heisenberg principle would be at work – except the observer-observed relationship would have become narcissistic. The world of scholarly talk-fests has been transformed. Everyone must be thinking of themselves or their others as Morris Zappas, Mirandas and/or Angelicas, the feckless Perse McGarrigle or the Rumbridge lecturer Phillip Swallow. Reflexity could well turn into parody in situations like this.

But there is a difference between literary studies conferences and those dealing with “the real world;” especially when that world is as uncompromisingly real as Africa. Post-structuralists in Africa don’t only cut off the theoretical branches upon which they sit, but they are liable to cut themselves off from reality and end up in a world of fantasy. African studies conferences will never be as ethereal as their peers in the Modern Language Association will – not even the former’s literature sections can be. Norman Etherington’s summary of this conference noted – with some pleasure, it appeared – that “post-modernism” did not appear at the sessions at which he was present. He wasn’t at all of them, of course, but if he is right there may indeed be some “new perspectives” in the offing. However, given the turmoil in which most of Africa is embedded, it would not be surprising if some of the “new perspectives” on offer were uncannily “post” and even “pre” modern. Indeed, some of the appeals at the conference to African “tradition” (sometimes more imagined than others – and usually so in the case of those who are farthest away from it) blended the “posts” and the “pres” in the way that only post-colonialists, or latter-day apostles of Negritude, can. Some appeals to “tradition” – as a well-spring of reconciliation, or as a new start to situating gender, for example – were more genuine and grounded than others. There could be a “new perspective” there.

So there were some “new perspectives” on offer, albeit not as self-paradingly as the nearly lapsed post-modernist moment from which we are struggling to be free. Being a rather vulgar Marxist (or at least, historical materialist), I would suggest

*David Moore teaches at the University of Natal, Durban.
that this should be no surprise. If 60% of the world’s war-related killings in 1999 were executed in Africa (and Africa’s population is not 60% of the world’s!), Africa is in crisis. Perhaps the crisis is a permutation of Marx’s notion of “original accumulation,” or perhaps it is a variation of Tilly’s and Mann’s state structuration: but it is devastating. Such destruction throws up all sorts of analytical modes, in all stages of elaboration.

At the conference such modes started with Thandika Mkandawire’s tour de force keynote address on the historical relationships between (public? organic?) intellectuals, nationalism, and African political economy. It is clear that if worthwhile “new perspectives” are to arise out of Africa’s contemporary remoulding – and if African and committed international intellectuals are to do this instead of the insulated technocrats in the World Bank, the IMF, the ministries under their tutelage – an uncompromising historical analysis such as his is a fundamental necessity.

There were other examples of promising and disturbing new standpoints. I was fortunate enough to chair a session on “democratisation in South Africa” in which the faces and discourses of the “rainbow nation” were revealed with almost exact precision. Victor Hilliard extolled the pristine virtues of the new South African constitution; Phil Mtshali defended the ANC’s strategies for creating a nation in a country where there are still two national anthems (and in the process defended the ruling party from the necessity of liberal checks and balances!); and Nirvana Pillay brilliantly dissected the real world of struggles over workplace “democracy” – and napping unions – in Durban. Class, nation, idealist liberal rhetoric ... such a mix was bound to lead to passion from the floor. Piet Croucamp, (who had just presented a tight paper using corporatist theory to look at the South African taxi industry and its wars in a panel with Gilbert Khadiagala on conflict mediation and Scott Macwilliam’s theoretically striking and eerily prophetic cautionary tales from Fiji) rose to defend his perception of the Afrikaners’ part in the new nation. Challenges to Hilliard’s constitutionalist idealism came from all over. The centrality of class was asserted to buttress Pillay’s opening. I had to silence an enthusiast jumping the list. Just as the debate was getting hot, Sheila Sutner summed it up with a caution that Rome was not built in a day, and, fittingly, had the last word. I think even those who did not know her own history of helping build the new Rome would have agreed that she did not mean South Africans should be satisfied with the status quo, but that historical perspective is necessary.

Such themes continued the next day with the panel inspired by Eddie Webster’s and Glenn Adler’s article on the necessity of “class compromise” in South Africa (July 1999 Politics and Society) Robert Lambert’s history of such compromise in Australia (March 2000 Politics and Society) poured cool water on the idea, and

Steve Rametse’s analysis of the ideological struggles over such policy options put the compromise in the historical perspective of struggles within the ANC: the debate, and the struggle over who compromises most, is obviously just beginning. (See Southern Africa Report: Class Snuggle vs. Class Struggle, 15, 2, 2nd Quarter 2000, for more.)

But to return to the first day and the worrying “new perspective.” The Rainbow Nation session was followed by “Rethinking the State” (entailing a lot of “rethinking conflict”). Richard Jackson’s international relations perspective on the OAU’s efforts at conflict resolution in Africa demonstrated the stickiness of old perspectives, if nothing else. I cannot comment on the efficacy of my engagement with Alex de Waal’s broadswipe (Famine Crimes) against the “humanitarian international.” I can say, however, that Assis Malaquias’s utopia of an African future seemed a far cry from reality. Can one prophecy an Eden-like future by saying “leave us alone” and ignoring conflicting states and conditioning capital? Such may be an indication of African-American ideology these days: if it is a reaction to “Afro-essentialism” is it equally debilitating? And is the cry (an eloquent one from the audience) “when the African state disappears, who will weep?” a sign of a “new perspective?” If so, whose: the IMF’s or “the people’s?” Was it a cry of renewal or of despair? Thus it was that at the end of the day it appeared that there were “new perspectives” (or variations on old ones?) all over the place. Was I worrying prematurely when it seemed that materialist perspectives seemed confined to those of us over forty?

Much of my Saturday was taken up by the discussions on political change in Zimbabwe, led by the inimitable Sekai Holland*, external representative for the Movement for Democratic Change: a working-class based movement which is extolling perhaps old, social democratic values (and the compromises they hold). New perspectives or old? In Zimbabwe, suffering from nearly two decades of disappointing ZANU-PF rule, what is new is that the opposition finally seems to have a deep social base – and that the present crisis is occurring in the midst of over-commitment to a war a long way away. Current events (only six months from when we thought there might be the chance of peaceful elections!) suggest a new twist on the age-old and much deferred problem of primitive accumulation, perhaps to be resolved in a grotesque parody of what we once thought was “land reform.” The point was made during the conference’s Zimbabwe session that “no one has a monopoly on truth.” This is often taken to be a post-modernist slogan, but in the face of state-controlled media it seems to be an old-fashioned liberal, and courageous, one. If the monopoly on “effective truth” in Zimbabwe and in a score of other African countries can be broken, that will be something new.
Something that was new indeed was George Gittoes’s Goya-esque portrayals of African (and other) crises. From Rwanda to South Africa, Gittoes hit to the nub of our consciousness so many times that it nearly became numb: but he managed to slap us out of that senselessness before we fell victim to media-created “compassion fatigue.” The immediacy of his art, combined with his own evident compassion (mixed with a healthy scepticism, about the UN for example) and ability to gather hope out of despair, suggested that if somehow — without romanticisation — we can get beyond the Murdoch-mediated visions of conflict, genocide and disaster in Africa into a world of real representation and concrete action, there might be something called hope at the end of it all. Today’s hegemonic representations, however — buttressed by fantastic forays — seem to militate against a “new outlook.” Perhaps Gittoes’s work may be the edge of the wedge, though.

The next day, Deborah Posel and Gerry Maré illustrated how some of South Africa’s best intellectuals are wading through the morass of the word that was so much taken for granted in the past: “race” (and by extension, maybe, “class.”) The perspectives they used — sensibly applied notions of governmentality and new sociological thinking — enabled us to get a start at unpacking so much of the “common sense” of the past. Hopefully, that will lead in some small way to a Gramscian notion of “good sense,” which for so long in South Africa was hidden by the destructive discourse of race even as “race” was being submerged by “class.” Posel’s analysis made very good logic of the immense Apartheid effort to create a bizarre notion of racially based common sense: a state project that was almost farcical at its moment of conception, tragic in its delivery but oh-so “modern” in its array of apparatuses and planning chutzpah. Imagined community indeed (see an earlier exposition of her “whiteness” project in the Journal of Southern African Studies March 1999).

On the theme of imaginary communities, Pal Ahluwalia, Michael Humphrey and Paul Omaji tackled issues of truth, reconciliation and justice. Such a fraught area promised to be contentious and proved to be so. Humphrey’s eloquent evocation of the extreme difficulty of symbolically constructing renewed communities in the absence of the material and structural means for so doing, while the vacuous language of “human rights” disappears into international tribunals, was contrasted by the more idealistc stances of his co-presenters. The Sun as an example of community enhancing gift-giving? A political economy of excess in Africa? I wondered if Dr. Ahluwalia’s deconstruction could have been invoked on his talisman of “community … the main locus for the sharing of pain, intimacy and tradition.” Shouldn’t post-structuralists deconstruct such a shibboleth of antiquated communitarianism? Shared trauma galvanising a “community”?

“hybridity? Multiple identities?” These words seem to contradict the ideal of “community” as the place where a “post-colonial economy of giving” can take root. If binaries are to be broken down, isn’t a good place to start with the false unity of “community?” Paul Omaji, although taking off on some pan-African flights, at least acknowledged the notion of “primitive accumulation” as something worth thinking about when considering conflict in Africa, rather than refusing to engage with it. (Pal’s piece will be published in Race and Class.)

In short, then, the sessions in the conference that I attended were evidence enough that even within the few African intellectual superstructures temporarily in Australia, perspectives were jostling for explanatory relevance. Even Heather Hughes and Luli Callinicos’s expositions of their biographical subjects, John Dube and Oliver Tambo, illustrated that what has been traditionally seen as a rather straightforward craft is indeed traversed by all the issues of race, class, conflict and reconciliation that criss-cross the other sessions. Perhaps it was only right that my tour of the conference offerings ended with an exposition of the Sudan: one place where a little application of “new perspectives” might help. Instead, in the “real world” the contradictions of aspirations for autonomy, imperialism, religion, and ruling classes which cause more harm than good, conspire to warn us just how hard it is to get to that space of “community.”

Academics are good at it though — hopefully for better reasons than David Lodge suggests. Yet the conference was vigorous. It did indicate “new perspectives”. And it was fun. Hopefully this response to it will be received in a sense of community — one that can only remain alive with spirited debate. Hopefully too, the Conrad Memorial Post-Official Dinner Drinking Session will remain as a fixture of community and good sense for many AFSAAP conferences to come.

* Sekai Holland was more recently reportedly (City Press, 4 June 2000) detained “for her own protection” for one night in May following an early party rally in the current elections (ed.)
Mapping North-East African Identities

Christine Mason*


Identity is central to social relations and may assume many guises and multilayered forms. Accordingly, a person’s identity may be marked to varying degrees by such diverse categories as gender, class, age, ethnicity and ideology. In light of the current debates surrounding identity three recent books, although not intending to discuss identity per se, are pertinent to its study no less. Donham’s *Marxist Modern* is the culmination of long-term research that weaves the author’s own narrative into the revolutionary narrative of Ethiopia and the religious and ethnic narratives of the Maaliland community where he conducted his ethnographic research in the 1970s and 1980s. Negash’s *Tigrinya Literature* traces the evolution of Tigrinya literature in Eritrea and in the process points to key nationalist and revolutionary sentiments generated by the thirty year war for independence and expressed in the novels, poems, prose and translations collated in this work. Finally, the edited collection, *Conflict, Age and Power* examines the significance of age in social and political relations in North East Africa through a series of unique and geographically determined essays.

Donham’s *Marxist Modern* analyses the impact of the Ethiopian revolution at a state and local level. The local is explored through his own narrative, interwoven with that of the Maale he lived with both during the initial stages of the revolution and later, from 1983-4, “after the revolutionary state had consolidated itself” (p. xx).

* Christine Mason is a doctoral student at the University of New South Wales, working on Eritrea. The title of her thesis is *Erotic Nationalism: Gender, Ideology and Nationalism in Eritrea.*

The period around 1974 sent shock waves through Ethiopia that reverberated all the way to remote Maale (where, Donham explains, radios were few and even fewer people would have comprehended what the arrest of Haile Selassie meant). However, the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie led to change and suddenly the Maale found that they were allowed to challenge the prevailing system of power. As a result, Donham details how an unusual coalition of evangelical Christians and southern traditionalists brought a court case against the heir apparent to the kingship of Maaliland and other chiefs and landlords, charging them with acts of ‘oppression’. However, this challenge was not intended to change the existing order or create a new society - it was “a petition instead for the restoration of what they conceived was a previous moral order.” (p. 41) However, the case dragged on with no result and was superseded by the 1975 land reform proclamation which abolished all private land ownership. Accompanying this reform were government calls for the end of the disproportionate sexual division of labour; and the termination of superstition and traditional practices (which, in Maale, involved interfering with the sacred relics and rituals of royalty). The land proclamation is especially interesting, as Donham argues:

In analyzing the Ethiopian revolution, it is essential to understand just how little the land proclamation responded to peasants’ own agitation and how much it owed to Ethiopian modernism (p. 27).

He consequently details the flow of urban (and predominately Amhara) revolutionary zemecha (campaign) students to Maale. Donham perceived this moment to be pivotal, since “[w]ithout the appearance of the urban revolutionary intelligentsia, it is unlikely that there would have been a revolution in Maale at all.” (p. 45) In this climate, it was the more educated Maale Christians that found much to support in the modernising reforms espoused by the youthful zemecha, and they more readily identified themselves as “Ethiopians” rather than just “Maale”. As such they dominated the peasant associations. In the context of reform and change, it was therefore the Christians, encouraged by the zemecha, who took the opportunity to attack the traditions of their animist Maale brethren. This conflict and reform marked:

a new beginning in which sixteen- and seventeen-year-old students from the north - sometimes clamouring, often with no small amount of condescension, and always with an enormous confidence in their mission - shoved Maale peasants onto the stage of Ethiopian history (p. 58).

However, the zemecha students were soon arrested and confined in neighbouring
Jinka as the revolutionary government cracked down on the youthful army of reformists it had so enthusiastically sent out to the far rural ends of Ethiopia.

Donham, unlike so many researchers who lived through various aspects of African revolutions, is able to analyse the impact of revolutionary reforms critically and without the gloss that has managed to obscure the complexities of revolution in the past. He therefore tentatively sketches the long term impact of reform in the wake of Mengistu’s demise in the early 1990s. That is, the post-socialist era witnessed a reassertion of Maale traditionalism, with the kai (king) they were not previously able to install and whose ancestral relics had been disturbed, being re-installed. At the same time, modernist evangelical Christianity, which had initially supported the revolution but eventually became a target also underwent a revival and an increase in church construction and attendance was evident. To many, this is not an outcome of revolution that they wish to acknowledge. However, it is a typical example of the complexities of post-revolutionary society, which can lead to slippage in various areas where reforms and changes were made. One of the most apparent indices of post-revolutionary regression is gender – an issue unfortunately not explored in Donham’s analysis. Other research amply testifies to the role of women in revolution and their subsequent exclusion (or partial exclusion) from the post-revolutionary spoils.1 It would be interesting to know, therefore, if the post-socialist return to traditionalism and evangelicalism in Maale was accompanied by a gender backlash or a recession of reforms significant to women? Donham does point to changes affecting women, such as land reform and the involvement of women in the new village assemblies. The question is, have the roles of women in these structures been altered or resisted, as in other post-revolutionary states such as Zimbabwe2 and Eritrea3?

**Eritrea**

In neighbouring Eritrea, Negash has undertaken a unique project - a history of Tigrinya literature - with considerable ability and finesse. Tigrinya is spoken by approximately half of the Eritrean population, however the extremely low literacy rates mean only a minority can read it (or any of the other Eritrean languages).4 The book analyses a range of Tigrinya sources, from the late 1800s until 1991, in an informative and enlightened way. This time-frame naturally situates a great deal of the literature squarely within the Eritrean movement for national liberation from Ethiopia. It would therefore be interesting to read it in the context of Anderson’s work on print media and nationalism in *Imagined Communities*.5 As Anderson contends:

[i]t is always a mistake to treat languages in the way that certain nationalist ideologues treat them - as emblems of nation-ness, like flags, costumes, folk-dances and the rest. Much the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities.6

Eritrean nationalism was largely a reaction to the changes wrought by Italian and Ethiopian colonialism.7 However, Tigrinya is not the only language nor the sole official language of Eritrea; and the experience of nationalism was not evenly felt across the board by all the peoples that lived within the colonially-demarcated borders of ‘Eritrea’. For example Tronvoll’s ethnographic study of a Tigrinya-speaking village in the Eritrean highlands found the following:

No ‘grassroots nationalist ideology,’ as described by visitors to the liberated areas in Sahel, was apparent in the highlands. To put it bluntly: the civilian villagers were not pre-occupied with the national sphere but rather focused on their gibri (share of land), and the conditions of the crops in the field...I noticed a difference between how the jegodolti (EPLF fighters) on the one side, and the civilians on the other talked about and comprehended the participation in the liberation struggle, and thus the question of Eritrean nationalism.8

Even if the experiences varied, this does not undermine the fact that a small group of literate intellectuals and later fighters (many of whom were educated in the field) fostered and constructed an ‘imagined Eritrean community’ with the aid of print media - in predominantly the Tigrinya and Arabic languages. Newspapers, pamphlets, novels and poems all contributed to the identification of various people (who may have otherwise identified as Kunama or Afar or indeed Muslim or Catholic Christian) as ‘Eritrean’.

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4 Although primary education is conducted in the ‘mother tongues’ of the various ethnicities, further education and official documents and media appear in Tigrinya, Arabic and English.


6 Ibid, p. 133.


By confining his study to the 1890-1991 period, Negash has perhaps circumnavigated some of the most controversial issues pertaining to Tigrinya literature. With respect to the post-liberation period, he argues that

with the achievement of Eritrean independence in 1993, Tigrinya writers now have unprecedented opportunities. A national government in place, they can freely use and practice writing in their language without fear of any colonial intervention. But they also face a new challenge: what kind of literature shall they produce in the post-independence social and political context of Eritrea? (202-3).

This approach overlooks post-independence developments that severely hinder academic scope and freedom. The Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF), which is now the governing People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), increasingly controls the activities of its citizens. Since independence, elections have not been held, despite the continued existence of opposition to the government — though the capacity of dissenting groups, such as the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front, Eritrean Islamic Jihad, and the various splinters of the Eritrean Liberation Front, to provide a viable alternative to the PFDJ is debatable. Despite the existence of associations, such as the National Union of Eritrean Women, civil society remains “poorly developed.” The renewed border conflict with Ethiopia, increasing since 1997, has curtailed spending on non-military avenues; increased censorship, especially of literature that may criticise the government’s role in the conflict; and heightened the abuse of human rights. Overall, as Connell explains:

in the political culture of the EPLF and of Eritrea as a whole, no-holds-barred public political debate is neither sought nor supported. On the contrary such debate is deeply distrusted — viewed at best as unpatriotic and at worst as seditious.

It is therefore probable that Negash’s contention that “Tigrinya writers now have unprecedented opportunities...[and] can freely use and practice writing in their language without fear of any colonial intervention” (pp. 202-3) is only partially true: it is not the Italian or Ethiopian colonisers that curtail academic freedom, but the new Eritrean government. Ultimately, the fervent nationalism that attempted to unify the multifarious collective in order to attain independence is the same force that represses dissension and difference in the post-liberation era.

The majority of papers in Conflict, Age and Power challenge the contention that age-systems serve no military or political function; thereby contrasting the research in this collection with older studies by scholars such as Evans-Pritchard, and Paul Baxter and Uri Almagor. Rather, all papers excepting one “take account of the political significance of age-system rituals by focusing on the antagonistic relations between various social actors - seniors and juniors, men and women, territorial units within an ethnic group; and ethnic groups” (p. 3).

Negashima’s contribution, on the contrary, points to the absence of a politico-military role for age-sets among the Iteso of Uganda and Kenya. While the conclusions in this final paper are unusual in respect of the other research findings appearing in the book, it highlights an increasingly vital issue with regard to age-sets: the encroachment of modernity, capitalism and the state are gradually eroding the function and existence of age-sets. However, this does not mean that such structures are destined solely for extinction - new conditions are likely to generate new adaptations of traditionally understood age-sets in North-East Africa.

The chapter by Kawai examining women’s age categories among the agropastoral Chamus of northern Kenya is especially welcomed. As Kawai explains:

It has been taken for granted by many ethnographical studies of East African age systems that they are male-centric and male-dominated. The position of women in the age systems, or what systems mean to the women, has therefore, with a few notable exceptions...received very little attention. (p. 151)

Kawai found that although the Chamus system is male-dominated, “this does not imply women are excluded from it.” (p. 151) Accordingly, this chapter explores a unique structure where women fall into two sets of age categories: first, age-grades, based on life changes such as physical development, marriage and childbirth; and second, age-sets derived from the age-sets of their husbands - since they do not possess one of their own. Kawai, in addition to detailing the punishments inflicted by superior age-groups on wayward inferiors, demonstrates that women are able to utilise their positions and unite against men in

11 Roy Pateman, op.cit. p. 250.
12 Dan Connell, op.cit. p. 147.
certain circumstances. This indicates a degree of autonomy and assists the author in her difficult discussion of female circumcision - it is an attempt to view traditional practices in their cultural context rather than from a position of outside condemnation. Female circumcision is an extremely controversial topic, which Kawai approaches in the following way:

Whether it is a violation of women's rights or not, and despite the fact that it is prohibited by both the government and the church, practice still continues today as a necessary and essential custom for the Chamus (p. 158).

The author then details the significance of the ritual among the Chamus extensively. However, one feels that Kawai discussion of circumcision would be greatly enhanced if it incorporated the dialogues of the women who are circumcised and their own narratives, situating the ritual in their own life experience. This omission highlights a weakness of the volume overall: the role of narrative in the ethnographical endeavour is simply not broached or utilised. As Donham explains:

Not only is narrative key for understanding particular historical actors, but also the way that narratives intersect and intertwine over time, are copied, changed, and passed across cultural space, is central to the task of constructing historical ethnographies (p. 180).

Thus, none of the papers in Conflict, Age and Power use the narratives of their informants in any substantial way; nor do the authors assess their own positions within host societies they 'studied' and the impact of their own narratives upon the findings produced for the book.

Overall, all three books, which cover diversely different topics - even if they relate to issues of identity within the same (vast) North East African region - make useful and interesting reading for university students and academics alike.

University of New South Wales
School of Political Science
Sydney NSW

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Labour As The Starting Point Of Capital Reforms, Naturally

Scott MacWilliam*


In a recent review of the 1997 World Development Report, The State in a Changing World, David Moore ("Sail On O Ship Of State" Review and Newsletter V.XIX, No.2, Dec.1997, pp.19-23) concluded that the Bank was pursuing 'an old story with a slight new twist'. The old was the continued attachment to 'the market' as the principal basis for organising human existence. The 'new' meant relenting 'from its neo-liberal push' of yesteryear, with a 'return to the pleasant Keynesian mixed economy world, headed by 'Clinton and Blair, not Reagan and Thatcher'. Nevertheless, concluded Moore, "(t)here is really nothing new here", although 'the state has crept back in to the discourse'.

While this review does not deal with the World Bank's position directly, nevertheless Adjusting Employment suggests that there might be more to the shift outlined than David Moore proposed. If during the 1980s and even the early 1990s, international financial and other institutions were pre-occupied with market reforms, more recently these as well as national governments have begun to stress instead the need for capital reforms¹. The former (smashing unions, driving down wages, reducing government expenditures on social services, devaluing and floating currencies etc.) are now recognised almost universally as having been associated with, as well as in varying measure responsible for, a widespread failure to reproduce capitalisation. That is, the commercialisation associated with market reforms did not necessarily mean producing surplus value, raising productivity and living standards²

* Scott McWilliam teaches in the School of Social Sciences at the University of the South Pacific
1 A longer essay would be necessary to show how the 1998/99 and 1999/2000 World Development Reports continued the shift toward pressing for capital reforms.
Commercialisation's deleterious effects, especially severe in much of Africa, have now to be overcome. The latter, capital reforms, are intended instead to reassert capital (accumulation) as the principal basis of production and as the means by which living standards in so much of the world rose in the first twenty years after WWII. In particular, attention has been directed at how to train labour, reduce unemployment and extend other means of production (the 'new technology for knowledge industries' of the 1999/2000 World Development Report) on a global scale. The 'new institutional economics' along with such increasingly fashionable ideas as social capital are attempts to design as well as to assert the primacy of capital reforms.

If the shift was still disguised in the 1997 World Bank Report, nevertheless other international institutions had previously seen as well as made explicit the need to displace, but not eliminate entirely, the prevailing emphasis upon market reforms. The 1995 World Employment Report was launched by the ILO in order to signal its intention 'to step up its efforts to promote national and international action to solve these problems'. The problems were specified in a stark opening paragraph, which elevated 'the task of creating sufficient new jobs to overcome unemployment, underemployment and problems of low pay (which rank) as the primary challenge for economic and social policy in countries at all levels of development across the globe'.

Labour Supply
Humanitarian considerations notwithstanding, there is good reason for ILO concern with unemployment in Africa. The continent is in some important respects one of the most substantial labour frontiers in existence. While in 'other regions of the world labour supply growth rates are falling', in Africa they are rising. The total labour supply in 1995 in SSA (Sub-Saharan Africa: SM) was estimated at 228 million persons, of which 38 per cent were female. It is projected to increase to 258 million by 2000. Over the thirty-year period 1995 to 2025 the total labour supply in SSA will increase at a rate above that for the previous thirty years 1965 to 1995'.

Adjusting Employment is a highly recommended collection of essays which emphasises that unemployment and impoverishment are not only extensive and extreme, but have been exacerbated by previous reforms. Obviously informed by the political-ideological shift outlined above, and driven by the ILO tendency to focus upon the terms of labour-power's reproduction, the collection has been prepared as part of as well as on the cusp of the global change against the primacy of market reforms.

It has also been prepared so as to use African conditions against long-standing, if often challenged, assertions of neo-classical 'dry' economics, including the proposition that if only prices, including the price of labour, fall far enough the market will automatically clear, i.e. the demand for labour will increase sufficiently to eliminate almost entirely unemployment. The manner in which 'African reality' is at a considerable distance from 'economic theory' is a continuous theme of the collection. The point of the theme, however, is not to satisfy the objections of those who proclaim the irrelevance of 'western ideas' for 'African development'. It is instead to show the need for the application of 'the new institutionalism' as the means of closing the gap, of reconciling theory with reality in order for development to occur.

This, and related arguments about the distance between 'reality' and 'theory' are neatly made in two ways. First, in three introductory chapters, two of which are written by the editors and the third by van der Geest and Ganesan Wignaraja, the 'need for an Institutional Approach to Structural Adjustment in Africa' is described in near-continental terms. This need arises, because, in the words of Werner Sengenberger, the Director of the Employment and Training Department at the ILO, who wrote the Foreword: 'Economic crisis and the early generation of adjustment programmes have led to decreasing capacity of labour market institutions either to provide appropriate structures to reach a national consensus through social dialogue or to support more effective implementation of the programmes'.

Plummeting Employment
The extent of the 'decreasing capacity' is strikingly illustrated by some of the data produced in the initial chapters. In Chapter 3, to cite just one instance, van der Geest and Wignaraja summarise recent findings on what occurred in sub-Saharan Africa between the 1970s and early 1990s. These show (p.47) that 'monthly real wages in Sierra Leone in 1987 stood at less than 6 per cent of the peak wage level of 1970, whereas for Tanzania in 1991 they were less than 25 per cent of the peak in 1974'. That is right, six percent and twenty five per cent— and still the market did not clear, for in both countries, as elsewhere in Africa, formal wage employment as a proportion of all employment plummeted and people were forced to retreat to smallholdings and/or so-called 'informal jobs' merely to survive.
Mercifully, the authors of the introductory chapters if not all the case study contributors show little romantic attachment to either the joys of rural life or the ‘informal sector’, as so often has been the case. Both forms of existence now represent for most Africans worst case conditions, with absolute impoverishment, low productivity and minimal prospects for improvement predominating. The disrespect shown for the so-called ‘informal sector’ as a low wage, low productivity, minimal standards of occupational health and safety form of sponge to soak up the growing numbers of urban as well as rural unemployed is a welcome corrective after nearly thirty years of official as well as unofficial enthusiasm for self-employment. The editors are clear on one matter: it is only by further subsumption of labour to capital, enlarged and extended, deepened proletarianisation in town and country that Africa will come to work. (In this sense, the direction of their argument is entirely against the rather silly conclusion of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz that already ‘Africa works’.)

Second Front
The second front for the attack against the earlier structural adjustment reforms is opened through five case studies, presented in chapters which generally uphold the principal directions plotted from the outset by the volume’s editors. The authors for the case studies are, respectively, Gerrishon Ikira and Njughua Ndung’u (Kenya), Germina Ssemogerere (Uganda), Venkatesh Seshamani and Ephraim Kaunga (Zambia), Godfrey Kayenze (Zimbabwe) and Ephraim Chirwa and Wycliffe Chilowa (Malawi). These studies show through brief potted histories of labour markets in each country just how substantial has been the decline in wage employment, while indicating the particularities of each place. Repression against trade unions as well as reductions in membership, cuts in public service numbers, declining real wages, little formal training for either workers or managers, small numbers of apprenticeships and the sell-off or even just closure of state enterprises run across national borders. Reductions or no significant increases in the numbers of substantial private enterprises in response to real wage reductions, and few successful government inspired programmes to re-educate or retrain the large numbers of unemployed, along with a constantly swelling force of new, young entrants to labour markets also are commonalities.

While resistance to the general directions taken by governments occasionally is presented, more than anything else the impression given by the authors of the case studies is that however inappropriate, previous Structural Adjustment pro-

grammes were accepted because, as former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher used to say repeatedly ‘There Is No Alternative (TINA)’. Now there is widespread support for what the essayists regard as institutional reform, including the now familiar proposal, for strengthening ‘civil society’. Even revitalised trade unions are proposed as a component of this strengthening.

If the capacity to follow a central theme or themes is one of the collection’s strengths, the general agreement on what is required also brings up a major weakness. For, and this brings me back to David Moore’s original assessment, what is proposed here as well as in the 1997 World Development Report is reform which does not move beyond development as a spontaneous process. The purpose of this latest phase of reform, which encompasses the 1995 ILO Employment Report as well, is to overcome deficiencies of the earlier SAP, not to anticipate capitalist development as a process with positive and negative effects. Intentional development, as a means for surmounting in advance the certainties of unemployment and disorder which accompany spontaneous development, has no part in the direction suggested by the contributors to Adjusting Employment. ‘Africa will come to work’ through markets strengthened by institutional reform, with no need to apply intent through state policy informed by a particular doctrine of development. It is in this sense, that there is not yet any sign of a cyclical shift or movement toward a belief in state policy intentionally directed at joining the relative surplus population, the unemployed and underemployed, to other means of production that Moore’s ‘ship of state’ is ‘sailing on’.

Whether this seeming persistence of the recent age of non-development also contains a seed for a renewed phase of intentional development remains to be seen. Further ‘failure of the market to clear’ as well as the insufficiency of institutional reforms conducted in the name of strengthening the market, which takes the form of continued and probably even increasing unemployment, impoverishment and disorder would seem to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for renewal in Africa and elsewhere.


5 The modern idea of development as a unity of spontaneous and intentional development, as well as the history of the idea, is examined in M.P.Cowen and R.W.Shenton Doctrines of Development (London:Routledge,1996).
Autocratic Elites And Enfeebled Masses

Kenneth Good*


The first of these two works has a continental orbit and contains nineteen distinct chapters. It has a focus on regional organisations, and the chapters by Peter Takirambudde comparing ASC with PTA/COMESA and by Colin McCarthy on SACU and the Rand zone as solid and useful. But it is an eclectic collection with a tendency towards academic playfulness with conceptualisations like "paradoxes and ambiguities of democratisation" and "is African civil society civilised?" The second volume is of fourteen chapters, four on military and foreign policy, five on various economic aspects, and three on demography. Most are concerned with the apartheid past and with "shaping the future," under such popular rubrics as "from isolation to respectability?" Both books are wide ranging, but neither engages closely with the political realities of the present day, in particular the yawning gap that almost everywhere exists between autocratic elites and weakened, enfeebled masses, and the "capitalist barbarism" spreading on the continent.

Regarding democratisation and civil society, few or no ambiguities actually exist.

Capitalist Barbarism

A modern barbarism of military force, economic exploitation, and social destruction has been wrought through the 1990s by identifiable elites in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea-Bissau, and elsewhere. Fighting swayed back and forth, for example, in that Congo in the late 1990s, between "Ninjas" and "Cocoeyes" militia forces, each led by a competing state President, where a victory was celebrated by the looting of the capital, and the country's main artery between Brazzaville and Pointe Noire was disrupted for months. The destructive contagion 'spilled over' from one warlord and country to another. Charles Taylor established himself as the most ruthless of such in Liberia, and promoted possibly worse depravity under Fodah Sankoh in Sierra Leone. Both became sources of contagion "for the whole region."

War and militarism also expanded out of Congo-Kinshasa and Angola. Jonas Savimbi brought deaths totalling around 800,000 and great economic sabotage over twenty-five years to his country. But the ruling elite in Luanda has direct personal control over the growing oil wealth, worth some US$3.5 billion in 1999, and both they and Savimbi's rebel leadership appeared to accept unending war as natural, inevitable and mutually profitable. Below both the elites, however, at the level of the foot-soldier and the person in the shattered streets, it was uniformly a case of poor people fighting miserable people. By 2000, on a recent United Nations report, some 200 Angolans were dying every day because of malnutrition, and 90% of the four million inhabitants of Luanda were in poverty. The resource-rich country had become "the worst place in the world to be a child" — almost one-third of infants died before the age of five.

East and South

War and destruction radiated east and southwards. Zambian businessmen-politicians provided lucrative supply facilities to Savimbi, and seemingly warning explosions occurred in Lusaka in early 1999, followed by other incursions by Angolan forces. Namibia became heavily engaged in the fighting from later that year, with raids into and out of the north of the country, the destruction of property, and the deaths of villagers.

In the east there was not only Renamo's systematic brutalities, but Rwandan

6 The words of the report, quoted by Abbey Malo in The Star (Johannesburg), 15 April 2000.
7 Grenade and landmine attacks had maimed more than 20 villagers, and another thirty people, including three French children, were murdered. Namibia announced in November that it was
genocide in 1994. In 100 days about 800,000 were slaughtered, a scale of killing which exceeded both Hitler’s and Pol Pot’s, and necessitated planning and organization by an elite — the “Akazu circle” or “Hutu-power extremists” — with high bureaucratic and social control, maintained right down until the Ugandan-backed Rwandan Patriotic Front entered Kigali. The military and moral contagion from this enormity has extended throughout central and southern Africa. Uganda and Rwanda entered Congo-Kinshasa to suppress still active Hutu-extremist forces, and in support of rebels fighting against the Kabila government. Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola intervened also, in support of Laurent Kabila.

Robert Mugabe’s military engagement was especially heavy — some 6,000 troops in 1998 and 11,000, with helicopters and fighter aircraft, shortly after. It meant access to the Congo’s diamond wealth for Zimbabwean generals and their backers, and great economic and political hardship to the people of Zimbabwe. Inflation, unemployment and interest rates were all above 50 per cent, and some 70 per cent of the population were impoverished. Gross domestic production was expected to shrink by five per cent in 2000, the annual budget deficit moved into double figures, and an estimated 150,000 jobs were threatened as businesses faced bankruptcy. After Mugabe suffered his first electoral loss, in an important constitutional referendum in February, state-organized anarchy and thuggery quickly engulfed much of the once well developed country.

Modern barbarism was further intensified in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Eritrea’s President Issaias Afwerki had displayed, since 1991, unusual leadership qualities of austerity, seriousness, openness, and egalitarianism. These were inter-mixed, nonetheless, with militaristic tendencies, giving “logistical support” to the Angolan army, but by April it had established its own military bases inside Angola intended, as President Nujoma claimed, to “wipe out” Savimbi’s forces. Tsegan Amugbadil, “Namibia Sneaks Into War”, Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 7 April 2000.

9 One estimate put the direct costs at $500 million, equivalent to one-third of the country’s total budget for 1999. In early 2000 two key diamond concessions were handed over to a private Congolese-Zimbabwean joint venture between Comex and Oleg. The main shareholders in Comex were President Kabila and some of his ministers, while those in Oleg were the commanders of the Zimbawe forces in Congo, Vitalis Zvinavashe, the boss of the Minerals Marketing Corporation in Harare, Onesimo Moyo, another mining parasitical chief, Isaiah Ruzengwe, and the permanent secretary of the defence ministry, Job Whabisa. “The Mess One Man Makes”, The Economist, 24 April 2000, and Business Day, 5 May 2000.


a firmness bordering on rigidity, and a contempt for diplomacy. They had a habit of settling their problems with a quick telephone call, but their relations plummeted through a series of provocative and irrational actions — over currencies and access to ports — in early 1998. Ethiopia is stronger economically, it possessed better weaponry, and its population was some 18 times larger than its neighbour. But Clapham had no doubt that the resort to war came from the Eritrean side.” In just a few days the two were at war in the vicinity of a disputed village.

In one battle in mid-March 1999 the Ethiopians advanced in human waves of tanks and infantry on a four-kilometre front. After 60 hours the Eritreans claimed to have killed around 10,000. A month later the corpses still lay unburied among the burnt-out tanks. Carcass and waste were the fruits of the determination of the two leaders. Eritrea around then had some 186,000 soldiers at the front — out of a total population of 3.5 million, and was spending about 20 per cent of national income on war. By the end of 1999 half-a-million Ethiopian and Eritrean conscripts faced each other in trenches. “Up to 50,000 had already gone over the top” and been mown down in the 18 months since their leaders started the conflict. Endeavours to mediate by various outside agencies were fruitless, and in May 2000 Africa’s bloodiest war resumed.

Electoral Despotism

Elsewhere, the contrast with capitalist barbarism was not meaningful democratization, but the legitimation of autocracy through the ballot box. Democracy understood as merely the act of voting, over 24 or 48 hours, once every five or seven years, not as a sustained process, is wide open to such manipulation and abuse. A few instances only. Blaise Compaore gained power in Burkina Fasso in October 1987 by brutally murdering his close friend President Thomas Sankara. He got himself elected — the objective definition of what happened — as civilian President four years later, and in November 1998 he was returned through the ballot-box for another seven years. Since only 25 per cent of voters had turned out in 1991, government thugs went into people’s homes and urged them to register. Opposition party members who called for a boycott of the polls were beaten-up. The official turnout was put at 56 per cent, and 88 per cent of them voted for President Compaore.


Legitimacy and recognition was acquired by existing autocrats even through blatant and oppressive techniques. Gnassingbe Eyadema held power in Togo for 31 years, and won a renewed term in 1998 through fiddling the electoral lists, denying the opposition access to the media, and direct intimidation; when it seemed that Gihlrist Olymio Might nonetheless win, paramilitary units stopped the count in Lome, and burnt ballot-boxes. 14 Charles Taylor emerged as the richest and bloodiest warlord in Liberia, and in July 1997 he was elected as President, after disbursing part of the wealth he had amassed from exploiting the country's natural resources through the decade. He got about 75 per cent of the vote, on a turnout of 85 per cent. His closest rival, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a former international official, got 10 per cent. His campaign implicitly promised that he would return to war if he did not win.15 Taylor continues to propagate an aura of fear and intimidation, around himself.16 His purpose is constant, but his means of achieving his ends have increased. In early 2000 he passed a law that gives him the right to dispose of all "strategic commodities". These are defined as mineral resources, forest, agricultural, and fishery products, all art, and anything else the President names.17 The economy, state, and people of Liberia had effectively become the property of Charles Taylor.

Democratic pressures in most other places — a possible exception was Senegal — led to elections which produced partially democratic systems at best, elected despots at worst. In Zambia, for instance, the movement which triumphantly brought back a multi-party system in 1991 proved unable to control the autocratic tendencies of President Frederick Chiluba, as he pursued a destructive vendetta against his failed and aged predecessor, and harassed his critics in the media and elsewhere. Daniel arap Moi retained power in Kenya over more than 20 years, while shifting from a single-party dictatorship to a multi-party despotism. Per capita income fell from $330 in 1978 to $285 in 1996, corruption sharply worsened, and the country was reduced to what Ngugi wa Thiongo called "ten millionaires and ten million poor."19 The military handed over power in Nigeria to widespread relief in 1999, but its legacy of corruption and autocracy was woeful, and the democratic foundations of President Olusegun Obasanjo were deeply flawed. The demographics of the vote did not stand up.

“As many as half the votes counted...must have been fakes”20 With wealthy supporters in and out of the military, Obasanjo had “benefited from a powerful political machine”, which his opponents completely lacked.21 What characterized most of Africa in 2000 was therefore a static inter-relationship between autocratic elites and enfeebled masses, the former uninterested in governance, and the latter without the material, organizational, and moral means to do anything about it. Decades of decay and despotism had eroded citizenship, and an empty electoral democracy had done little or nothing to engender it.

Development and Democracy in Southern Africa
Southern Africa is in many ways totally different from the barbarism and despotism, and in some essentials much the same. It is obviously the most advanced both economically and democratically. But the political feature that characterises the region, with the exception of Mauritius with its functioning liberal democracy, is the existence of predominant party systems, and the elitism which accompanies them. SWAPO commands a dominant parliamentary majority in Windhoek, and when Sam Nujoma sought an unconstitutional third term as President in 1999, the constitution was readied changed to facilitate it. The predominance of the ANC over the opposition in Cape Town is slightly less numerically speaking but as great politically, thanks to the power conferred on the leadership through the list and electoral systems (for choosing MPs), the absence of constituencies, and the disciplinary technique of "redeployment".

The BDP has remained in power in Gaborone, through every free and open election, since before 1966.22 Elitism is embedded in Botswana society, popular participation is limited, and the accountability of the executive is low to non-existent. The constitution empowers the President to decide alone. Whether it is in the broad area of security, in everything affecting the military, the position of the San/Bushmen/Basarwa, in funding for the ruling party, or corruption in government, the executive chooses not to explain. When the Botswana army was sent recently into Lesotho, and when Vice-President General Ian Khama was granted an unheard of "sabbatical", after only one year in office, this was on the judgement of President Festus Mogae alone. Critical journalistic comment is readily

13 Huband, op cit., p.53, and BBC Focus on Africa (London), 10,1, January 1999. Huband notes that Compaore was also a "significant element" in regional barbarism.

14 The Economist, 4 July 1998.

15 One of his campaign slogans was: "He Killed my Pa, He Killed my Ma, I'll Vote For Him", quoted by Elizabeth Ohene, "Chosen by God?", BBC Focus on Africa, 5,4, August-October 1997.


20 Elizabeth Blount, "But Were They Cleans", BBC Focus on Africa, 10,2, April-June 1999.


portrayed as “breeding a culture of contempt”, and no whistle-blower or freedom of information legislation exists.

Debate in South Africa was lively in parliament and in the ANC until around 1996-97, extending out of the great popular movement of the 1980s, represented by the UDF, COSATU, and a vast range of “civics” in schools, work-places, churches and elsewhere. But the UDF-MDM was disbanded shortly after the release and return of the established ANC leadership, and the civics passed their zenith of activity on the eve of the 1994 elections. Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Joe Slovo, and Jacob Zuma seemed to have little affinity for this critical, and especially independent, activity. When President Mandela made a strong attack on the press and opposition at the ANC’s 50th national conference in 1997 the change was well underway.23

Three trends have propelled one-party predominance and elitism since then. The ANC has aimed at universalising its predominance. Key “centres of power” in the state and society were to be identified and party cadres deployed to them. The coverage explicitly included the army, police, bureaucracy, the intelligence structures, the judiciary, parastatals and regulatory bodies, the public broadcaster, the central bank, and so on, as well as “all other sectors of social activity”, including the economy, the media, and sport. The party had been making political appointments to the “upper echelons” of the state since 1994, but the present policy greatly widened their scope, centralised control over them, and aimed at ensuring their accountability to the party leadership after deployment.24

The serious effects of this policy were pointed to by Mamphela Ramphele at the University of Cape Town in December 1999. There was, she said, “a disturbing culture of silence in this country.” Black academics did not criticise the government because of misplaced loyalty, and white academics “did not speak out on issues of national concern any more...afraid that they will be labelled racist.” New ruling elites elsewhere in Africa had a tendency to concentrate absolute power in their hands, just as had as their colonial masters. Responsible citizenship required robust, open, and public debate, while conformity and silence would “negate the gains of our infant democracy.”25

23 He frequently declared at this time that, not only were the opposition parties small in size in comparison with the ANC, but they were valueless and irrelevant – “Mickey Mouse” was a favourite epithet.

24 Quotations are from the conference resolutions, cited by Tony Leon, Business Day, 23 March 2000. Control was formally centralised in a sub-committee of the national working committee headed by (now) Vice-President Jacob Zuma, but effectively in President Mbeki.

Second Trend

The second trend was also underway under Nelson Mandela, but it was accorded explicit policy endorsement by President Mbeki in November 1999, when he called for the formation of a black capitalist class. Speaking at a conference in Johannesburg on “patriotic capitalism”, he urged that blacks abandon any possible embarrassment about the emergence of successful, ultimately prosperous, black property owners. Blacks must act in a manner consistent with a realistic response to the real capitalist world of South Africa. “We must work to ensure that there emerges a black bourgeoisie”, he affirmed.26

Although the President denied that wealth and income disparities among blacks were widening – he implied that the very idea was a racist red-herring – this is of course the corollary of the policy, and it is in fact occurring. Even in the period 1991-1996, the richest ten per cent of black households gained on average a 17 per cent increase in their incomes, while the poorest 40 per cent lost around 21 per cent. In addition, the proportion of blacks in the top ten per cent of income earners rose from 9 per cent to 22 per cent.27

The formation of a black bourgeoisie is now being promoted in agriculture too. This sector embraces some 20 million rural people, who contributed significantly to the ANC’s much touted landslide victory in 1999. New programmes were announced in February and April 2000 that have the aim of shifting land redistribution resources towards the promotion of black commercial farmers. The policy of the former Land Affairs minister, Derek Hanekom, had been to target the weak, while the market, through lending institutions, catered for the relatively strong. He had offered a R16,000 land acquisition grant and had aimed at ensuring that scarce state resources reached the maximum number of those in need. The new plan of minister Thoko Didiza offers a sliding scale of grants up to R100,000, which could be used to leverage bank finance; the beneficiaries being those who already possessed the experience, enterprise, and assets to farm commercially. Didiza’s radical changes were introduced without consultation – not with civil society, parliament, the Land Bank, nor even with the commercial banks which had been assigned a vital role in the programme. As Hlatshwayo summed-up the situation: “In 1994 the ANC drafted policies


through consultative processes with a wide range of democratic forces...Since June [1999] that consultation has given way to centralised directives promising to reverse many of the gains secured for the poor over the past decade.28

Other complex tendencies surrounded these three big changes. Hanekom was known as a “conscientious and hard-working minister who spent much of his time tramping rural SA”, and was summarily dismissed on Mbeki’s inauguration. He was followed by the contrived resignation of Helena Dolny as chief executive of the Land Bank;29 she was an experienced rural economist who worked at least a 12-hour office-day, and who had re-directed the Bank’s lending activities towards the rural poor. The moves appeared inter-connected and significant. Forrest concluded that “left-wing whites who champion the down-trodden masses” represented a particular irritant to black nationalists, and that Mbeki’s “over-riding priority [was] building a black ruling elite.”30 Dolny’s own understandings were similar. “There’s a different style of leadership emerging under President Thabo Mbeki. [His] emphasis is on an African renaissance built on personal loyalty to him.”31 Subjectivism, and a spreading “anti-intellectualism”, might also be added to the equation of Mbeki’s distinctive elitism.32

National elections in 1999 in Botswana saw the virtual disappearance of the opposition, on a turnout of eligible voters of only around 42 per cent. Only Mauritius in the region possesses a functioning electoral democracy which has actually produced a change in government on more than one occasion. The sharp contrast between autocratic elites and masses which they have deliberately weakened is everywhere else in place. The people of Zimbabwe rejected proposals to confer increased powers on the presidency in February, and Mugabe responded in days with anarchy, increased intolerance and racism.

Yet, South Africa remains inherently, structurally different from the rest of the continent in its possession of a relatively advanced capitalist economy, and the well organized working class movement which accompanies it. COSATU was at the vanguard of the struggle for popular democracy in the 1980s, and levels of unionization in South Africa remain one of the strongest and densest in the world.33 Zimbabwe, before Mugabe initiated the destruction of the country’s economic assets, was a smaller but not dissimilar example, with an organized working class at the front of the opposition party today.

Critical, democratic forces remain active in South Africa, and the outcome of their struggle with the ANC’s predominance and elitism is not pre-determined. But democratic South Africa, it should be noted, has been as ready as its apartheid predecessor to retain its economic dominance in the region. Colin Stoneman, in his chapter in Simon’s book, has pointed to Pretoria’s on-going efforts to limit the development of manufacturing industry, especially in clothing and textiles, in Zimbabwe. Over the past few years, car assembly in Gaborone, represented first by Hyundai then Volvo, has faced determined opposition from South Africa. Ex-President Ketumile Masire stated that that country’s established auto-builders had been “dead opposed” to the Hyundai factory. The ANC government stood with its industrialists, saying that “nothing should happen on the periphery”.34

32 Acting Constitutional Court judge, Edwin Cameron, endorsing Mamphela Ramphole’s views, that public policy showed a “lack of respect for a scientific base for health care planning”, and that government lacked a “coherent management strategy”.  Mail and Guardian, 31 March 2000.

Heald introduces the Gisu as having an historical reputation for violence which others believed was in their 'human nature'. At the time of her field research new Gisu movements had emerged, one focused on controlling beer drinking and another on eradicating thieves and witches. Rather than interpret this as primarily a political consequence of the collapse of local administration when the new post-colonial state changed the colonial arrangements of indirect rule – i.e. a local power struggle – she locates this violence in cultures of Gisu masculinity (manhood), self-reliance and self-help remedies. She describes Gisu culture as existential in its primary focus on the contingencies of the present.

African kinship systems form the theoretical context of this study of violence. The classic studies of 'acephalous societies' by Evans-Pritchard on the Nuer and Fortes on the Tallensi are used to contrast the limited range of reciprocity and obligation in Gisu kinship. Thus amongst the Gisu there is no institution of the feud and most murder does not lead to the mobilisation of kin. This central focus on kinship and forms of political mobilisation at first seem to date the book. The original fieldwork was undertaken between 1965 and 1969 and it was first published in 1989 by the International Africa Institute at Manchester University. However Heald's very engaging analysis adopts a phenomenological approach to provide a much more dynamic account of how traditional cultural models and practices are extended and transformed by the contingencies of Gisu social and political life.

The title of the book includes not only 'violence' (act) but also 'anger' (emotion). While violence is perceived to be endemic amongst the Gisu here it refers primarily to remedies of self-help to achieve 'civil peace', lukoozi - the 'submission of the self to moral rules' (p.3). The emotions associated with violence are fear and anger. Fear refers to a specific object and setting and anger (litima) the passion men have (women are not considered to be able to be roused to such an extent) to act against their fear – i.e. to be fearless. The study then is a phenomenology of Gisu male fear and their resort to anger and violence as a strategy of self and social defence.

Heald's account of Gisu understanding and response to misfortune contains fascinating detail of cultural creativity and texture of daily life. This is conveyed through proverbs. There is inescapable uncertainty in all social relationships: 'witchcraft thrives on friendship' (p.180). The legacy of disputes is not easily forgotten: 'He who shits forgets but he who steps in it remembers forever' (p.185). Moreover the proverbs are constantly produced with reference to daily events and personalities. 'The things that have present meaning are things that live in the memories of others, in their feelings, and particularly in their anger.' (p.198) They survive only as long as they remain relevant or displaced by a new event-proverb – just like the daily news!

Culture of Fear

The Gisu culture of fear attributes human agency to all death – either murder or witchcraft. However the threat of escalating violence is contained by attributing the cause of all murder and witchcraft as interpersonal conflict. If an adult dies from the witchcraft it is seen to emanate from the hatreds he has aroused during his life and poses further risk. 'The thing that kills you comes from your past' (p.198). Thus by individualising conflict the Gisu are said to limit its social consequences.

The richness of this work is produced by weaving between 'thick' cultural description of individual subjectivity and the structural conditions of Gisu life. At times the contrast seems a little disconnected as it shifts between detailed descriptions of ritual circumcision which mark, through pain, male manhood and fearlessness and quantitative analysis of homicide data, land ownership or kinship. It also conveys the impression of being a layered work produced by stages of ethnographic sedimentation – periods of fieldwork and reflection. This comes out explicitly at various points – 'Early in my fieldwork I suggested that much of the killing was essentially and unintentional in nature' (p.57).

The real ethnographic value of Heald's work is its dialogue with earlier traditions of anthrology in Africa. Her firm grounding in the work of British African anthropology (the Gisu even recognised her as having a quasi-kinship tie with Jean La Fontaine, an earlier ethnographer of the Gisu) places her in a very good position to gently critique the iconic status of the African anthropological classics. She does this through careful exploration of the kinship relations in different settings, their limitations and conditionality. Moreover she very
firmly establishes the importance of understanding violence in its local context, where it is produced and where social relationships have to be ‘healed’, to use more contemporary language. This echoes the much later work of Michael Ignatieff who, from a human rights perspective, questions the possibility of reconciliation outside lived relationships. Heald’s study is in stark contrast to the tendency towards more global analyses of violence, repression and dictatorship in Africa and demonstrates the importance of the local analysis of conflict.

What would be interesting to follow up from this study is the extent to which Gisu strategies of violence as ‘traditionalisation’ – Durkheimian defence of community through policing deviance - can survive increased pressure on land and the more rapid ‘de-traditionalisation’ of the rural poor in the burgeoning cities of Africa. In this broader rural-urban context Gisu emphasis on the morality of self reliance and self-help point to a quite ruthless treatment of those who fail in that world. As Heald notes, those accused of witchcraft are the poor, those who have the least stake in the kinship or land system. These are the failures of the cultural code, the social cost of retaining a ‘warrior’ morality. The vigilante groups she describes as ‘new movements’ also seek to reinforce the ideals of manhood - independence and fearlessness -

As an antidote to ‘Africa Negra’, overwhelmed by violent passions and madness, I fully recommend Suzette Heald’s book.

Michael Humphrey
School of Sociology
University of NSW

Understanding South African Political Exiles


Reading Mark Israel’s “South African Political Exiles in the UK” is like sifting through a library full of personal diaries. It is especially rich in recollections for anti-apartheid activists who migrated from South Africa after the nationalist government came to power in 1948.

Israel was well placed to research their experiences. The son of South African political exiles living in London, he learned about the struggle at first hand and pays tribute to his parents for stimulating his interest in the sociology of migration. In 1990 Israel began documenting the accounts of a range of former political activists, taking the reader on a journey which traces the circumstances that led them to leave South Africa; methods of departure and of arrival in Britain; the establishment of exile networks; questions of identity in exile and the role the exiles played in bringing apartheid to its knees. In doing so he has woven together a rich tapestry of personal accounts which bring a wealth of understanding to the migrant experience. Some of the stories in earlier chapters tend towards repetition, but as the book progresses through the decades the pace speeds up and the personal dilemmas encountered by a wide range of individuals serve to build a coherent and gripping oral history of exiled South Africans in the UK.

In the course of reading this book, I hunted down my personal diaries from 1961-1963 and between the lines found a mirror to the climate of fear and mistrust in which people lived under apartheid. This climate was reflected in the agitated reaction of close friends and family when, as a university student, I started making frequent visits to the home of my favourite aunt and uncle in Cape Town, Jack and Ray Simons. It was a long time before I began to understand why my exclamations were considered a risky business. That was because Jack and Ray were prominent members of the outlawed Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). Only then did it begin to dawn upon me why my comparatively conservative parents were concerned when a poem I wrote in defence of Helen Joseph was published in The Evening Post in Port Elizabeth. It was 1962 and my parents believed - maybe knew - that our phone was being tapped.

In traditional storytelling tradition, Israel follows a chronological path, pulling together the threads of political events which overtook South Africa after 1948. In doing so, he identifies and isolates conflicting personal accounts of life under apartheid, placing them into a clear perspective which will untangle for many readers more than four decades of secrets, lies and propaganda. Drawing upon a variety of sources, he describes the years after 1963 as “desperate for the liberation movements”, a time when the ANC faced massive repression, a time when the 90-day detention laws were introduced, a time when almost 1100 people, including my Uncle Jack, were detained, a time when the underground collapsed. Members of the banned CPSA were often at a loss, waiting for permission from the Party to leave, fearing accusations of disloyalty. A most convincing argument for taking a one-way exit permit in 1966 came from Albie Sachs, now a Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa: “I left because it was hell. It was impossible to function. I had been detained twice. I had virtually no legal practice left. I was about to be disbarred.”

So exile followed resistance, and there a new story begins, and within this tale, what Israel calls the “fragmentary and contradictory, and occasionally just plain dubious” story of South African immigration to Britain. This story has parallels in Australia. Many South African exiles migrated to the UK before coming here and all South African exiles I know have encountered the dilemma described in the
chapter “Exile and Identity”. What is an exile? How does an exile live? For whom and for what? Israel eloquently comes to terms with these questions in his own words and in the words of others.

As for the guilt and grief of exiled South Africans, he allows the exiled artist Dennis Brutus to verbalise the inner torment many of us felt on reading about political events taking place in our home country:

“I am the exile
am the wanderer
the troubadour
(whatever they say)
gentle I am, and calm
and with abstracted pace
absorbed in planning,
courteous to servility
but wailings fill the chambers of my heart
and in my head
behind my quiet eyes
I hear the cries and sirens (Brutus, 1989:189) - p147

In 1986 I caught up with my aunt and uncle, who had gone into exile in 1965. They were working for the African National Congress in Zambia, where they provided sanctuary to an ever-growing stream of exiles. With their encouragement, on my return to Australia, I made contact with the Chief Representative of the ANC here, and my connection with Jack and Ray granted me rapid acceptance. I was very fortunate. Within months I was editing the ANC newsletter, speaking at protest rallies and raising funds for political prisoners. In the years that followed I learned much and worked hard, and my burden of collective guilt was eased.

The activities of the anti-apartheid movement in the UK which Israel describes are startling in their similarity to those in Australia. There were corresponding rallies and meetings, identical films and concerts. In both countries visitors who fronted up to the ANC office offering help were carefully studied in case they were agents for ‘the regime’. There was the same malicious gossip, such as the rumour that one South African exile who attended all major rallies in Sydney was working for the CIA. I was told to avoid him at all cost and learned only this year that the rumour was completely erroneous. Other issues in the UK highlighted by Israel were enacted here as well. These revolved around the choices activists were required to make between affiliating with the ANC or PAC; the confusion faced by the second generation of exiled South Africans and the dilemma both generations experienced when it became possible for them to return to their homeland - 30 to 40 years after leaving it.

Many decided to remain in the United Kingdom. Jack and Ray Simons decided to return to Cape Town and were welcomed back with great jubilation on 2 March 1990. Jack was given a hero’s funeral following his death in 1995. Ray, who will be 85 this year, is now writing her autobiography. On my part, I have decided to remain in Australia with my children and grandchildren, but a good chunk of me still lingers in South Africa. If you take the time to read this book and grapple with the experiences contained within it, you will understand why.

Lynette Simons
Special Broadcasting Service
Sydney

Women In Zimbabwean Urban Culture


A new book or article by Terri Barnes is always good news. One of a handful of established scholars of colonial urban history of Zimbabwe, Barnes has the special ability to imagine the lives of women who worked with and against the tendencies of their time anonymously. The voices she has us read are of people who rarely if ever heard their names shouted from podiums or saw their faces on campaign posters. They are the sorts who seem altogether too ordinary to do anything historic. Barnes takes subaltern history seriously, though, and weaves such people into and around laws, politics, work situations, and traditions of opportunity and constraint in African “locations” of Harare. In doing so, she works forward (to nationalism and independence) and backward (to the conquest years) around the 1930s, a period she refers to as the middle age of Zimbabwe’s colonial history.

Barnes co-authored To Live a Better Life: An Oral History of Women in Harare, 1930-1970 (1992) with Everjoyce Win, a wonderful book about daily life in Harare across more years than she surveys in this latest work. The themes of her new book expand on gender, women’s work, colonial urban development, social reproduction, and coherencies in Zimbabwean urban culture. African women, she contends, successfully organised and imbued their lives with local cultural meanings that were appropriate for present and future society, and they did so in the face of limits that local men and colonial strictures put on them.

58
In illuminating intricacies of women’s success — and their pain — Barnes aims to set the historical record straight about women in post-conquest social reproduction. She particularly wants to correct the impression that the colonial period was all about men struggling as labourers, unionists, and political actors. Colonialism entailed “violent exploitation, destruction, and impoverishment, and it was also an era of reconsolidations of economic, political, and social identities and power” (p. xxi). The key to the reconsolidations were gender activities in which city women built cultural coherencies “well before a political vision of a reclaimed Zimbabwean nation was articulated” (p. xxi). This orientation places some of Barnes’ interpretations in contention with Elizabeth Schmidt’s account of women in colonial Zimbabwe (Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1992), particularly where Schmidt argues that women suffered a decline in social and economic status. Barnes is keen to have us appreciate the centrality of women to the reconsolidations of the time.

What did the city women do exactly? First of all, they lived active lives in colonial Harare. That this is so may seem obvious; but to Barnes, it was a complex matter for African women to be in any Rhodesian city. At once, women’s presence could be at odds with the geospatial logic of colonialism, annoying to some (and gratifying to other) African men, and it could be the means to class, gender, and African mobility. The intricacies she finds dispel any notion that there was an archetypal urban woman. Job, aspiration, life style, and treatment differentiated “her” from others in the city.

Coherencies

Barnes does find some coherencies, though, which add to the complexities of differentiation. Hierarchy in gender relations is one. In a place officially associated with working men and whites, Barnes notes that African women who aspired to be respected in the city had to adjust the image of the good rural women to the new conditions. They did so by becoming “well-known,” which is to say moral, righteous, and admirable. Such women were “properly” married (with lobola or bride-price), often Christian, and lived tidy protobourgeois lives in urban houses, where they seemed to depend on bushbars for economic viability. Lowly women were prostitutes, or infamously independent mapato women in de facto marriages (cooking pot marriages), which they could enter and leave as they chose (taking many of the household belongings with them when they left). Yet hierarchy was not simple. That married women had access to housing meant they had the means to accumulate wealth: it was easier to brew and serve beer in a house, for example, than in a hostel. The vast majority of unmarried women negotiated around the laws, mores, property and job constraints around them to found a life in Harare without benefit of good regard.

All of this detail is fascinating, and Barnes’s heart is in it. Still, I liked her last book a bit better than this one. The last one relied on earthy, humorous, and poignant narratives that imparted marvellous texture to urban life; a reader familiar with Harare could smell the vegetables cooking, sneak around the alleys of Ilighfield with unmarried women evading police, and laugh with them about various escapades. This book is more stern with its data, its narratives more valiant, more tied to the points Barnes wants to make. And, it does seem that she makes points even if it means getting ahead of her evidence. Three examples. She asserts that “gender in precolonial Zimbabwean society was less defined by physical, anatomical attributes, and more by participation in various social rituals of identity” (p. 94). This statement seems to come out of the blue and is not elaborated. Might it not be that anatomical attributes become the subject of social rituals that, over time, reproduce and maintain anatomy as the basis of gender meaning? An argument like this would be in keeping with Barnes’s concerns to elucidate complexities of the commonplace. She also makes the point time and again that urban Africans were concerned mostly to survive and reproduce their culture in a hostile political economy. Yet she imparts a sense that harsh relations of urban gender operated at cross-purposes with this encompassing, singular goal. That is, the evidence she presents for urban sexual violence is so robust that this reader went away thinking the older thought that oppression leads the oppressed to displace their anger on those near them. Yet, it is also clear in Barnes’s work that aspects of gender oppression were around in the precolonial time too. All of this should be flushed out. Finally, towards the end, Barnes wonders whether we can say that Zimbabwean women supported nationalism, a topic she realises needs more research. Before doing research, however, she dismisses without explanation a well-regarded study by Norma Kriger (Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices, 1992), showing that the armed struggle phase of nationalism did not command strong voluntary rural support (p. 150).

By the last page, the reader is far more knowledgeable about the middle age of urban colonial Zimbabwe than when she began. Barnes throws us new themes and recasts old ideas in innovative, useful, and solid ways. She draws our attention to debates unfolding in Zimbabwean historiography too, which is a bonus for researchers and development specialists, who may think we have the history of Zimbabwe down pat. Barnes’s expressions, her willingness to be self-critical, and her engaged writing also frequently charm. Yet, as I exit the book thinking everything is far more complicated than I realised, Barnes exits simplifying, as in this statement from the penultimate chapter: “Women’s refusal to be oppressed, then, pointed them not in the direction of liberation from personal oppression but from oppression that was rooted in the colonial political economy” (p. 160). Er, which women and which sign of refusal? How difficult it is for all of us to find that delicate balance of interpretation and assertion. And how worthy Barnes’s effort is.
Matters Of Identity: Women In Zimbabwe


"Words: what are words? They are like little bits of rubbish, feathers floating away in the wind". These phrases, from Zimbabwean writer Chenjerai Hove, are quoted at the beginning of Christine Sylvester's book (p.3). However, the rest of her book proves that Hove is wrong. Words do matter and words are stronger than feathers.

It is not surprising that Sylvester begins with these words. Despite her remarkable achievements that make her one of the foremost authorities on Zimbabwe, and her ability to integrate appropriately the diverse and complex fields of international relations, African and development studies and feminist theories, Sylvester is a modest writer. She is concerned that her research processes might be considered "disorderly, nonneutral, and sometimes less than fully systematic" (p.36). This is not true. She is, to use a Swazi feminist phrase, a "responsible" researcher, who is prepared to place herself within a community in order to find a "production of identity in the in-between spaces" (p.39).

It is this aspect of identity that is one reason why Hove is not correct. The issue of identity is a key one in this book. As Sylvester notes, "matters of identity and interpretation are empirical questions as well as philosophical, cultural, and theoretical ones" (p.252). Identities are neither singular nor static. They have histories and futures, and are products of struggle and imagination, very often due to labelling by the other. In this process of attaining, retaining and becoming identities, words can appear to be forever floating past on the wind. Yet the labels given and used can be vital aspects of identities. Indeed, the first question asked by Sylvester of each group of women that she interviewed: "Are you a woman and if so how do you know?" (p.33), shows this. It is hardly surprising that some laughed and rolled their eyes at this question. Added to which, the problems of translation are immense (p.35). For words do matter and are not mere feathers on the wind.

Words also matter in the political context. Sylvester's book is published at a time when President Mugabe has called white farmers "enemies of the state". In fact if it is the commercial farm workers, owners and trade union people who were interviewed for this book, who are now affected by the government's support for the occupation of white farms by what are called "war veterans". So this research is not an historical account of identities but an on-going one. After all one of the leaders of the opposition Zimbabwe Union of Democrats, Margaret Dongo, can be identified both as a "war veteran" and as a "woman".

My only major criticism of this book is that the first part of the first Chapter (pp.1-16) is awkward in terms of engaging the reader and in clarifying the objective of the book. Otherwise the book reads well and uses African poetry and other writings as appropriate interjections into the flow of argument. It is a valuable book that needs to be priced to make it available for all those interested in Zimbabwe.

Robert McCorquodale
Faculty of Law
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT

Colonial Administrators Reminisce


This substantial volume was inspired by Marcelle and Douglas Browne, editors of Looking back at the Uganda Protectorate (published in Dalkeith in Western Australia in 1996 and apparently now sold out!) In 1998 Ronnie Anderson put out an invitation to a hundred former colleagues. The result is a book of thirty chapters divided into a total of ninety five parts. It is arduous to count the number of contributors since several have written more than one part, so the estimate of "almost forty" from another source is gratefully accepted. If those who did reply are a representative sample then members of the Eastern Nigerian Civil Service are loyal to the region and appreciative of its people and culture, preferring the bush to the fleshpots of the capital. Colonial staff in Nigeria were usually allocated to one region, each of its regions being larger than most African countries. In an era when international agencies shuffle staff around it is salutary to remember that in the 1950s there were poorly paid members of the District Administration with decades of experience in the Eastern Region who spoke the local languages.
Three chapters (comprising 21 parts) are devoted to vignettes: Medical matters, Public Relations, Historical analysis, Eastern Nigeria Revisited and the Epilogue are all in one-part chapters written by expatriates while Looking Forward is based on a letter from Chief Udoji. As someone who progressed to Nigeria from southern and eastern Africa I myself did not see the banks of the River Niger until ten years after Independence and I never crossed over into the Eastern region. Even so I was surprised at the number of familiar themes, including ritual murder and the Royal Visit. As elsewhere in Africa, District Officers had the best views and gardens, used powdered milk, and had the time to read Proust. Chapter 7 covers the UPE (Universal Primary Education) riots of 1957/8 which arose when the wives, who traditionally supported their children through primary school, discovered that UPE was not to be free. Since in those days the stone was the favourite weapon of the rioter, the protesters in the Delta where there was no stone for 50 miles were very disadvantaged. Chapter 10 begins with "The Crash of the Bristol Wayfarer", the crash of a civil aircraft in Calabar that was efficiently handled as were some other emergencies. Elsewhere there are honest examples of less efficient behaviour, one being the destruction, by mistake, of the current code book.

This work is blessed with an index. However I should like to permit myself a cavil (or two). Although biographical details of the authors are scattered throughout, some potted biographies at the end would have been useful. My other cavil, since I am writing the review in Wales, is that I was amazed that the famous couplet from the song The Black Pig needs an explanatory (Peninsular!) after the placename "Gower". Overall nonetheless this book represents another addition to 'The Empire fights back' genre. It is extremely readable, but with almost a hundred parts, don't try to read it all at once.

David Lucas
Australian National University
Canberra,ACT

New Survey Of African History


The latest survey of the history of Africa from the prolific Professor Isichei is the first half of a promised two volume set. This volume provides a panorama of the African past, from the prehistoric period to 1870. Readers should not be put off by the somewhat self-congratulatory tone of the introduction and occasional self-praise scattered throughout the book. Once again, Professor Isichei has demonstrated her capacities to synthesise a broad range of specialist, often parochial, literature and convey their insights in a language accessible to ordinary undergraduates and the general public.

A History of African Societies to 1870 reflects preoccupations and controversies of the 1970s and 1980s, the period of most of the sources. In a world in which the neo-Marxist debates are rapidly fading from undergraduate awareness, it provides a useful introduction to those unfamiliar with the controversies that raged around modes of production and dependency theory. Similarly, the emphases on gender and discourse reflect attitudes and assumptions of a previous decade, rather than more recent insights of post-colonial studies of the 1990s and discussions of the links between race, class and gender.

Such a survey invites comparison with contemporary textbooks, such as the third edition of John Fage's A History of Africa (London: Routledge, 1995) and the third edition of Africa edited by Phyllis Martin and Patrick O'Meara (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). Like the John Fage volume, Professor Isichei's text is structured in terms of chronological political history by region, though the scope in terms of societies is far more ambitious. Yet the hints at a thematic structured in the introduction pale in their execution compared with Africa by Martin and O'Meara, the latter a reflection of the diversity of African Studies as distinct from the African history focus of Fage and Isichei.

The book is divided into three unequal sections. The first, roughly twenty-percent of the text, deals with the long pre-historic period to the Early Iron Age and includes a rather awkwardly located 'prelude' on the nature of sources, particularly the role of oral history in African Studies and questions of historical interpretation. The subsequent prehistory chapters provide a sound review of archaeological interpretations, with focus on the material culture and technology, and historical linguistics. The segment ends with a somewhat eclectic, often oddly ahistorical and generalised anthropological survey of African institutions.

The second section, approximately a third of the narrative, covers the period before European contact and is organized around regional clusters. Each regional chapter opens with issues of the ecology and ethnic identities, followed by brief accounts of the social institutions and political history of the
major regional politics. While issues of gender and cultural history are touched upon, it is only in the segment on West Africa that such aspects are addressed in some detail.

The final segment, just under half the text, covers the period from European contact to 1870. While this partially reflects the availability of material, it is an oddly Euro-centric periodization. Moreover, only when on more familiar turf of West Africa in the nineteenth century is the reader introduced to something of the wealth and flavour of the archival sources. More often the voice is that of the historians, the majority of them non-African.

While the informed reader will find little that is new in terms of content or interpretation, *A History of African Societies to 1870* is a very good undergraduate textbook in African history. It provides a broad coverage of African history to the eve of the Scramble for Africa and its diverse contents should provide fertile material for stimulating discussions.

David Dorward
African Research Institute
La Trobe University
Bundoora Vic 3083

New Human Rights Bulletin

*Zimbabwe Human Rights Bulletin*, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, Issue 1, July 1999. SUS15pa (2 volumes per year), 140pp ISSN 1562-5958

The *Zimbabwe Human Rights Bulletin* is a new publication by the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, an impressive and effective human rights organisation. The volume reviewed is the first volume of a series that is intended to be produced every six months and follows on from earlier publications by the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, though those publications were generally not bound in the manner of this Bulletin. The main purpose of the Bulletin is to provide surveys of significant human rights developments in Zimbabwe during the preceding six months, relevant human rights statistics and some articles on current issues. The first volume achieves this purpose. It begins with a 44 page report by Angela Cheater of the key human rights developments in Zimbabwe for the period from January to June 1999. This comprehensive account of events, judicial action, legislation, and political, economic and social activities, deals with a vast array of human rights from economic, social and cultural rights to civil and political rights, with a section on children's rights. There are also helpful sections on economic and political "contextualisation". This report is followed by a report on legislation by Charles Goredema and Bryant Elliot and a report on court cases by Geoff Feltoe. These latter chapters are both useful and provide further detail to matters raised by Angela Cheater.

There are two short articles in this volume: one by Tendai Biti on judiciary bashing and one by Geoff Feltoe on torture. The former considers the tensions between the judiciary and the executive in Zimbabwe, by reference to the deliberate and calculated attacks on the judiciary by the government. It concludes that "at least in the short run, the prospects for democracy and the Rule of Law in this country can only be bleak". Sadly, recent events in Zimbabwe bear this out. The second article, by one of Zimbabwe's most well-known human rights legal academics, summarises the international law with respect to torture and considers some past and recent actions in Zimbabwe that amount to torture. Both articles are interesting, though are perhaps too brief to offer any in-depth analysis of the law and practice. The last section of the Bulletin sets out information on the international human rights documents to which Zimbabwe is a party as well as some prison statistics. These are helpful for later reference.

Overall, the Bulletin provides invaluable, thoroughly researched, evidence of the state of human rights in Zimbabwe. Such evidence is all too rarely compiled in such a systematic and comprehensive way. The Bulletin is accessible to non-lawyers and should be read by anyone interested in both Zimbabwe and the protection of human rights. After all, the production of such journals as the *Zimbabwe Human Rights Bulletin* is one of the ways to place effective pressure, based on sound evidence, on a government that seems determined to violate human rights.

Robert McCorquodale
Faculty of Law
ANU Canberra ACT

(The second issue was published in Harare March 2000. The address is ZILHR, P.O. Box CY 1393, Causeway, Zimbabwe - Ed.)
Congo Essay*

David Moore

What is it about the centre of Africa that attracts the west's best writers - the crafters of "our" white, largely middle class collective consciousness and conscience - in the midst of some of the world's most tension ridden, crisis drenched and epoch-making periods of history? What was it that made Conrad take the Congo as his cue - so much so that his Heart of Darkness became a metaphorical guide to our modern mass psyche and we forgot that it was brought about by the real "horrors" of the end of the 19th century by the notorious deeds of King Leopold and the henchmen of his company-colony, instead of some semi-Freudian pop-psychology - just as the rest of the world was experiencing the height of liberal global capitalism: the heights before the fall and the "long depression" of 1913 that only came to an end after the second world war.

And what is it about today - when the Congo is going through what has been called Africa's "Great War," drawing in three or more rebel movements and over half-a-dozen countries in the wake of the neighbouring Rwandan genocide and the disaster of Laurent Desiré Kabila's takeover from the kleptocratic Mobutu Sese-Seko - that lets us read Adam Hochschild's exquisite King Leopold's Ghost, which lays out the compellingly morbid details of the Belgian king's "free-state" company-colony responsible for the death of perhaps 10 million Africans in the quest for ivory, rubber and the means of transporting them out of the "heart of darkness" that Conrad's questing soul drove him to see?

Hochschild's book is "history," and although its clarity, description of personal details, and evocation of humanitarian heroes such as E.D. Morel and Roger Casement give it novel-like readability, my concern here is with two Conradesque chronicles of the Congo in the 1960s, that moment when the Cold War was getting notably warmer. Then, Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the just-independent Congo, seemed threat enough to the United States to warrant the CIA's assistance in his murder.

Ronan Bennett's The Catastrophist and Barbara Kingsolver's The Poisonwood Bible confront this moment. Bennett is a stark, realist portrayal of Gillespie, an Irish novelist trying to remain aloof and distant from the revolutionary din, yet in love with Inès, an Italian journalist for the Communist L'Unita whom he fears loves revolutions - and Africans involved in them - more than she loves him. However, he's drawn almost inevitably towards engagement through his naïve and misguided trust of the American CIA agent in combination with Inès' defense. It's a brutal, literally torturous involvement. We're never quite sure, though, whether he embraces her abstract ideals, or if he is driven to the lengths of his life to protect her as his love, perhaps even his possession.

The Poisonwood Bible - seven or eight months on the New York Times bestseller list - is a much different book. It explores the lives of the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a mad, Kurtz-like American evangelist who drags them to the deep forest during the Lumumba conjuncture. We read the Congo's contested historical conjuncture through their very different eyes. Rachel, the prissy, eternally teenaged cynic; Leah, a more classically leftist Lumumbist; Adah, perhaps a deep ecologist with a disturbingly harsh approach; and Ruth May, believe it or not a ghost - perhaps King Leopold's Ghost - are representations of the marvelously polymorphous complexities that are arising, ironically enough, again now that the Cold War is over.

So what is the connection between the Congo and "us?" Could it be that at the turn of the century, also one in which we are experiencing the trials and tribulations of financial capitalism at its free-wheeling best and worst, the Congo again appears to be the canary at the bottom of the mineshaft? Could this coincidence of economic base and literary superstructure be the cause of the nearly simultaneous publication of these books?

What are the canariesque coincidences in the Congo, as these three books were written, released and read? The Congo, so often represented as the "other" in literary representations, may tell us about something much closer to our own existence. Just as Hochschild's chronicle is exposing the stark side of history, Laurent-Desiré Kabila, president of a fast disintegrating Democratic Republic of the Congo, is being compared by his more historically minded opponents not just to his predecessor, the infamous Mobutu - who was installed by the same upholders of global justice who killed Lumumba - but to King Leopold himself.

And what is this connection between the Congo and "us?" Well, we may be spiralling towards financial crisis and the Congo is going through a war pitting warlords against democrats, international opportunists and mercenaries plundering the Congo's vast mineral resources versus patriots hoping to use that wealth for their people, genocidares contra humanitarians, facing each other in the maelstrom of

*This is the text of a broadcast by David Moore on the ABC programme "Books and Writing" broadcast on January 11th 2000. I am grateful to the ABC for permission to reproduce the talk here.

David Moore, formerly of Flinders University of South Australia, School of Political and International Studies and the Centre for Development Studies, is now teaching in Economic History and Development Studies in the University of Natal, Durban South Africa. (Ed)
war and transformation. Interestingly, though, in our age of instantaneous global communication, our Comrades interpret 40 year old events. Conrad himself was quicker. No doubt a new one will chronicle today's heart of tumult. Hopefully, he or she will be Congolese. But in the meantime, the connections between "us" and "them" are clear. I have been speaking with one of the leaders of the Rally for Congolese Democracy, to my mind the most democratically oriented group of Anti-Kabila rebels and most deserving of support. His analysis of the crisis extends far beyond his home, to the whole continent. Jacques Depelchin thinks that "If Africa is going to survive and eventually emerge from the state in which it is, it will have to follow the route which brought down Apartheid: systematic sustained solidarity."

I wonder if these books will have any impact on the sort of solidarity needed for such a task. If they could have similar influence as the humanitarian in King Leopold's Ghost who contributed to the demise of King Leopold's "free state," we might save ourselves from a new century that otherwise is bound to repeat the blunders of the one just past.

The Books
Runner up for the Whitbread Prize, 1998.

Winner of the 1999 Lionel Gelber Prize


Other Literary or "Travel" Books

The introd and quirky reli of the Victorian age heads into the other Congo (Peoples Republic of, or "Congo-Brazzaville") in search of a mythical dinosaur-monster. His American side-kick mikes for a hilarious counter-fell, and his (sometimes drug-altered) Darwinian perspectives challenge a lot or our preconceptions.


Sebald's walking tour of England's east coast is languard: but it has surprising encounters with Conrad's and Casement's ghostly memories.


Son of Professor Wamba din Wamba, professor at the University of Dar es Salaam and leader of what in my opinion is the one supportable group in opposition to Kabila. The book is bound to be a key one in the debate on what it means to be "Afro-American" in this day of diasporic identities.

Some Other Books and Articles of Interest
(to the more academically inclined)


Films

Lumumba: Death of a Prophet, (dir. Raoul Peck) is a haunting collage of images and memories, directed by a Haitian born man who spent the formative years of his life in the Congo in the sixties, while his father worked as an agricultural economist and his mother in the Leopoldville mayor's office. Available from California Newsreel.


A Few Websites

http://www.marckins.com/ This site reproduces many sources on the present conflict - from the US House of Representatives Africa Subcommittee to statements from parties in the present war in the Congo.

http://www.inti-crisis-group.org The International Crisis Group is a well-funded (check out the names on the board of governors and try to figure out where the cash for these reports is coming from) information-gathering agency on crisis spots all over the world. On the Congo, start with "The Agreement on a Cease-Fire in the Democratic Republic of Congo" and continue with "How Kabila Lost His Way" and "The Seven Nation War."

Research Matters

Through the Lens of Tragedy: Learning about Gender and Age in the Construction of Community

Miroslava Przak

A recent New York Times article titled “Malaria, a Swamp Dweller; Finds a Hillier Home” reminded me of a very poignant event during my last fieldwork in rural Kenya. The article describes a malaria epidemic in Kisii, a small city in western Kenya, which is the centre of a serious outbreak of malaria, “one of the worst in recent years, and all the more worrisome to experts because malaria has not usually been a widespread problem here. At an altitude of nearly 6,000 feet, Kisii had been considered too high for the mosquitoes that harbour the parasites.” But since May over 300 of the 18,000 cases hospital staff had seen had died.1

In the course of fieldwork, one learns about culture in many ways, consciously and unconsciously, by design and serendipitously. But as any seasoned field researcher can tell you, conflict provides an optimal opportunity to gain deep insights into a community and the way it functions. Societal and behavioral norms, as well as deviations, are often most clearly articulated during conflict, where people struggle to promote their agendas— not necessarily between good and evil but between competing demands. Such daily conflict, as competition for resources or the struggle to meet basic needs, can reveal the framework of social relations as individuals enlist family, friends and others on their behalf, mobilizing them to overcome obstacles and satisfy social and economic needs.

My fieldwork is carried out among the Kuria people. Over the past 15 years I have explored the forms and dynamics of rural inequality. Bukuria is an agrarian district in the border highlands of southwestern Kenya situated on the fringes of colonial and postcolonial administration and development. My research focuses on socioeconomic differentiation at the homestead and community levels as loci for assessing cultural and societal continuities and discontinuities. In June 1994, I watched friends deal with health problems in separate series of events. Those problems raised conflicts, which were resolved in ways that seemed, at first, unsettling and unnecessary. To make sense of those outcomes, I began to examine the constraints and opportunities which delimited the options available to the participants involved. Thus the motives and acts were elucidated.

These events illustrate the texture and quality of fieldwork, which is made up of a myriad of compelling incidents like this—events that need to be unravelled and placed within a context of meaning. Through the analysis of such daily dilemmas, the ethnographer begins to delve into the mysteries of the culture and society in which she or he is participating and observing.

Two stories

As he approached our house, Mwita Keroto made his presence known by calling out, “Hodi.” Accompanied by his brother’s son — because solitude is unacceptable for the newly bereaved — Mwita came to ask our assistance. Robi, the daughter of one of his brothers, had just rejected his plea for help, so he came to seek help from us.

Two days earlier, his second-born daughter had died in the hospital closest to the Kuria district. There are no hospitals in Bukuria, so the seriously ill must travel for two hours — some 60 kilometers over unpaved, rutted roads — to seek treatment. In the case of Mwita’s nine-month-old daughter, the trip was too late, and she died in hospital of congestive heart failure, brought on by a combination of malaria and sickle-cell anaemia. Her death devastated Mwita and his wife, all the more so because they had tried for nine years to conceive.

When he came to our house, Mwita needed help to bring his daughter’s body home for burial. Regular buses do not carry corpses. But hiring special transport for the trip would cost him about a third of his annual farm income, and thus he was seeking the assistance of his kin. All his brothers had refused to give him money. Two of them were in the same situation having also just lost children to malaria. However, Mwita was alone among his brothers to have taken his child to the hospital, and who felt through his Christian beliefs that his daughter should rightfully be brought home for burial. Mwita is an ardent Seventh Day Adventist, and a church elder. Because young children are not usually buried with any ceremony, none of his brothers was willing to sell off livestock to meet this expense. His niece Robi was the only relative to own a vehicle—a pickup truck. She often received similar requests to provide transport, yet seldom obliged.

1 Ian Fisher “Malaria, a Swamp Killer; Finds a Hillier Home” New York Times July 21, 1999. 2 Kuria District is located to the east of Lake Victoria, north and west of Serengeti Plains, in the area immediately adjoining the international boundary between Kenya and Tanzania.
Unbeknown to people, even to her kin, Robi had to face her own troubles. She was fighting cancer and had just returned from Nairobi, from yet another round of chemotherapy and radiation. The exhausting visits to Nairobi, 500 kilometers away, for chemotherapy had been going on for six months and Robi was familiar with the routine, all the more so because of a previous bout with cancer five years earlier. She kept her misfortune secret, in fear of the talk that would arise were it to become public. Public knowledge of her illness would have fanned rumors and gossip that she had been bewitched. Because she is a successful and wealthy woman, any resentment of her accomplishments would find itself legitimized in the circumstance of her illness, which would be construed as a sign that her good fortune had gone too far. People would begin to shun her.

The stories of Robi and Mwita, and the difficult events that befell them, raise many questions. Their compelling situations are incidents from the realm of everyday experience in Kuria culture. Therefore the responses they received need to be understood and located within that context, which requires additional background.

Mwita is the youngest of nineteen children. There is a fifty-year difference between the oldest and the youngest, though by virtue of the Kuria generation class system, they are considered social coevals. There are, nonetheless, vast status and economic differences between them. Mwita was still a child when his father died and he grew up under austere circumstances. Even while his brothers prospered, he slept on a hide on the floor, in a grass-thatch hut. Unable to get enough money to pay for school fees, Mwita ended his education when he reached the highest level of the free primary school system. Fortunately for him, his father had divided the land between all his sons before he died, and thus Mwita has enough to cultivate to support himself, his wife and child, his mother, and his severely handicapped older sister.

For Robi, circumstances were very different. Her father, one of Mwita's oldest brothers, served for thirty years as a top administrator in a nearby area. He had been appointed to the position during the colonial period, but served until the early 1980s, when he retired. As the child of a government official, Robi grew up in relative affluence. She and her ten siblings were all educated to secondary school or beyond, and their thrifty mother ensured that they had everything they needed that was available. At age 18 Robi was married by a university graduate. After the birth of her first child she went on to further education, and became a primary school teacher. Her husband worked for the government in a midlevel, permanent position. At this point, she was living on land her husband and one of his brothers purchased. Having left teaching some years prior, she was pursuing a gamut of agricultural and business endeavors. Her four children were all in boarding schools outside of Bukuria, in order to improve their chance within the meritocratic national educational system. A successful entrepreneur, she was using her profits to buy land for her sons.

Social relationships
So what can we learn about the organization of social relationships within this community from this example? Mwita is the brother of Robi's father, a relationship known as "little father" in Kuria, and thus Robi should respect him. Normally, she should try to do whatever is in her power to help him. There are two reasons why she could get away with not helping him. First, she is older than he by about a decade, thus putting him in the position of having to respect her. Then, she is a married woman, and as such, her allegiance is to her husband's lineage, not to the lineage in which she was born. In this sense, her obligation to her uncle is even more curtailed.

Aside from these strictly social reasons, the economic niche of each of our two protagonists is also highly relevant. Because Mwita is poor and without skills that would provide him with an access to wealth-generating activities, it is unlikely he will ever be wealthy. Robi is wealthy and successful, and public opinion is behind the successful. Mwita's and Robi's relative statuses in the socioeconomic hierarchy also limit the obligations of kinship that Mwita had expected to activate to induce Robi to come to his assistance. All can understand that given the limited obligation defined by the principles of age, and kinship, Robi could, and most probably would, not agree to come to his assistance. They know, like Robi, that if she assisted everyone, her wealth would end before the hardships ended.

There were other reasons why Robi refused her uncle, other background factors that conditioned Robi's pragmatism. These allow us to understand the constraints which played a part in shaping how Robi evaluated the request for help, and refused to carry out such an ostensibly humanitarian act. That June the meandering ridges and closely spaced hills of Bukuria were carpeted with maturing maize, sorghum, millet and tobacco. It was a hungry time before the harvest at the end of the long rains. After three years of drought in which crops failed, this season brought so much rain that swollen streams and ponds dotted the landscape. The red earth was saturated and squishy. After three years of bad harvests, the villagers were looking forward with delight to eating the first of the new bumper crop—fresh roasted maize.
But the rain that nourished such bounty also bred legions of mosquitoes carrying the deadly malaria parasite. As the rainy season progressed, breeding grounds for mosquitoes multiplied and soon illness became a regular part of life. That year, the rain brought a cruel paradox: while grain storage containers would be overflowing, infants and young children were dying from malaria in unprecedented numbers. Malnourished and economically stretched, few had the reserves necessary to combat the illness.

Expulsion
The malaria epidemic turned out to be one of the most serious experienced to date in the highlands of Kenya. In Bukuria, this represented the climax in a series of difficulties since the beginning of the decade. The 1980s ended with the expulsion of a large Kuria squatter population from the adjoining Rift Valley province. Thousands of people, together with their livestock were forced to abandon their pastures and fields and to repatriate in Bukuria, seriously overburdening the resource base, as well as the tolerance and charity of their kin.

While these Kuria had no legal basis for their residence in Rift Valley, the impetus for and brutality of their removal were very much a part of the mentality of ethnic cleansing that has continued during this decade to divide Kenyans who have lived peacefully side by side for decades if not centuries. Motives for this and other examples of ethnic cleansing can be traced to ruthless policies of the government, concerned with maintaining its power.

In response to the serious deterioration of human rights in Kenya, the foreign donor community decided to end its support, thereby putting a halt to one of the largest segments of the country’s income. To offset this shortfall, the government cut its costs, particularly by reducing outlays in social services, most notably health care. Facing onerous debt repayment and the stringent conditions of the structural adjustment program, money became very tight. As a result, many people lost their jobs, at the same time as prices skyrocketed. This development was played out at the same time that decades of record-breaking population growth was creating a demographic peak of youth entering the already overcrowded workforce.

Set against this broader historical background, Mwita’s story is but one example of the conflux of many forces, external and internal, which shape social relationships in both domestic and public daily life.

Age and Gender
To step back a minute, I need to explain why I have focused in my research on the role of age and gender in the construction of community. Much of the anthropological writing on East Africa, indeed some of the classics in the discipline, such as E.E. Evans-Pritchard’s The Nuer, describes societies with forms of social organization unlike those from other parts of the world. Of particular note, and subject to lengthy theoretical elaboration, were the so-called acausal societies in East Africa, within which there were no institutionalized positions of leadership and no apparent hierarchies, such as classes or castes. Anthropologists described these societies as egalitarian, and recognized primarily two fundamental principles underlying social and political order: age organization—based on birth or on a communal rite of passage, and lineage organization—usually based on the male line of descent. Inequalities inherent in both these organizational systems were overlooked, ostensibly because everyone belonged to a lineage and everyone passed through the stages of the lifecycle, and thus everyone had a chance at positions of prestige and power.

It seemed to me, when I set off to do my fieldwork, that these early anthropologists had quite easily glossed over some fundamental criteria by which certain groups within the society were always underprivileged. For example, as a female, one belongs to the father’s and then the husband’s lineage. In neither lineage does a woman have rights of ownership to land or cattle, the two fundamental means of production in much of Africa. A woman can gain the right of use by being a wife or a mother, but she will never acquire a status that conveys the right to own land or cattle, or to dispose of it as she may wish. A woman’s seniority depends on her children. As her sons marry and she becomes a grandmother, she moves through the life cycle, gaining in seniority, able to command the labor of her daughter-in-law. Yet even this accomplishment is tenuous since, in most societies, if the husband divorces his wife, she loses the children, who are part of the husband’s lineage.

Pursuing this line of thought, one can easily see that the homestead is the basic unit of Kuria society and the locus of social inequality. Socially, the homestead serves two primary roles: it is the basis of the kinship network, and it is the locus where primary statuses are assigned. Economically, the homestead is a core unit of production. Homestead members do not, as a rule, collectively undertake production and consumption activities. Nevertheless, access to land is made available by belonging to the homestead.

This relationship between social and economic roles in the homestead serves
as the basis for the construction of community relationships. The three principles active in differentiating members of the domestic unit—kinship, gender, and age—differentiate members in the community at large, defining not only their relative status vis-à-vis each other, but also their access to opportunities and resources.

Even though gender- and age-specific roles and statuses are largely inherited from the past, renegotiation of those roles and statuses shapes new content and meaning. The changing context of everyday life is forged through the interaction of internal forms and external forces. Attitudes, customs, beliefs, institutions, obligations, and conventions that direct social life and shape the use of resources are also being altered to correspond to the social, economic, and political realities of today. They are not uniformly held or activated because individuals—in the still operative contexts of gender and age categories—must respond to varying structural constraints, perceptions of the texture of reality, goals, as well as available means to pursue daily social life.

In this particular case, Robi was able to shrug off kinship obligations, which were outweighed by gender and age statuses that limited her role. By calling on an older woman to give him economic assistance, Mwita was straining their reciprocal relationship. Yet, Robi’s economic status remained delicately related to her gender, which could easily reassert itself in negative terms if the news of her illness had become public.

Outcomes
My husband Robert drove Mwita to Migori and redeemed the body of his baby. The next day, even though I was severely ill with malaria, we went to the funeral at their homestead. It was a religious ceremony presided over by a minister. We observed the lengthy service, partook of the food, and witnessed the tiny coffin being lowered into the ground, covered up with soil, then heaped in thorny branches to keep predators from digging it up. It was the first funeral I attended in my life. I was tremendously moved by the silent suffering of Mwita’s wife and of the attending family—all of whom knew the extent of the disaster for her and her husband, some of whom had just buried their own children a few days earlier.

Because sickle cell anaemia is a hereditary illness, any of the blood relatives could be the next to experience this health problem. The whole thing seemed senselessly tragic, because simple steps could have saved the little girl, or could prevent other children from following her fate. Widely available and inexpensive mosquito nets limit exposure, but almost no one uses them. Mineral supplements of iron increase the amount of oxygen that can be carried by the blood, although that fact is little known in endemic areas. Other, competing explanations are drawn upon to explain misfortune: the swelling of the baby was regarded as the result of the doctor’s giving her too much water. Or the jealousy of another community member led her to bewitch the baby.

A year later, Mwita’s wife gave birth to another little girl. Now four years old, she is a lively child, watched over by her parents. And whenever I return to the field, Mwita and his wife are there, welcoming me back and reminding me of the time we retrieved their baby’s body, reconfirming that the bond between our families is a permanent link. Robi’s cancer is in remission. But the malaria epidemics in highland communities continue, though now they are attracting international attention.
The Women From Rhodesia: Identity, Positionality and Experience of Some White Immigrant Women in Western Australia.

Eleanor Venables

The desire to write a thesis relevant to the Australian experience has led me to ask the question, "How do women from a privileged background — from Rhodesia and Zimbabwe — understand their experiences as immigrants to Australia?" I look at white women who have come into Australia and who are often mistaken for Australian women (until they speak). The racial markers which symbolise difference are absent. The study includes women who have been living in Australia for many years and some who have arrived recently. All the women are of European or British descent and their home language is English. All the women come from well-educated and privileged backgrounds. The autobiographical content is a given.

The focus of my doctoral research is on how memories of what has happened bring us to the understanding we have of ourselves now. Notions of migration particularly immigration into Australia from Southern Africa are explored. Issues of identity and memory, and reflection on them, are relevant and are discussed in the context of assimilation and integration into Australian society. Therefore, the validity of our identity and cultural differences that shape personal identities — national, personal, and attributed, frame the work. The reflection and discussion of other times and other places reveal how these memories intersect with the twisting threads of our 'new' lives in Australia. I explore socio-economic backgrounds, status and education and how that places us in Australia. Using earlier research, I am able to contrast these experiences with the experiences of some of the white women who went into Rhodesia in the early 1900s. Consequently, the impact of wider historical, political, economic and social issues on the lives of these women — possibly why they came to Australia is also examined. Notions of race and class are explored in the African and Australian contexts.

Drawing the research into the Australian experience emphasises the significance of the immigrants' perceptions of integration and assimilation into mainstream (white) Australian culture, and their perceptions of the culture. This provides a counterpoint to the media driven (and political) Australian assumptions about migrants, and some of the prejudices of populist views of multiculturalism.

Note on Methodology.
When I set out to do the research for the thesis in January 1998, there was no question in my mind but to follow feminist interpretive social research methodology. Clear guidelines for feminist ethnography are described in Feminist Methods in Social Research by Shulamit Reinarz. Feminist ethnography is consistent with three goals...
*To document the lives and activities of women;
*to understand the experience of women from their own point of view; and
*to conceptualize women's behaviour as an expression of social context (51).

Add to this my profound belief that the transparency demanded by feminist research 'making visible why we do what we do—and how we do this' (Klein in Reinarz 1992:74) helps me avoid what Donna Haraway calls 'the God Trick of seeing everything from nowhere'. In other words, I am fully involved in the research — which becomes as much about me as about the women with whom I am working.

Note on Theory.
The Bourdieuan concept of habitus (i.e. embodied knowledge) and the Bakhtian concept of heteroglossia are proving rewarding — and inform much of my writing. The postcolonial writings of Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ashis Nandy and Madan Sarup are all applied. The construction of 'whiteness' in the work of Ruth Frankenberg, and others informs the racial narrative.

At my present rate of progress, and barring any unforeseen circumstances, I will submit the thesis in March 2001 or toward the middle of 2001.

Murdoch University, Murdoch WA.
Traditional Authority Applied Research Network (TAARN)

(Ed note. Professor Don Ray, University of Calgary, Canada, has sent me this note about a research project on Traditional Leadership and Local Government in Social Policy Reform in West and Southern Africa. He would be most interested to correspond with anyone in Australia interested in such research.)

The purpose of TAARN is to bring together researchers and students, government and non-government policy makers and administrators, and chiefs (i.e. traditional authority practitioners) based throughout the world, but initially mainly in Africa, in order to discuss selected major policy questions involving traditional authority, so as to produce policy results that will enhance development.

TAARN: CHIEFS NET (the electronic component of the TAARN project) is designed to address the problems of communication, policy comparisons and best practices by increasing the capacity of African countries to generate, analyze and share their experiences of traditional authority that will help to promote development, through a new network of electronic communication.

The acknowledged need of TAARN is exemplified in the amount of funding the overall project has accumulated: over $530,000 CAD has been provided by International Development Research Centre, Ottawa (IDRC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) - Standard Research Grant, and SSHRCC - Research Development Initiatives for the various TAARN projects.

TAARN’s major project is the IDRC-funded 3-year project entitled “Traditional Leaders and Local Governance in Social Policy in West and Southern Africa”. This project, currently in its first year, involves researchers and policy practitioners from Ghana, Botswana, South Africa and the University of Calgary.

The specific objectives of this project are to:

a) Identify and analyze the traditional values that affect social policy processes in the areas of land tenure, health and education, including those related to gender and conflict resolution, allocation and pooling of resources, and access to services;

b) Identify the autonomous traditional authority structures inside and outside the state structure in order to examine what role they play in the social policy process put in place by the state;

c) Identify ways in which traditional values, traditional structures and community participation can be incorporated into social policy processes put in place by the state in order to enhance the responsiveness, effectiveness and equity of selected social policies;

d) Conduct a comparative analysis among the selected countries in order to identify the nature and the effect of the diverse contributions of traditional values and authority structures in social policy processes;

e) Make policy recommendations and disseminate the results of the project.

This project will build capacity in information technology skills as well as in participatory, interdisciplinary, applied and gender research approaches. All the stakeholders (i.e. researchers, traditional leaders, state policy makers / implementers, community members) will be meaningfully involved in the research process at the appropriate strategic moments. Knowledge and results derived from the research will not only be of interest to the academic community but will also be applied to practical solutions.

Direct beneficiaries of this project will be social policy makers and service providers in the public, private and traditional sectors who will have a better understanding of the role (present and potential) of traditional values and structures within social policy. They will thus be better equipped to design responsive, effective and equitable social policies. Other direct and indirect beneficiaries include, but are not limited to, traditional leaders, state officials, political leaders, community leaders, marginal groups such as women and the rural poor, the community at large and donor organizations.

For more information on this project, contact:

Prof. Don Ray
Project Leader and International Coordinator of TAARN
University of Calgary, Canada
2500 University Drive N.W. Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2N 1N4
Phone: (403) 220-7371
Fax: (403) 282-4773
Email: taarn@ucalgary.ca

Prof. Keshav Sharma
Botswana Country Case Study Leader
University of Botswana, Botswana
Email: sharmako@noka.ub.bw, sharmako@mopipi.ub.bw

Prof. Albert Owusu-Sarpong
Ghana Country Case Study Team Leader
Notes & News

The Africa Institute of South Africa Turns 40

The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) turned 40 on 7 April 2000. The Institute was established in 1960 as an independent, non-profit research organisation. Since the democratic changes began with the elections of 1994 and especially following a review undertaken by the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), the Africa Institute has been restructured and transformed to reflect the new challenges of providing quality information on the continent. The vision is to become an independent, authoritative centre of excellence for the production of knowledge on Africa and to promote awareness as well as the importance of unity, peace, prosperity and democracy on the African continent. On their 40th anniversary they organised a three-day conference around the theme "A United States of Africa?". Advantage was taken of the opportunity presented by the 40th birthday of the Institute to bring together political practitioners, non-governmental organisation, scholars and researchers based on the continent and outside, to reflect on the socio-political, economic, cultural, youth, environmental, health and gender challenges relating to the political unity of the continent. This is motivated by two related resolutions of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) the 1991 Abuja Treaty calling for the setting up of an African Economic Community by the year 2025 and the 1999 Sirte Declaration calling for the establishment of an African Union.

La Trobe University African Research Institute Seminar Program

The High Commissioner for South Africa, Dr Bhadra Ranchod, gave the first seminar paper in 2000. He addressed issues relating to equity of opportunity in the new South Africa, speaking on the process by which the Constitution of 1996 was produced, and the path that government has taken to redress former inequity. Dr Ranchod affirmed the South African government's focus on attracting investment and encouraging the corporate sector. In the modern global economy downsizing is a continuing feature of the corporate world. Loss of jobs does not rest well with the social needs of South Africa and the urgency of increasing employment opportunities. Finding a satisfactory balance between attracting investment to maintain a vibrant economy and dealing with social...
issues resulting from the inequalities of earlier regimes is the fine line that the current government has to measure.

Emeritus Professor Martin Klein, from the University of Toronto, gave a seminar paper in May, entitled ‘Ethnic Pluralism and Homogeneity in the Western Sudan: slavery and the internal slave trade’. Professor Klein focused on the complexity of state structures, existing economies and the influence of status groups such as leather workers, blacksmiths and praise sayers in maintaining slavery through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The same factors were also influential in maintaining slavery through much of the twentieth century.

Associate Professor David Dorward will give a paper on 14 June at Australian Volunteers International, 88 Kerr Street, Fitzroy. This will be on ‘The Tragedy of Sierra Leone diamonds, warlords and the failure of the United Nations’.

The African Studies Centre of Western Australia (ASCWA)

ASCWA continued its regular seminar programme through the first half of the year, speakers including overseas visitors as well as Perth academics and others. Seminars up to the end of May were given by:

Dr Xolani H. Mkhwanazi (CEO National Electricity Regular, South Africa)
“People, Power and the Promise of a Better Life in South Africa”

Nathi (Nkosinatho) Khanyile (Durban, South Africa: mixed media artist, sculptor)

Rita Pasquale (Murdoch University)
“Languages of Empire(s) in the Horn of Africa and North Africa.”

Dr Mia Roth (Vista University, South Africa)
“Winnie Mandela & The Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”

Dr Mia Roth (Vista University South Africa)
“The Decree that changed the history of Europe & its effect on Black Communists in South Africa 1928-34.”

Professor Martin Klein (University of Toronto)
“The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Development of Slavery within Africa.”

Speakers expected in June and July included Professor Neil Parsons, University of Botswana, Wessel Visser, History Department, Stellenbosch, and Dr Jane Carruthers, University of South Africa.

Workshop on African Film

The Centre of African Studies (School of Oriental and African Studies, London) held a two day Workshop Challenges and Celebrations on African Film in March as part of the events marking the first Sembene Ousmane Annual Lecture, delivered this year by Professor Manthia and introduced by the Director of SOAS Sir Tim Lancaster. Included in the event was a screening of the spectacular film Sang’o, the director of which, Femi Lasode, was partially funded by the Centre of African Studies. The Workshop was attended by, amongst others, the East African Visiting Scholar from Uganda, Dominica Dipio, and the LINK programme visitor to the Africa Department, Debrah Ogazuma.

Establishment of a Network for Executive Development of Senior Women Managers in Higher Education in South Africa

The Australian Technology Network, Women’s Executive Development Program recently awarded a third round Australia-South Africa Institutional Links Program grant is supported by AusAID and managed by IDP Education Australia. The project will be based in Australia at the University of Technology Sydney and in South Africa at Peninsula Technikon (Pentech). It will operate in partnership with the Forum for African Women Educationalists South Africa (FAWESA) and will also liaise with the National Colloquium of Senior Women executives in Australian Higher Education. The aim of the project is to establish a professional development and leadership network among senior women on the academic and general staffs of South African universities and Technikons.

Through a conference to be held in early 2001 and workshops, women will identify emerging challenges in higher education and the skills senior managers require. The outcomes and benefits include the emergence of a critical mass of senior South African women, the identification of cultures responsive to the employment patterns and career priorities of women staff and the strengthening of international alliances between senior women in Australia and South Africa.
African Art Exhibitions in Fremantle WA

Durban, South Africa, Mayor Obed Mlaba, opened an exhibition “Durbs to Free Wire & Metal Art” in Fremantle on January 28th. The exhibition, which ran until February 6th, was of the work of South African artists, Michael Mbatana, Ntombifuthi and Vincent Sithole. The exhibition was described as “A fun, funky and frantic look at the amazing wire and metal art created by Zulu artists. Works that show the inventive way in which recycled materials are lifted out of context and turned into colourful and extraordinary artworks. The makers speak about working in and around Durban, with little money to buy materials, whilst reflecting a sophisticated attitude towards “found materials” in the new South Africa.

In a second exhibition also held in Fremantle, Dreams and Visions, Visiting South African artist Nkosinathi Khanyile exhibited works that represent his contribution towards healing disadvantaged Black people in both his home country and in Western Australia. The exhibition ran from 21st to 30th April.

Visitors

Emeritus Professor Martin Klein, (University of Toronto) was in Australia, as a Visiting Fellow in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University for three months earlier in the year. Professor Klein is a past President of the Canadian Association of African Studies and of the US African Studies Association. From July this year he will become co-editor of the Canadian Journal of African Affairs, one of the most important of the journals in this field. He has written extensively on slavery, especially in Africa and the impact of the Atlantic slave trade on African societies, most of his research having been connected with francophone Africa. Among his many publications his most recent is Slavery and Colonial Rule in West Africa (1999). He has also recently edited a volume on Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage and Emancipation of Modern Africa and Asia. While in Australia he started work on a book on comparative slavery and was researching Asian slave systems.

Dr Jane Carruthers, Department of History, University of South Africa, who was Visiting Fellow in the History Program in the Research School of Social Sciences at the ANU in 1999 (see this R&N Vol XXI, No 1, June 1999, p 47) will be joining the History Department at the University of Western Australia for the month of July.

AFSAAP News

First Volume of Proceedings of AFSAAP ’99 Conference

(http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP1300index.html)

A selection of papers presented at the International Conference on New African Perspectives: Africa, Australasia, and the Wider World at the End of the 20th Century, held in Australia in November 1999 under the auspices of the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific, have been published by refereed journal Mots Pluriels in its April 2000 issue. The articles selected cover a wide range of disciplines and themes across a range of African countries and together take stock of African scholarship at this important crossroad. The contributions are united in their common focus on contemporary issues and thus provide considerable insight into the problems and prospects of Africans at the present and in the immediate future. The articles are arranged in two main sections — "Literatures & Languages" and "Society, Globalization & Transformation" — within which there are sub-sections treating different themes.

African Studies Review and Newsletter

Editor’s Report, November 1999

The 1999 AFSAAP Annual General Meeting is for a number of reasons an appropriate occasion to report in more detail than is usual on the progress of the Association’s Review and Newsletter. This year’s Annual Conference, which will be the largest international occasion the Association has ever hosted, has equally reaffirmed the interest in Africa amongst Australians and the hope that notwithstanding the reduction of resources available to academics concerned with Africa, the academic study of Africa in Australia has a future. With this in mind I am pleased to report that, at a time when African studies remain severely under threat in Australian universities, and Africa-oriented courses are visibly fewer in number, the Review and Newsletter (henceforth R&N) has not only survived but has also grown in size and intellectual content. While it remains a small, modestly produced publication, its contents now make available to an Australian audience some substantial material on Africa at a time when public interest in Africa has so far as one can see increased. This growth seems to me something that the Association would wish to nurture; and it is with this nurturing, at a time when the future of African studies in Australia
remains problematic, that I am chiefly concerned. This short report therefore provides first a brief reminder about the origins and development of the journal and second some information about recent progress and policy by way of providing some back-out to making some recommendations for its future. Which I believe offer the opportunity to involve more people in the R&N and also to extend our links with overseas scholars engaged with Africa.

Origins and Development.
What was formerly the African Studies Newsletter originated in 1978 as an Information Leaflet produced by David Dorward and Tom Spear to publicise the fledgling African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific (AFSAAP) set up that year. James Polhemus who became editor in 1981 expanded and took that Newsletter a considerable stage further; and by the time that I succeeded him in 1987 it had settled into its present format. Even in the early years of his editorship Jim Polhemus welcomed articles and book reviews from contributors and I in turn continued that strategy. Through the 1980s the Newsletter contents as a result slowly became more wide-ranging, to include information about research, books, Australian Government policy, along with occasional scholarly articles. The publication has grown in both size and content especially over the past seven or eight years; the most significant expansion being with the book review section. The change of title to Review and Newsletter in 1994 when Peter Alexander, then AFSAAP President, and I redesigned the cover, was recognition of this fact.

Editorial Policy, Aims and Objectives and Journal Content.
Present editorial policy starts from the nature of AFSAAP's wide-ranging membership, drawn not only from the academic world but also from other scholarly, professional and public communities located across this country; including those concerned with development, aid, refugees, the NGO community, the business world, churches and others.1 A primary function of the bi-annual R & N has always been to establish and to maintain links amongst academics and others with an African interest across Australia and also between Australian Africanists and the rest of the world; and to provide a focus for this diverse and dispersed membership and the different interests and links with Africa that it represents. Keeping AFSAAP members in touch with the Association and (so far as it is possible) with other Africa-related groups and events across Australia remains an important function of today's R&N.

In relation to content the explicit understanding in the early years was that anyone

1. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in Africa/African studies. There has also always been a small (but in recent years growing) number of overseas members, from across the Australasian region (hence the change of the Association's name in 1994) and more recently from Africa.

who had something of interest to say about Africa should be encouraged to offer a contribution to the Newsletter and this has also remained an important element of editorial policy. Australians who are/have been working in Africa, or engaged with field work, or otherwise visiting that continent have always been urged to write about that experience for us. At the same time the R&N has always offered a place where Australian (and other) academics could publish short, scholarly articles, and see their work published in a comparatively short time; and editorial policy has encouraged contributions about research and other relevant professional interests and from across the disciplines... Book reviewers are encouraged to use their reviews, where appropriate, to highlight and discuss contemporary African issues. And so, albeit slowly, the present structure has taken shape and the journal has expanded. Each issue continues to include news of AFSAAP in its News and Notes section. Each issue now also however includes information on resource materials; reports on research work in progress and field work; information about postgraduates working on Africa; and book reviews now appear regularly. Over the last three years review articles have been added and there has been a small but welcome increase in more scholarly articles. Articles that appear in the Review are abstracted in the ASSIA (the Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts).

What has been an essentially flexible and inclusive editorial approach has produced over the years an interesting "mix" of academic and more generalist material from different disciplinary and professional backgrounds and on a very varied range of topics, as well as some superb, anecdotal accounts of "grassroots" activity in Africa. Of course not every contribution or every issue of the Review has reached the same heights! Providing space for Australian and other contributors who have something to say about their research and/or work in Africa has nevertheless given the Review and Newsletter its characteristic flavour and interest, and its value (I believe) as a (small)contribution to the literature on Africa. While it is unfair perhaps to single out particular contributions I draw attention for example to: Kevin Mageary's Wozza Alber! As a teaching text in December '87; Greg Hunt's Eritrea and the Forgotten War; in the December '90 issue; David Dorward's National Registry of African Artifacts in Major Public Collections in Australia in the June '92 issue; Francis Regan's Legal Aid in Uganda in June '93; Fiona Terry's Liberia: Not Just Another Ethnic Conflict in the June '96 issue; Nicholas Duell's Negotiating Peace in Alexandra Township in the December '97 issue; and Mike Parry's account of his work in KwaZulu, Use Him, He's Only Here For Two Years in the June '99 issue. In each case the material is original and valuable. And so the R&N has become in a small way a means of communication and the sharing of knowledge across academic and non-academic boundaries, primarily but not exclusively for those of us in Australia.
Distribution.
Members of the Association receive the R&N as part of their subscription. When Jim Polhemus became Editor in 1983 he had a mailing list of 55. In 1996 the Association received subscriptions from just over 100 members. In mid-1999 there were 75 paid up members although the Treasurer expected that a few more subscriptions would be brought up to date bringing the membership to 100 by the end of the year. The actual mailing list is at present just over 270, reflecting a deliberate AFSAAP policy that ensures that the journal goes to a range of individuals and institutions, including some 15 to 20 African universities. Contributors should know that they are being read in African Members of the Australian Agency for International development (AusAid) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) working in Africa receive complementary copies (some are members of the Association) as does the office of each of the four Australian African Missions (Pretoria, Lagos, Nairobi, Harare.) Members of the AFSAAP Executive have copies for distribution to visitors and enquirers from potential members. Copies go to all publishers whose books are reviewed in the journal. A number of University and African Studies libraries in North America and Britain maintain a subscription. (but not it might be noted in Australia although La Trobe and Monash libraries, for historical reasons, receive supplementary copies.)

Costs of Production
The R&N has always been produced "on a shoe string", and hence its very modest style and production; the basic principle being that the costs of production must be within the resources of a small Association which has to meet those costs. It needs to be remembered in this context that the ability of the Association to sustain the journal has been in large part the result of the university support, direct as well as indirect, that its successive editors have received: from La Trobe, from Deakin University and from the Politics Discipline at Flinders University of South Australia and the School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages at the Curtin University of Technology. The Editor and the Association acknowledge that support with gratitude.

The Future of the Review and Newsletter.
The Review and Newsletter could be said at present to perform a dual role for the Association: it is essentially an in-house journal that endeavours to keep members in touch with AFSAAP and African-related events in Australia, and at the same time to provide a place where Australian academics and postgraduates engaged in the study of Africa, whatever their discipline or particular research interests, can publish short articles and (bearing in mind the con-
used, although not extensively. Such refereeing has been on a fairly informal basis and needs therefore to be institutionalised.

Recommendations:
With all this in mind I wish to make two recommendations

First, that the Review and Newsletter adopt DETYA guidelines for a “formal process of peer review” of “scholarly articles” in a “non-refereed journal” with an Editorial Committee.

While articles that appear in the R&N are in fact abstracted in the ASSIA if we are to be satisfied that academic contributors can claim recognition of scholarly work published in the AFSAAP journal what is now required is a recognised system of “peer review.” The procedure recommended is that adopted by the Development Studies Bulletin published by the Development Studies Network in Canberra, which publishes similar, short, scholarly articles and whose editor tells me it works satisfactorily. The guidelines require the creation of an Editorial Committee, while the minimum requirement for peer review is that there be two independent reviewers who provide a “blind review.” Neither requirement presents any difficulties. It will be necessary to provide more detailed “notes to contributors” than are at present included in the R&N and we will probably have to think about a change of title of the journal to remove the word “newsletter” and ensure that the journal is not referred to in future as an “in-house journal.” Hopefully the review process need not slow down publication but will ensure that scholarly articles that are published by the R&N have been “peer reviewed” and are recognised as such. It ought not to affect existing policy concerning the contents of the journal and the sharing of knowledge across disciplines and between academic and non-academic readers. (The Development Studies Bulletin practice seems to make this clear.)

Second, that the Association actively engage in increasing the number of subscriptions to the R&N.

If we are to sustain the journal financially it is essential that the present level of subscriptions, which means the AFSAAP membership, be at least maintained and if possible increased. This suggests the need for a membership drive not only within the universities but also the school system and also appeals to public as well as professional interest; and takes advantage of the opportunities presented by this conference to expand our overseas membership. Although there are many fewer academics actively engaged in African studies within the universities, there remain (in my experience) a considerable number who retain an interest in Africa but who are not at present members of the Association. The greater Australian public interest in Africa combined with the excellent response to the AFSAAP ‘99 meeting offers the opportunity to draw in new members, including from overseas. We can use both the R&N and the AFSAAP website, now in place as a result of David Dorward’s hard work, to do so.

Cherry Gertzel (Editor, R&N) (23-11-1999)

(This report was prepared originally for the 1999 AGM.)

AFSAAP Postgraduate Workshop 1999

St George’s College
University of Western Australia
Perth, Western Australia

Postgraduates and other academics were welcomed to the Workshop by the coordinator, Eleanor Venables, Murdoch University. Professor Cherry Gertzel spoke on the importance of postgraduates to the future of AFSAAP. Prof. Gertzel detailed the conditions for the $100 prize to be awarded for a paper presented at the workshop. Dr Tanya Lyons from Flinders University, South Australia, and co-coordinator of the workshop spoke briefly on the aims of the Postgraduate Workshop.

Mary Paton, an independent scholar associated with Curtin University gave the first paper “Population pressure and land degradation: Historical perspectives on population and resources in Kwandebele”. Dr John Wright of Natal University who attended the workshop, commented on the irony of having a paper devoted to the history of the ‘homelands’ being given in Australia.

Jennifer Weir from the University of Western Australia gave an interesting paper on “The Power of ‘Royal’ Zulu Women in Pre-Colonial Zululand” which elicited some spirited discussion from the audience.

Morning tea was combined with a Roundtable discussion led by Chima Korieh from Department of Social Inquiry University of Adelaide. The lead paper “Orality vs Other Sources: Tit bits from Fieldwork Experience” encouraged the participants to engage in a debate on the merits of different methodologies and research skills.
Eleanor Venables followed with a paper devoted to her research for her PhD — “Women Working With Women: Determining my position in the field”. Once again participants shared their experiences — and some of the problems associated with fieldwork. Dr John Wright gave some valuable feedback on this discussion. His experience as an eminent and professional historian and academic was appreciated.

Jacob Malungo, Research School of Social Sciences Demography programme, Australian National University gave a lively presentation of his paper “Premarital Sexual Networking in Zambia: Perceptions, Attitudes and Practices in the era of AIDS”.

Mansura Dopico, PhD Candidate in Social Work and Community Welfare, James Cook University, Queensland held our attention with her paper on “The Impact of female circumcision (infibulation) on sexual gratification and the implications of this on marital relationships”.

Following lunch, Adesola Adeyemi from the University of Natal enthralled us with a exhilarating presentation of his paper “Subversion of myths and ritual in Femi Osofisan’s Many Colors Make the Thunder-King”.

Paul Woods, PhD student, Department of English, The University of Adelaide engaged the audience with his witty play on words and straightforward language in “Sins of the father?: Thematic concerns in South African Homosexual writing”.

The final paper at the workshop was “Languages of Empire(s): African angles of a personal perspective” given by Rita Pasqualini, PhD candidate in the School of Education at Murdoch University. The amusing and playful delivery of this paper appealed to the workshop participants who joined in with enthusiasm.

During the plenary session, participants were invited to discuss the issues raised during the day and directed questions to the postgraduate presenters. Tanya Lyons moderated a discussion about publishing for postgraduates in African studies — Publish or Perish! Participants and other postgraduates attending the workshop were enthusiastic about submitting papers for a publication (the title still to be decided) to be edited by Tanya Lyons and Eleanor Venables.

The Workshop ended with the nomination and election of Mansura Dopico as the new AFSAAP Postgraduate Representative.

AFSAAP State Representatives

South Australia:

Dr Mark Israel
School of Law
Flinders University of South Australia
GPO Box 2100
Adelaide, SA 5001

Western Australia:

Professor Norman Etherington
History Department
University of Western Australia
Nedlands WA 6007

New South Wales:

Professor P Alexander
English Department
The University of New South Wales
Box 1, Post Office
Kensington NSW 2033

Queensland:

Dr Tom Bramble
Grad. School of Management
University of Queensland
Brisbane, QLD 4072

Canberra/ACT:

Dr David Lucas
Graduate Studies in Demography
ANU
20 Balmain Crescent
Canberra ACT 0200

Tasmania:

Dr Derek Overton
School of General Studies
Tasmanian College of Advanced Education
PO Box 1214
Lanceston, TAS 7250

New Zealand:

Dr Richard Jackson
Dept of Political Studies
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin, New Zealand

Dr Chris McMurray
Secretariat for the Pacific Community
B.P. D5, 98048 Noumea Codex
New Caledonia

South Pacific:

Dr David Moore
Economic History and Development
Studies Programme
University of Natal
Durban 4041

Southern Africa:

The African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP) can now be reached at the website: 

Note: The Vice President, AFSAAP can be reached by telephone on (03) 9479 5943.