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BOOK REVIEWS

African Anthropology

Mwenda Ntarangwi, David Mills and Mustafa Babiker, (eds.), *African Anthropologies: History, Critique and Practice*, London: Zed Books, in association with CODESRIA, Dakar, 2006. Pp 274. ISBN: 1 84277 763 7 (paperback).

This volume is an excellent and highly recommended addition to any Africanist collection. Written by African anthropologists, the timely volume serves as a corrective to a corpus for too long dominated by the work of scholars of Euro-American descent by offering a series of essays on the current state of anthropological practice in Africa. The editors begin by tracing the history of anthropological engagement with the continent in an outstanding introductory essay. They offer a concise history of the discipline in Africa, past and present controversies, an assessment of where the field is now, and its future prospects. The remaining chapters are organized according to three emphases: history, critique, and practice. All sections offer a far-reaching account of the fundamental challenges facing African anthropology at the beginning of the new millennium.

The first section “Regional Histories of Anthropological Practice” reconsiders the shaping of anthropological practice in several parts of the continent, specifically focusing on Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Cameroon. Each author brings to light issues specific to their country and its historical context, but reveals common threads of experience. The uneasy relationship between practitioners and colonialists of the past is a common theme, as is the continued relevance of colonial heritage for current practice. To the extent that the postcolonial practice of anthropology is still associated with its colonial past, some African governments and academic authorities remain reluctant to allow the development of the discipline. Yet this volume moves well beyond oversimplified debates to give readers a nuanced look at the production of anthropological knowledge in Africa. Nevertheless, the main issue in the first section and, really, in the whole volume, is the focus on theoretical, epistemological and practical problems stemming from that past, and from the heritage of colonialism and neocolonialism as it informs the realities of everyday life of subjects and scholars alike. Thus the work of African anthropologists takes its direction from the conditions of the environment around it, leaving behind earlier theoretical notions of the

study of isolated or marginal groups for an engagement with broader social issues, many of which are indeed the outcomes of policies and practices of the colonial era.

The second section, “Acknowledging Critiques, Debunking the Myths,” offers four essays that tackle the misunderstandings arising from the ‘idea of Africa’ and demonstrate the growing importance of anthropological engagement. They discuss marginalization of Africans and their voices in Western scholarship, and point out the unequal politics of knowledge about the continent. Christine Obbo’s insightful, nuanced essay stands out, but all chapters point to the need to generate more accurate representations of African realities and to contribute to the understanding of and solutions to development and human rights issues in Africa. The authors discuss the marginalization of Africans and their voices in western scholarship, and point to unequal politics of knowledge about the continent.

The final section, “The Future of Anthropology in Africa: Application and Engagement,” looks at some of the major challenges to the development of anthropology in Africa today and considers the field’s engagement with students, with practical solutions to the problems of inequality and poverty, and with tackling the schisms between elites and the poor, both as insiders and as outsiders. These challenges include the reluctance of African governments to fund anthropological research; low interest among university students; the lack of dissemination and access to major publishers and academic journals; the need to reaffirm the validity of applied anthropology and justify its political engagement. The essays also celebrate the importance of African anthropologies to the formation of knowledge within the discipline, and call for the willingness and capacity of Western anthropologists to achieve better rapport and mutual respect with African intellectuals. Overall, the authors of this collection aptly demonstrate that African anthropologists have much to offer intellectual and practical concerns within the continent and beyond, and that they are redefining the legacy of Western anthropological traditions by contributing to both theory and practice in the development of the discipline in post-colonial Africa. Perhaps the most serious shortcoming of the book is the relative lack of perspectives from western and southern regions of the continent, and the preponderance of male voices.

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The “African Geopolitics” Series

***African Geopolitics*: Number 28 (October- December 2007), “Cultures of Peace in Africa”; Number 29 (January-March 2008), “Africa and Sustainable Development”; Number 30 (April-June 2008), “The Congo and the International Community”. Paris and Brazzaville. ISSN: 1632-3033.**

This quarterly magazine is now in its tenth year of publication. It has some intriguing features but, treated with caution, is a useful source of contemporary opinion about African affairs, especially the views emanating from a certain range of African leaders. Its emphasis is only partly on conventional articles of a scholarly kind from academic sources; about equally, interviews with leading political figures, personal reflections and a range of re-published source documents give it a strong policy cast. The documents can be quite lengthy (for example, the twenty-one pages of the “African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance” produced by the AU in 2007 and found here in volume 29). The analytical articles tend to be shorter, averaging around 3 000 words in the volumes considered here, with about a dozen in each large volume of between 300 and 400 pages.

The magazine, produced in both French and English versions, has a decidedly Francophone tilt. The sixteen members of its editorial board come almost exclusively from French universities or academic and official positions in former French colonies, and its nineteen-member ‘committee of consultants’ are even more heavily populated by French officials or senior politicians in former French colonies. Indeed the ‘honorary president’ of the committee is no less a personage than Denis Sassou N’Gusso, president of the Republic of Congo, and a figure of some controversy across his long career. His speeches or press conferences figure twice in these three volumes and this is not a new tendency of the magazine. N’Gusso was prominent in the first volume, leading one doubtful reviewer to raise “questions about the new journal’s objectivity” (Gilbert M Khadiagala, “Africa’s Shaky New Voice”, *Foreign Policy*, 124 [May-June 2001], 78). It seems clear, however, that the editor, Henri Lopes, is keen to extend its range and readership. He introduces each volume with prefatory remarks on the theme of the volume but additionally asks (volume 28:5), “how many” [readers].. are Anglophone?” and whether they are “individual readers, university libraries, decision makers or political institutions?”

Those questions are best answered by considering the quality of the analytical articles. The fact that most focus, geographically speaking, on the former French territories is no necessary disadvantage, and could be a positive for those wishing to escape the heavily Anglo emphasis of much English language writing on Africa. Delphine Lecoutre's assessment of Thabo Mbeki's role as the mediator of the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire is an exception that nicely brings together a pan-continental view (28: 87-106). By and large the articles are more often 'opinion pieces' that closely argued scholarship but with careful selection a number would be suitable for postgraduate or advanced undergraduate classes. Of the volumes considered here, the one on sustainable development is the most integrated; the one on the Congo might have been concerned with the crises in the DRC but turns out to be the papers given at a conference in Brazzaville and are generic in nature, dealing mostly with the international relations of the continent. The appeal and scope of the series would probably be improved by including a statement of editorial policy in the usual way in the pages of each volume and by inviting contributions according to specified guidelines; these things do not appear in the printed volumes though they may possibly be available on the web page of the series, which was not accessible at the time of writing

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Gender Issues in Nigerian Universities

Charmaine Pereira, *Gender in the Making of the Nigerian University System*, James Currey, Oxford/Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc, Ibadan, 2007. pp xvi+203 ISBN: 978-0-85255-172-1 (p/b).

This publication is part of a series of titles supported by the American foundation funded Partnership for Higher Education in Africa. The series aims to generate and share information about the education system. This is the first study which specifically addresses gender issues and is therefore an important addition to the series. That fact, combined with a focus on what must be the largest higher education system in Africa, means that the publication is bound to create interest. Its analysis and discussion could therefore be expected to be useful to those managing and teaching in universities, as well as to educational and gender historians. The author, Charmaine Pereira, a feminist scholar-activist, provides an

overview of the development and functioning of the Nigerian university system from a gender perspective. She highlights areas which often in the past have been considered to be gender-neutral, using gender analysis to identify the institutional power relationships and contextual and systemic issues. Through focussing on four research questions she attempts to illustrate how masculine norms have perpetuated inequities in ways that have prevented or hampered both women's participation in higher education and the inclusion of gender studies and philosophy. She shows how some of these constraints are gradually being removed and ways in which progress can be accelerated.

The book commences with a relatively long introduction on the social, political and economic context and includes a literature review. A key point is illustrated by a quotation from Morley, Unterhalter and Gold, (2001) *Managing Gendered Change in Commonwealth Higher Education*, that "Power is not redistributed, even though the potential space for access to power might have been widened." To increase numbers is important but not sufficient. The study then goes on to describe in some detail the political and economic factors that have played a significant role in influencing the education system, including the periods of military rule and regionalization. Given the extent of the challenges, it is not surprising that gender issues have not been easy to address. Unfortunately, the author makes it sound as if the system has deliberately tried to prevent women from accessing educational opportunities, when in fact it is merely practicing long-entrenched beliefs and practices (however biased they might be) and its own development has been severely constrained in many, very serious respects. She herself points out that there have been fierce power struggles in the system - which are illustrative of the prevailing tensions inherent in a country with such a volatile political and diverse cultural background and where economic survival has to be fiercely fought for. Nor does she acknowledge the extraordinary challenges of establishing a modern university system in such a relatively short period of time - from five universities in 1962 to forty-seven in 2000 - and all this during a period of significant population growth and political instability. No mean feat, even though this approach does raise serious questions about quantity versus quality.

As well as identifying the major constraints, she also describes the positive developments which have occurred, largely thanks to the persistent activism of women's groups. These include the growth of gender and women's studies programmes across Africa since the 1970s

and the dramatic increase in the richness and volume of scholarship since the 1990s, including on masculinity. The issues of sexual harassment and sexual corruption are rightly highlighted as key issues for women within the university system and are linked to the wide-spread social acceptance of male promiscuity. However, the author fails to take the discussion further into the spread of STIs including HIV infection – major gender issues in themselves. Also, in some respects the discussion misses out on identifying other aspects of discrimination. Poor male students and graduates also suffer lack of opportunity. For example, the author fails to pick up on the evidence she provides that more male graduates than females are unemployed and the reasons for this. Such a bias is not likely to win recognition from those who need convincing about the need to change the system. Nor does she address the evidence provided that there is a huge drop-out rate for both sexes. If we are talking (partly) about the need for a substantive mass of females in the system these crucial questions need to be addressed. The subject of the extraordinarily high drop-out rates is, in itself, a major issue, as is the overseas ‘brain drain’ which was also not addressed. However, these questions are really part of the bigger picture.

Having said all that, of course she is right in highlighting the specific and strong forms of disadvantage females face but wrong not to acknowledge that it is far from an ideal world for both sexes, as well as for different ethnic groups, and especially those from the north. Given the importance of strategies to change systems, it would have been useful to provide more detail on those used by the various women’s groups. Such specific information would be far more convincing to ‘non-believers’ than labouring on about gender theory (which can be very off-putting to the un-committed). The attempt to move into the area of application, while admirable, is somewhat weak: the recommendations do not specify who is responsible and how, fatal flaws in terms prescribing follow-up action. The division of recommendations into short and long term, however, is appropriate. But it may have been more useful, in a practical sense, to put the ‘how to’ examples and recommendations as steps in what to do in a separate publication. This would have been more digestible for would-be reformers who do not have the time and inclination to plough through such a mass of historical information. The publication would also have benefited from tighter editing; the structure appears confusing at times. The latter, combined with the voluminous amount of information provided, meant that it was not always easy to distinguish between the information on the state of the university system, which in itself has immense challenges, and the status of gender related matters. The data

used were also weak at times, many being quite dated and with many projections rather than actual figures.

Pereira has made an ambitious attempt to address what is inevitably a massive subject, and not always with clarity. This study would have benefited from a sharing of the workload so that some aspects were more adequately and evenly addressed. It is notable that the other titles in the series, all of which focussed on much more limited subjects, had multiple authors. Pereira was over-viewing a history of some sixty years and covering over forty institutions. Her expertise in the area of gender is obvious but weaknesses appear when discussing aspects of the university system. However, despite the weaknesses, the author has answered the four research questions and the study has played a useful role in highlighting the type of influences which have shaped the university system, many of which have undoubtedly institutionalized and reinforced gender inequities. The book's strengths lie in the way gender analysis has been applied to reveal hidden discrepancies and to identify the relevant contextual and systemic issues. Its weaknesses lie in the one researcher trying to tackle the subject in such a comprehensive manner when a more focussed approach (or more authors) might have accomplished the same ends in a more convincing manner.

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The Cultural Heritage of Africa

Kenji Yoshida and John Mack (eds.), *Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Africa: Crisis or Renaissance?* Woodbridge/Suffolk and James Currey / UNISA, 2008.

This timely publication is an outcome of contributions by scholars and curators working in the area of African cultural heritage. It is contextualised in a paradigm that challenges 'primitivism' and 'savagery' approaches to the exhibition of African heritage. Africa's cultural heritage is rich and diverse and has been the subject of foreign curiosity and collection, hence the massive collections in both private and public museums in Europe, the United States of America and Australasia. With globalisation and paradigm shifts in post-colonial states there is a definite move to ensure that the agenda for African institutions is to build museums for the purpose of preserving and presenting cultural heritage

on site. This book examines the changing nature of Africa's museums and the roles they are beginning to play in reconstituting both the tangible and intangible contexts of Africa's cultural heritage.

In reference to African museums, and to collections of African objects held elsewhere in the world, John Mack, in - "Museum and Objects as Memory-Sites," argues that objects can be conceived as memory-sites, and that, whether in situ or in a museum context, they form part of an ongoing dynamic. Heritage sites are not simply a part of the so-called 'tangible' heritage; they are simultaneously a subject of the 'intangible', a site of use, speculation, and oral accounting — a combination which is implicit in the phrase 'memory-sites'. Consequently the challenge of museums in Africa (as elsewhere) is to achieve in the setting of a different kind of institution a reconciliation between the objects as museum specimens and as catalysts of narrative, between the museum as bank vault and as contemporary memory-site. This challenge, according to the author, has been taken up in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In the process the whole concept of what a museum 'is' has quite properly come under review.

Umino explains in - "A Backyard (Hi)story: Doing geskiedenis among Griqua people in South Africa," how cultural memory has been sustained by way of 'doing geskiedenis (history)' among Griqua people in South Africa. This important contribution articulates ways in which communities remember and renew their cultural heritage. It highlights the importance of human agency in reconstructing and renewing cultural memory. Artefacts as 'memory-objects' and their embedded performative potential implies that Africa's material culture should be used to redefine African cultural identities and memory; thus African cultural artefacts may be given a new life and meaning relevant to contemporary social-cultural realities.

Under a broad theme of 'Preserving Heritage,' Mahachi's chapter - "Great Zimbabwe and the National Identity of Zimbabwe," is centred on the archaeological site of Great Zimbabwe, the largest and best known of several hundred other stone-walled prehistoric settlements found in Southern Africa. Mahachi explains that Great Zimbabwe is a historical site which was built and shared by the ancestors of the Shona people, and in recent times has acquired political and spiritual significance. He discusses the politicisation of Great Zimbabwe during the colonial regime and illustrates the interconnection between history, politics and material culture. Togala's chapter - "The Plight of Mali's Past," examines the

trend of illicit trade in archaeological resources and antiquities from Mali's archaeological sites and attempts, by government and international agencies, to prevent the plundering and illicit export of Mali's cultural resources. The author argues that the spread of Islam since the eleventh century added to the devaluation and relevance of ritual objects (especially the sculptures) as part of African cultural heritage. In recent times, the increasing secularisation of art in Western Countries, which makes the context in which the art pieces were originally used irrelevant, has added to the commodification of African art. This is an insightful discourse about the challenges of preserving cultural heritage in Mali where the plunder of the resources has an international dimension, implying that the cooperation of the international community and agencies is needed, complemented by education which sensitises the people about the implications of plundering the nation's wealth.

Mudenda's chapter – "On the Road to Cultural Preservation: Emerging Trends in Zambia," provides a brief background to museums in Zambia and recent developments in cultural preservation, with special reference to the emergence of local festivals, the establishment of community museums, the community-based activities undertaken by Zambian museums and the museums' network, national and international. The chapter highlights a new emerging paradigm—a shift from tangible to intangible aspects of the heritage, from an exclusive focus on the storage of objects to a forum where Zambian communities and professionals meet together to plan methods of preservation of their cultural heritage. Mudenda demonstrates the changing role of museums in relation to African cultural heritage. Establishing community museum projects is a positive development which will facilitate conscious revaluation of cultural heritage and in turn strengthen relationships between museums, communities, institutions and individuals. Chalcraft's chapter – "The Habitus of Heritage: The Making of an African World Heritage Site," discusses the world heritage site in the making, the painted rock shelters of Kondoa-Irangi, in central Tanzania. The chapter explains what this change in status means for the 'heritage' itself — rock art in this case — and for the locals. Chalcraft suggests that heritage is qualitatively different from history and suggests ways through which heritage revises the past.

Aikawa-Faure's chapter – "Safeguarding of the African Intangible Cultural Heritage," explores the notion of intangible heritage in the context of African cultural heritage. He argues that African cultural heritage is less recognised because most African heritage is expressed in

living and oral forms. It is intangible cultural heritage, closely related to the spiritual life, value systems, visions of cosmology and social practices of peoples and communities, and embodies their cultural identity. Expressed in the form of oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, festive events, traditional knowledge and craftsmanship, this heritage demonstrates most accurately people's cultural distinctiveness and diversity. Raising awareness of the value and significance of intangible cultural heritage at the local, national and international levels nurtures a sense of pride not only among the custodian's community but also throughout the whole nation. This is an important chapter because it defines an approach or model which may be effective in documenting and translating oral culture into an accessible resource for future generations. And as the author observes it is necessary that African museums incorporate a new dimension of activities specific to the intangible heritage, namely, documentation, archiving and interpretation, training, dissemination and production of cultural goods. By developing these activities, African museums will become key institutions in the domain of the intangible cultural heritage.

Under a broad theme of 'Creating Heritage,' Nettleton's chapter – "Creating Heritage, Manipulating Tradition: Art and Material Culture in South Africa's Rainbow Nation," observes that South Africa, with its British colonial and apartheid legacies of racial and ethnic separation of peoples, has used language for at least the past 100 years to encourage particularistic, separate identities, and separate imagined communities, which not even the protracted liberation struggle managed to eliminate. So the tactics of the post-apartheid government have been to celebrate various, interacting cultures, and to embrace the 'Rainbow' nation concept. But, as the author observes, we cannot conceive of a culture that would have no relation to other cultures, and accordingly identity arises from awareness of difference. Hence, Nettleton proposes that South Africa, and probably Africa in general, must move away from ideas of heritage grounded in the ancient and the antique, from differentiations on narrow ethnic bounds, to look for commonalities, to move forward, taking the past with us, interpreting it at various points along our journey into the global future. We need to guard our objects, but we must understand that their real value lies in their specific contextual valences, which include both aesthetics and performance. This is a reconciliatory paper which encourages forging a common destiny without necessarily abandoning our differences but nevertheless conscious of the need to identify common grounds. Okediji's chapter – "The Gender of Museum Collections: Women Muralists of Ile Ife," explores the notion of 'gender

blindness' in African Art. This refers to a lack of awareness of the gender identity and its implication or lack thereof in any African artwork. The anonymous display of African art objects has prevented us from realising the gender implications in the production, consumption and acquisition of art objects from Africa, Okediji argues. Because collectors and scholars have not been referring to the names of individual African artists, they have failed to realise that art museums have been displaying the works of African men, to the neglect of works of Africa women. The author observes that occasionally museums mount exhibitions of African textiles and ceramics, which is mainly the work of African women, but such exhibitions are not frequent, nor are they the main focus in permanent gallery installations. Using two examples from Senegal, Kawaguchi's chapter – "Covering Heritages, Erasing Locals: Passing on History to the Next Generation," discusses how cultural heritage is articulated in post colonial Africa and assesses the importance of this articulation. The chapter is an important contribution to understanding the cultural dynamics of renewing and sustaining cultural heritage: what is crucial for cultural heritage are the local values and memories which are shared among people and their willingness to hand them on to future generations. Unfortunately, as he observes, there are many cases where local values and memories, which are deeply rooted in their native contexts, are ignored by institutions such as national governments and museums despite the rhetoric and official recognition of the importance of cultural heritage. Kamei's chapter - "Ndebele Decorative Cultures & Their Ethnic Identity," shows how the Ndebele people have used their decorative culture to evoke their ethnic identity. Displacement of the Ndebele may have contributed to a decline in their artistic material culture; nevertheless the chapter implies that there is a possibility of exploring these traditions both as a research and educational activity.

The first of four chapters under a broad theme of 'Representing Heritage' explores the changing nature of museum exhibition in relation to 'Other' cultures. According to the Yoshida, ethnographic museums throughout the world used to focus on cultures other than their own. Recently, however, the peoples who have been the subject of ethnographic exhibitions have become more aware of their own cultural heritage and histories, and have begun to protest against this one-sided approach to exhibitions of ethnic cultures. Under the circumstances, a variety of new approaches are now being tried by museum curators. This chapter sketches movements which are underway in the field of ethnographic exhibitions and is an important contribution towards new approaches in ethnographic exhibition in museums, going beyond 'exoticism' and the

curious gaze of the 'Other'. Roberts' chapter – "Exhibiting Episteme: African Art Exhibitions as Objects of Knowledge," asserts that African cultural heritage is an intellectual heritage in addition to a material and spiritual one. As a curator mounting exhibitions about Africa for diverse audiences, Roberts is concerned with the political and ethical implications of exhibiting African intellectual heritage and with the dilemmas involved in 'translating' African epistemological frameworks into exhibition formats. Important to these processes is the recognition that exhibiting is always in some measure the construction of a cultural imaginary and never a direct reflection of lived experience. Yet, how that imaginary is constituted, the sensibilities and sensitivities involved, and the exhibition's ultimate goals, are issues of great concern to the future of African cultural heritage. Takezawa's chapter – "Ethnological Museums and the (Un)Making of History," observes that most African cultural heritages, including archaeological materials and historical documents, were taken under colonial rule to the metropolitan cities. As a result, African historians are obliged to leave their own countries in order to rewrite African history which has been written by Western scholars. In recent years many of these ethnological museums that hold these materials have been engaged in the total renewal of the exhibits. But as Takezawa notes no concern has been manifested about the historical value of the objects displayed in ethnological museums. His paper presents a valuable critique of ethnographic exhibitionism perpetuated by some museums in Europe when it comes to displaying African heritage. Colonial ideology is still prevalent in some of these museums and the paper is a useful contribution towards revealing conservative ethnographic exhibitionism. Lagat's chapter, the last in the book – "Traditions, Trade and Transitions in East Africa: A Collaboration Exhibition Project between the National Museums of Kenya and the British Museum," observes that museums are assuming a new role that is sensitive to the dynamic nature of culture. His is an appropriate conclusion because it demonstrates the implementation of new approaches to museum management and practice in Africa. The collaborative spirit with other organisations and agencies is a positive outcome. Moreover targeting local communities as beneficiaries of museum experience and education is a valuable development in museum practice.

This is a timely publication. The contributors have located their work in a progressive context, taking into account contemporary debates and paradigms that critique the colonial project of cultural appropriation and 'primitivistic' exhibition of the 'Other.' They cover both theoretical and

practical approaches to museum practice that promote respect and multilayered interpretations of cultural heritage. The changing nature of museums and their role in local communities is clearly articulated. It is a book which will be useful in many disciplines including but not limited to Archaeology, Cultural Studies, Museum Studies, History, and Education. It is also accessible to a general reader because academic jargon is kept to a minimum. The editors and contributors are commended for putting together such an important work.

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The Rwandan Genocide

Linda Melvern, *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*, Zed books, London, second ed., ISBN 978-1-84813-244-3 (hb), 978-1-84813-245-0 (pb).

In 1994, I was living in Saudi Arabia and planned to make my first trip to Rwanda. Although Saudi Arabia censors all news, we did hear there was civil unrest in Rwanda, and I was advised not to travel there. I cancelled my trip. Since then I had always planned to go there, and finally did that in 2009. While there we visited the Genocide Memorial in Kigali, which was both fascinating and disturbing, and I was keen to read Linda Melvern's book to learn more about the reasons for the atrocities that occurred in 1994.

This is the second edition of Melvern's book, and includes newly released documents and fresh interviews. She has condensed a vast amount of research into a relatively small book of 356 pages. It has seven collections from the Rwandan National Archives, files from the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations, maps, a detailed chronology of events and the text of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948). The book gives a devastating account of how the genocide unfolded and the outcomes so far of the investigation into the genocide. The book also generates a sense of anger at the West for not acting on a situation that it had so much control over - particularly when politicians were democratically elected and did not act with the humanitarian capacity that would have been expected by the people who put them in such positions of power.

The book opens with an account by a United Nations (UN) Belgian peacekeeper and civilians from 8th – 10th April 1994 when approximately 2000 people were massacred, while senior officials in the Ministry of Defence watched. At the same time all UN Belgian soldiers and expatriates were ordered by their government to leave Rwanda, knowing there would be no protection for the people. This draws the reader into the story - how this could happen and how did it lead to the genocide? This is followed with a resume of the history of Rwanda from 1894-1973. It describes the evolution of the problems relating to Rwanda's ethnic divide and highlights the ignorance of the colonists in undertaking a census dividing people into ethnic groups. It also explains the role the Catholic Church played in the racial divide. This culminated with the League of Nations insisting that the Belgian authorities introduce democracy with the formation of the first organised political parties, which were unfortunately ethnically based. Melvern presents evidence from the pre-1994 period showing that the government had already considered political campaigns of ongoing racial violence, organised killings, and massacres. That continued to evolve until up to a million people were killed in the 1994 genocide.

She explains the birth in 1987 of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) by Rwandan refugees living in Uganda. This was a well-organised political party acting outside Rwanda, with a published program to end the ethnic divide and with clear objectives for democracy. How they received their funding is not clear, although she provides background about Uganda's involvement. This was followed by the first attempt of the RPF to invade Rwanda in 1990, leading to pressure from the international community for negotiations between the RPF and Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana for a resolution to the civil war. She notes the negotiations around the Arusha Peace Accords, which led to a nucleus of extreme Hutus forming the Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR) to ensure that the peace agreement failed.

There is extensive evidence about President Habyarimana and his family's support of an anti-Tutsi agenda, and his close links to French President Mitterrand. These links are further highlighted by the French government's supply of arms to Rwanda. Melvern explains how international funds intended to help the Rwandan's economy actually fuelled the conditions that made the genocide possible, and there is evidence that the West was aware that aid money was being used for arms. She demonstrates the corruption of president Habyarimana and his extreme Hutu regime, the Movement Revolutionnaire National pour le

Developpement (MRND), whose members had free reign and whose accountability was not assessed by the West. There is evidence about Boutros-Ghali's involvement in the supply of arms to Rwanda from Egypt, before taking up his position as UN Secretary. This was all in preparation for exterminating the Tutsi, with evidence of the planned military training of non-military people.

The evidence for the genocide is overwhelming. The use of hate radio to incite the violence and killing highlights the government's plan for the extermination of Tutsis and moderate Hutus. What is alarming is that nothing was ever done to stop the pro-genocide broadcasts. They were never inactivated by anyone, even though they were one of the main ways of instigating ethnic hatred and racist propaganda. They blatantly named people who should be killed. But the most disturbing evidence presented concerns the participation of the French in support of the government during the genocide and, post 1994, their denial of the facts. There is evidence that the French and Belgians have hampered, and are possibly still hampering, investigation of the atrocities under the Genocide Convention.

In addition, the inaction of the West and its apathy about the situation in Rwanda is striking. No one wanted to use the word genocide; Western leaders were concerned at 'saving face', particularly after the West's problems in Somalia. Melvern emphasises the US and UK's lack of support post-genocide for the Genocide Convention. Another point was the naivety of the UN Security Council, despite persistent advice to the UN peacekeepers in Rwanda that the only way to resolve the problem was to keep negotiating with the leaders of the RPF and MRND and encourage them to abide by the Arusha Peace Accord. Melvern highlights how incompetent the UN Security Council was, despite repeated reports that indicated genocide was taking place. Information was suppressed and facts deliberately distorted. Because of this, the Rwandan government was able to put into action the planned extermination of Tutsi and moderate Hutus with speed and intensity for three months of unrestrained violence - that could have been prevented. It is alarming how ineffective the UN was in a situation where the world had an expectation it could solve the problems. Despite one of major principles in the creation of the UN being the prevention of the genocide seen in World II, it failed to do this in Rwanda, even when the evidence was indisputable.

The book also praises those who stayed during the genocide, describing their bravery and the circumstance they were under with no recognition of their work. It describes how they continued to provide whatever help they could to the people, in very dangerous situations, and prevent many killings. Their personal accounts mainly focus on what was happening at the time. The later psychological impacts on them are not discussed in the book. Melvern's account provides reassurance that some of the perpetrators have been brought to justice, although not all have been convicted and some are still in countries where they cannot be tried. In particular, the evidence against France and its denial of the facts proves that the wrong doers are still being protected. There is still more to be revealed on this; according to Melvern "there still remains much that is hidden from public scrutiny."

While travelling through Africa in 2009, Rwanda was one of our favourite countries. It was difficult to fathom how the genocide could have occurred in such a peaceful and friendly country. The only reminders of the genocide are the memorials placed all over the country and the Genocide Museum in Kigali that displays not only the Rwandan genocide but other major genocides perpetrated around the world. In Rwanda the classification of people as Hutu or Tutsi no longer exists. On the surface, the country is moving forward. It is a beautiful country, with new environmental laws that ban plastic bags and bottles and with a national clean up day; it is one of the cleanest countries in Africa. However, since reading this book I suspect there would be a section of the Rwandan community who possibly still hold the old racist views and I wonder how much of the past has been resolved. For the short time we were there, it was difficult to know what real issues still exist. The Rwanda we saw is very different from the one portrayed in the book. This book will appeal to anyone with an interest in Rwanda or the development of Africa. The book is written in an easy to read journalistic style, and is succinct in its layout. Additionally for the academic audience there is extensive research from sources not otherwise widely available. As the leader of the UN peacekeepers at the time of the genocide, Romeo Dallaire has commented, "*She discovered so much that we did not know*".

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