Demilitarisation and Peace-Building in Southern Africa: Understanding the Opportunities Lost

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Peter Batchelor and Kees Kingma, (eds.), *Demilitarisation and Peace-building in Southern Africa. Vol. I, Concepts and Processes*. Aldershot: Ashgate (The International Political Economy of the New Regionalism Series), 2004.

Peter Batchelor and Kees Kingma, (eds.), *Demilitarisation and Peace-building in Southern Africa. Vol. II, National and Regional Experiences*. Aldershot: Ashgate (The International Political Economy of the New Regionalism Series), 2004.

Peter Batchelor, Kees Kingma and Guy Lamb, (eds.), *Demilitarisation and Peace-building in Southern Africa. Vol. 111. The Role of the Military in State Formation and National Building*. Aldershot: Ashgate (The International Political Economy of the New Regionalism Series), 2004.

Benign: how else might one described the two words, 'Demilitarisation' and 'Peace-building', which anchor this set of three books published on behalf of the Cape Town-based Centre for Conflict Resolution? Benign, yes; and yet, the unfolding tragedy in Iraq shows how quickly these (and other) key-words can be corroded. In the exercise of state power, words are often stripped of meaning to suit narrow political ends. Often, however, this process is corroborated by the set routines of academic discourse. Here, the accusing finger points, not at faceless decision-makers, but to the routines of organised knowledge.

While the contributors to these three books are not beholden to the power of power politics, to use a phrase from the American theorist, John Vasquez,[1] suggest that the routines of orthodox International Relations, especially its ontological focus on states, have corroded the good intentions of those who participated in the project from which these books were hatched.

Orthodox International Relations (IR) is fixated on what it calls 'Realism'. Underlying this theoretical construct are five assumptions: international politics is about states; states seek (military) power because nothing else can guarantee their security; relations between states are guided by national interests; it is possible – no imperative – to distinguish between the political and the economic; and because the world is driven by calculations of power, states must prepare for war.[2]

Generalised statements like these are of course the staple diet of disciplinary routines where parsimony always weighs heavily on choice.[3] As a result efforts to organise are invariably over-stretched, distorted, and twisted to fit into formal explanatory frames. This is an over-riding feature of Realist IR and accounts for its wholly simple-minded formulations of the social world.

Take the Realist belief that southern African states operate within a regional 'state system'. This idea was introduced into the region's political discourse in the late 1960s by the American political scientist Larry Bowman.[4] Four years later the idea was imprinted in academic lore by the success of a book[5] which first described the region within the conceptual framing of Realism. As it did so, both history and sociology were ignored: what mattered more was the necessity to force the region into policy frames that could be of use to practitioners.

The facts on the ground were somewhat different, however. At the time, all the states in the region were – as they remain, incidentally – wholly unformed. This explains why overlapping sovereignties, not to mention robust cross-border communities, flourish throughout southern Africa.

The essays in the three books under review are positioned within the broad framing of 'Peace Studies'. In its heyday, 'Peace Research' – as it was also known – was seen to be an antidote to Cold War Realism. Strongly normative in its calling, Peace Studies favoured social engineering over empirical and historical inquiry.

Understanding this teleology explains why these essays fail to ask deep-seated, first-order questions about the theoretical construction of southern Africa and its 'state system'. It also explains why these writers are not concerned with rescuing the key-words – even those which they champion – from their corrosion by the unbridled forms of Realist IR.

Peace Research has never made a deep impression in southern Africa. Institutionally, its only real home – in South Africa, certainly – has been the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) which has been within the institutional fold of the University of Cape Town for forty years. In the 1970s and the 1980s, the CCR was associated with the work of H. W. van der Merwe, the Afrikaner sociologist and Quaker Peace-Activist; from 1992 to 2003, it was directed by Laurie Nathan, one-time student leader, anti-conscription activist, who has degrees in Business, Law and Peace Studies.

The overall aim of these books, as Peter Batchelor and Kees Kingma suggest in their introduction to Volume One, 'is to support and facilitate the achievement of sustainable peace and human development in southern Africa, by analysing demilitarization and peace-building processes in the region and identifying policy options for peace-building. The central focus of the research is the extent to which demilitarization following the termination of wars has contributed to broad processes of peace-building in the affected region. Has the military in southern Africa downsized and refocused towards new roles? Has

there been a "peace-dividend", allowing more investment in economic and human development, thereby dealing with some of the root causes of conflict? The research findings reported here have addressed these questions from several different angles, at several levels, and in a number of specific country settings'.

In the main, the goals they have set themselves have been achieved. In the first volume this is certainly so, but – and this is great disappointment of the entire set – these goals fail to describe the region in ways that are different from those offered by Realist IR. For this reviewer, this is the fundamental flaw in Peace Research. Interests, as I have argued elsewhere, will always trump ideas.[6]

Andre du Pisani's chapter is the only one (of five) to be positioned, disciplinary-speaking, within the mainstream of International Relations (IR). His chapter on 'concepts and discourse' succeeds in tracking an unfolding series of ideas both within the region in the aftermath of the Cold War. He opens with Barry Buzan's pioneering work towards the 'widening and deepening' of the idea of security:[7] away from the state towards more rounded understandings of ways to understand the myriad of processes which surround 'demilitarisation and peace-keeping'.

This said, du Pisani's chronology often decomposes, and his emphases are difficult to understand. He also misses, in my view, important moments in the development of the critical literature which challenged Realist IR. (Ken Booth's brief but seminal paper[8] which turned thinking about security in southern Africa on its head, for example, is not mentioned at all!) Does this explain, one must wonder, why the idea of Human Security – which has recently made such of powerful impact in both theory and practise of IR – gets only one, and very passing, mention?

Laurie Nathan's idea around the 'structural causes of crisis and violence' borrows from an early generation of peace researchers especially the pioneering ideas of Johan Galtung. Although often invoked, these concepts have not enjoyed a wide understanding in southern Africa. But the guise in which they appear here is not strongly sociologically located, as was Galtung's work. Instead, Nathan locates them in democratic theory and suggests ten ways to manage 'structural violence' in Africa.

Gavin Cawthra's ideas are located within state theory – Charles Tilly and Benedict Anderson, for instance – but he draws the argument about the provision of security continually back towards the limits of 'state capacity'. Both History and Sociology might have helped him to suggest why this lack of capacity can be explained by the imported nature of the state in the region.

The defence economist Peter Bachelor sets out a strong 'opportunity-cost' argument for demilitarisation through the use of quantitative indicators. It is a convincing argument but, alas, one poorly understood by mainstream economists who look beyond militaries to markets to deliver peace to southern Africa. Bachelor does not address this issue. This is a pity because the alliance

between market economics and state-centred political power sustains most Realist IR thinking in the region.

Using a 'sociological lens', Jackie Cock's interests are with identities, institutions and ideologies. She ends, however, somewhere else – with violence, gender and the environment but only after picking from a rich theoretical base: Noam Chomsky, Jaques Derrida, Richard Falk, Anthony Giddens, Clifford Geertz, Eric Hobsbawm, Michael Igantieff, Fredrick Jameson, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Edward Said and Anthony Smith.

These thinkers offer interesting alternative perspectives on the southern African region but, curiously, Cock ignores the insights offered by history in the construction of the region and its political discourses. Nonetheless, this is the only piece in the entire series that is seriously interested in theoretical ideas and in sociology.

Kees Kingma's contribution is distant from the region. He mainly reports second-hand from workshops; he is more interested on what happens when Peace Studies meets management and implementation. Five quite flimsy, case-studies, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, anchor a plea for appreciating more deeply the plight of ex-combatants, and for assisting in their integration in society.

If Volume One of this Series hangs together, albeit by using different disciplinary points of entry, Volume Two is little more than a pastiche. What were the editors aiming at by drawing such diverse themes together?

Certainty there are, as the sub-title suggests, 'national and regional experiences' of demilitarisation and peace-building in the region, but each of these themes could have produced a volume in, and of, itself. Parenthetically, this is where a chapter looking at the force, power and material basis of policy think-tanks would have made a welcome contribution to consolidating 'demilitarisation and peace-keeping' in southern Africa.

After apartheid ended, energetic writings and policy interventions from these groups helped to turn words into directions other than they were intended. Max Weber helped us understand how this happens during transitions: ideas that aim for '... change … are worn down by historical process, codified and routinized by interpreters, gradually brought into line with the status quo'.[9]

Located in (foreign-funded) think-tanks, these interpreters have devoted themselves to the perfection of the management of the region through the ontology offered by states. They fought – and they won – a battle for the soul of the region by strategically positioning benign words at problem-laden conceptual intersections. In these places, progressive ideas were constructed as threats to rational ordering and any benign meanings that words may have enjoyed were stripped away in power politics.

As this happened, any hopes for another form for southern Africa was lost and the idea of 'peace and prosperity' was turned into an armed chain of Realism that links demilitarisation and peace-building to the imperative for

economic growth. South Africa's 1998 invasion of Lesotho stands as testimony to efforts to impose Realist order on the region by twisting words and their meanings; unfortunately, this event gets barely a mention in these three books.

If the second volume in the series was an opportunity lost, the final in the series is well directed: the role of the military in state-formation in Southern Africa. This is a return of the modernisation theme that militaries make nations.

Following an introductory chapter by Andre du Pisani and Guy Lamb which traces, but does not really critique, this modernisation trajectory, there are country chapters – Botswana (Bonolo Simon Ditiraw), Mozambique (João Paulo Borges Coelho and Paulino Macaringue), Namibia (Andre du Pisani), South Africa (Annette Seegers), and Zimbabwe (Walter Tapfumaneyi). These are interesting, albeit uneven, case studies: each points the way towards the need for further work. Again, what seems necessary is a regional perspective: this could, conceivably, again have been delivered by History and Sociology.

If all these criticisms sound a trifle hard: let me mute them somewhat. Any work that counters the deepening corrosion of social life that has been so powerfully driven by net-worked Realist think-tanks must be welcomed – no, must be roundly applauded. In important ways, and this follows from what has been argued, the absence of muscular IR is a singular strength of this volume; indeed, the entire project.

The contributors to these three books hope that neo-institutionalism will deliver to southern Africa's people all that has been denied them. But, Iraq suggests that neo-institutionalism, if stripped of its benign intent, can deliver great harm. The problem may lie elsewhere. It is a pity that the idea of states – their history, and their sociology – was subjected to too few searching questions by the twenty-five authors who fill these pages.

Notes

1. John A. Vasquez, (1983), *The Power of Power Politics*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

2. These ideas have been distilled from Kim Richard Nossal, (1998), *The Patterns of World Politics*, London: Prentice- Hall, p. 15.

3. This comes from Donald J. Pachula, (2002), 'Introduction, Visions of International Relations: Project and Procedure', in Donald J. Pachula, (eds.), *Visions of International Relations: Assessing an Academic Field*, University of South Carolina Press, p. xv.

4. Larry W. Bowman, (1968), 'The Subordinate State System of Southern Africa', *International Studies Quarterly*, 12, 3, 231-261.

5. Christian P. Potholm and Richard Dale, (eds.), (1972), *Southern Africa in Perspective: Essays in RegionalPolitics*, New York: The Free Press.

6. Peter Vale, (2004), *Whatever happened to the post-apartheid moment? Past hopes and possible futures for southern Africa*, London: Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR Comment Series), 37p.

7. Barry Buzan, (1991), *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, (Second Edition), Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner.

8. Ken Booth, (1994), 'A Security Regime in Southern Africa: Theoretical Considerations', Bellville: Centre for Southern African Studies (Working Paper Series No. 30).

9. Cited in John Abromeit, (2004), 'Remembering Adorno', *Radical Philosophy*, 124, p. 27.

BOOK REVIEWS

Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press. 2001.

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Ellis and Ter Haar waste no time in alerting their readers to their claims: to understand the dynamics of African politics first seek to understand the religious ideas and experience of the people of Africa, and: look to the inter-action between religious ideas and politics in Africa for a better understanding of changes taking place in the wider world. Politics and religion have never been separate issues in Africa (nor often, elsewhere) simply because African life has never lived separate from spiritual matters. With at times captivating enthusiasm Ellis and Ter Haar ('the authors') have produced a well-researched account of the fusion of the spiritual and the social, and especially spiritual and political, that shapes Africa and her peoples. But more than this, they have recognised that to understand religion in Africa it is not enough to subject the religious practice of the people of Africa to the Western sociological gaze: as panoptic as such as gaze may be, it fails to hear the voices of Africa.

Truth is partial in that no one individual or group possesses it entirely. Knowledge comes from facts and experiences, but since our facts and experi-ences are inevitably limited, our truths are never total. No one of us is ever objective enough because no one of us can ever see, hear, taste, smell, or touch enough. If we wish to secure a truth greater than our own, we must converse with people whose experiences are different than our own. The truth, says Donna Haraway, emerges through 'shared conversations in epistemology' (1991, p. 101). The time Descartes spent meditating would have been better spent conversing with the largest number and widest cross-section of people possible. No one can attain the truth herself or himself. To achieve objective knowledge, we need each other (Tong 1997: p.157 - 158).

One of the key contributions of this text to the sociological study of religion lies in the authors' epistemological approach to the study through the ideas of the people, rather than the typical sociological approach focussed on structures and systems. One intriguing source for their study has been recognition of the oral traditions of Africa through the use of rumour to facilitate their epistemological access to African ways of faith, for it is often in the discourse of

rumour that peoples ways of knowing come to the fore. The novel perspectives the authors bring are well rooted in established anthropological and socio-logical theory of Weber, the Comaroffs, Foucault, Geertz, Giddens, and from African philiosophy and religion, Mbiti.

From their definition of religion ('a belief in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one, that is the home to spiritual beings with effective powers over the material world' – 2001, p.14), the authors place their study firmly in Africa. Traditional Western understandings of religion simply cannot accommodate African perspectives; they colonise and confine the ideas of Africa into the paradigms of the West (2001:181). To understand religion in Africa requires that we look to African ideas of religion and not simply to the institutions of religion. In ways echoed by the ontological perspective of social realism in the West (Archer 2000) many Africans view reality as stratified. The African perspective acknowledges that beneath the empirical world lies the spiritual world, with the former emergent from the latter. This relationship between the visible and invisible world is what connects religion and politics in Africa, for influence over the spiritual world (and control over communication with that world) 'can become a matter of the greatest political importance' (Ellis & Te Haar 2001:15). The authors remind us that we need to recognise that 'politics' extends beyond the social institu-tions into the underlying social structure emerging out of the relations between human agents: '…politics is seen as the debates and activities relating to the distribution of resources in society in the largest sense' (Ellis & Te Haar 2001:20). It is in using such broader understandings the authors succeed in giving their readers access to the 'shared conversations in epistemology' of religion, life and everything heard in the streets and through radio trottoir (literally, 'radio shopping mall'). Through these shared conversations both religion and politics in real-world late modern Africa appear in an evocative manner.

One of the insights that emerges, related directly to the role of radio trottoir (and the electronic original) concerns the complex relationship between politics and religion that is revealed – tragically – in the way HIV/AIDS is understood and responded to in Africa. In an oral society, dependant upon radio (in both its literal and social form), the rather obvious assertion that foreign aid, and foreign AIDS, sound the same becomes a matter of causality with very real implications (Ellis & Te Haar 2001:46). Added to African understandings of causality rooted in spiritual concerns which ask the question 'why' rather than the Western 'how', and against the background of centuries of colonial exploi-tation, and HIV/AIDS becomes a direct consequence – malicious or accidental – of relationships with the West. In African understanding HIV/AIDS, as it was briefly in the West (and still is in many religious contexts) is a moral issue in its origins, and thus must be treated with religious technologies.

Religion, argue the authors, has been the generally preferred 'technique' for managing change in Africa (2001:163) through the use of spiritual resources. They acknowledge that religion has not been, and is not perfect in managing these resources. Religion in Africa has in some cases been used to support regimes of evil (Maboto Sese Seko) as much as it for social good. They argue that where 'a bloody colonial history has left particularly acute traumas' (for example the Democratic Republic of the Congo) religion is no longer able to perform one of its important African functions – the exorcising of the 'spirits of the dead' – and this failure leaves people ill-equipped to create theories of change (2001:185). In many cases traditional religion has been left so decimated, or so corrupted, that it has lost its influence, and concern has grown for a lack of moral centre and a loss of connection between the spirit world and the material world. As a result new forms of religion ('entrepreneurs') have begun to emerge that lack the social roots of those they replace (2001:190). Once again, the emergence of religion in these spaces of moral uncertainty is not always viewed as good by people outside a specific context (the conflict around shari'a in northern Nigeria for example).

Despite these failures and weaknesses of religion in Africa, the authors argue that religious revival is present in Africa, emergent from the loss of moral centre. Like it or not, believe in it or not, religion and politics are securely inter-twined in Africa, and as Africans continue to spread in a new African Diaspora, so the connections between the spiritual and material worlds will become real in other parts of the world.

This work makes a valuable contribution to understanding what we make of religion as a social practice in Africa. It also has salience for those who seek to understand African politics, from village to national levels. Although at times focusing strongly on the central regions of African, the authors have managed to include rich examples from Egypt to South Africa, and have done so in a way which is refreshing, accessible and frequently surprising.

Archer, M. (2000). Being Human. The Problem of Agency, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tong, R. (1997), 'Feminist Perspectives on Empathy as an Epistemic Skill and Caring as a Moral Virtue', *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 18 (3), 153-168.

Toby Shelley, *Oil: Politics, Poverty and the Planet*, London, Zed Books. 2005.

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Readers of Toby Shelley's *Oil: Politics, Poverty and the Planet* will be easily reminded of Anthony Sampson's *The Seven Sisters*. Like Sampson, Shelley brings into his work a strong journalistic background marked by years of observing and analysing the socio-economic and political dimensions of petroleum exploitation. Shelley's urbane prose demystifies the ensemble of geology, mining machines, economics and accounting – the petroleum industry's classic view of itself – making the inner workings of petro-capitalism intelligible to the lay reader.

The major difference with Sampson's *Seven Sisters* (and this is not to belittle the unparalleled investigative depth for which Sampson's works are known) is that Shelley does not dwell on the history of the oil industry and the ruthless tactics with which the oil oligopoly (Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Total and the like) influence politics and policies in Third World oil-producing countries. Shelley's main focus is on the role of oil in the deepening of social impoverishment across the world and on the spread of wars, cross-border socio-political tensions, economic wastefulness and brigandage. He places at the centre of much contemporary global conflict the politics associated with petroleum exploitation. He sees, for instance, the 'politico-military storm' in the Middle East and Central Asia as inseparable from the two regions' vast oil and gas reserves. Even more provocatively, he suggests that '[r]ight-wing lobbyists would not be championing an assertion of US hegemony in West Africa were it not for the uncovering of that region's deep-water oil and natural gas since the 1990s', (p.2).

The book touches on just about everything oil has done to the world and its sensibilities. Chapter Two – the most comprehensive of the book's five chapters (excluding the Conclusion) – details, among other things, the 'bitter harvests' that oil-dependent economies like Venezuela, Nigeria, Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar, have reaped from 'sowing the oil'. These range from the inability to 'convert oil revenues into sustainable economic growth', and declines in per capita incomes since the mid-1970s, to overall economic contraction (especially in major oil exporting countries like Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirate). Economic declines in these countries, the book notes, have occurred across periods of oil price booms and slumps, persisted in a world where oil demands continue to grow, and tended to worsen despite promises by national politicians that oil revenues would stimulate

economic diversification. Many of these countries, like Nigeria, have grown used to being referred to as rich lands full of impoverished people.

Among the many explanations the book proffers for the persistence of 'bitter harvests', 'wasted windfalls' and poverty in oil-dependent Third World economies is that the governments of these countries fail to take account of the fact that 'oil and natural gas extraction is capital- rather than labour-intensive'. Even so, petroleum export 'requires little in the way of linkage into the rest of the local economy'. In reality, rather than automatically stimulating diversification, petroleum production 'tends to create enclave industries'. Shelley points out that these attributes of petroleum underscore the need to use petroleum revenues in the wisest ways possible: diversifying the local economy must be a deliberate endeavour if oil-rich Third World countries want to 'break down the walls of the enclave and loosen their excessive 'ties to the oil companies of the industrialised world' (p.43).

Many readers will find Shelley's accounts of the geographies of petroleum-related civil conflict quite revealing. The coincidence of petroleum exploitation and civil conflict is found in places as far apart as Aceh (a special district in Sumatra, in Northern Indonesia) and the Niger Delta (in southern Nigeria), in Angola and Colombia, and in Sudan and Mynmar. A substantial part of Chapter Two is devoted to case analyses of civil conflicts in Aceh (Indonesia), Niger Delta (Nigeria), Angola, Sudan and Colombia. In the various cases, a point is made of how petroleum intersects with factors such as ethnic, linguistic and religious differences and the colonial experience in entrenching civil conflict.

Cross-border conflict seems also to be a major by-product of petro-capitalism and petro-politics. The book details how in the late 1990s the scramble for control of offshore petroleum resources in the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa 'resulted in more than thirty territorial disputes' (p.79). Nigeria and Cameroon were brought to the brink of a war when the International Court of Justice ruled that the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula was no longer to belong to Nigeria, but must be ceded to Cameroon – a verdict the Nigerian government rejected. Cross-border tension currently mars the relations between the two neighbours. Western Sahara is still struggling for full independence from Morocco, the multi-billion barrel petroleum reserves in the Spratly Islands are still being contested by at least six countries (China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Philippines Malaysia and Brunei), and given the Chinese economy's rapacious thirst for oil, it is unlikely that China will voluntarily relinquish its claim to the islands. Much of the tension between Iran and Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Russia is linked to cross-territorial claims on the oil riches of the Caspian Sea. The now hidden, now open disputes between United Arab Emirates and Iran, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Qatar and Bahrain, and Kuwait and Iraq, all have direct links to oil and natural gas reserves in specific territories.

The discourse on 'Dutch disease' and 'oil curse' has traditionally portrayed economic declines, conflict and the prevalence of corruption in (especially Third World) oil-producing countries as seemingly resulting from the mere fact of petroleum endowment. Shelley adopts a different approach. Although frequently using the term 'commodity curse', he lays the blame for the development predicaments of Third World oil-producing countries on institutional failures. He maintains that the spell of conflict and corruption associated with petroleum production can only be undone 'through the construction of social institutions that impose transparency on the collection and distribution of hydrocarbon wealth' (p.80). He advocates 'the widest popular participation in decision-making', which for some countries would mean confronting ethnic and class divisions and for others regional issues and 'traditions of rule by families or military cliques' (p.81).

Another illuminating feature of the book is that an entire chapter is devoted to the role of Western powers in destabilising oil-endowed developing countries, a situation exacerbated by the fact that Western industrial economies are overly dependent on imported energy. For these countries 'oil and gas are too important to be left to their owners to manage' (p.81). The book details the connections between American neo-conservative Republicanism with the conflict in Iraq. It shows how it has been the United States' desire, since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre, to have 'a partner or stooge regime in Iraq' just in case Saudi Arabia could no longer be trusted to play its pro-US role of curbing, from within OPEC's oil price hikes. Indeed, Shelley argues, the United States has used the rhetoric called 'global war on terror' to run a ring around some of the world's major oil reserves. 'War on terror' has served as a pretext for garrisoning the Middle East, 'building air bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan', and seeking 'control over Caspian reserves' (p.107).

If Shelley's book makes an important statement on the current state of conflict and insecurity in the world, it is that the lust for oil (within and outside producing states) is central to both.

This is a bold, lively and readable book. It is another vocal example of the longing among analysts and activists across the world for a new energy future.

G. Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

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This book offers an analytic commentary on the living contradiction inherent in the notion of colonial humanism developed as a variant of French colonial policy in the inter-war years as well as on one of its intellectual responses, that of Negritude. Both, it is shown, eventually fed on each other and enabling a relationship of a special type – a variant of neo-colonialism – to develop and operate up to the mid-1990s. Its policy resonances however, seen in the current nature of Western development projects in Francophone Africa for instance, continue up to the present.

From a vantage point that is post-Marxian/structuralist/modern, Wilder's analysis is guided by 'the conviction that it is possible to identify structural features of colonial formations and their corresponding socioeconomic, political, and cultural logics while also attending to their contradictory and historically specific features' (p.79). He wants us to believe that contrary to those post-colonial scholars engrossed in post-national geopolitics that look for explanations and categories beyond the nation-state, post-modern explanations can (still) be sought for at the level of discourses found at the level of the state. 'Greater France as a spatially dispersed and multicultural political formation (and) Negritude's multiple commitments to republicanism, panafricanism and cosmopolitanism', to him can be explained at the level of the specific discourses and resultant policies in and around the nation-state. This is in order to explain something that is not altogether new (say, for students of Francophone African foreign policy), that colonial policy and Negritude did produce its own symbiosis (p.204), something that carried over into the Franco-African relations in the first decades after independence.

First and foremost though, the book sets out to challenge conventional inter-pretations of France's colonial role. Wilder wants to overcome the tension evident in conventional writing between the ideals of French republicanism and the grubby oppressiveness of imperial-colonialist exploitation, a tension most analysts, he finds, are unable to overcome. But he also intends something else. Using Marx as reference, a bottom-up view in explaining French history and sense of self is taken. Explaining the contours of the contradictory and unfinished nature of the French imperial-nation state is best done by starting from the colonies. This, with the intention of exposing the 'doubleness' and ambiguity of the history of French capitalist modernity. The intention is to

expose the crises and transformations, the ebbs and flows of political rationality (p.14) and the disjointed relationships engendered in and around the French imperial venture.

To Wilder the disjointedness and contradictoriness of the modernist project in the French colonies – a project which contains elements of liberalism, neo-liberalism and welfarism – helps us transcend the conventionally talked about 'tension' of a French republicanism, seemingly at odds with French imperialism. Instead, he takes a holistic view, explaining French behaviour in terms of the contradictions within the nation-state itself. The aim is to bring about an integrated treatment of universality and particularity as 'interrelated dimensions of republican, national and colonial policies' that have 'seen universalising practice have particularising effects' (p.15).

As such, the book gives the reader a sense of the intellectual discourse(s) in and around the state which informed colonial policy in the inter-war years. This discourse combined republican images of solidarity with integral nationalist images of organic community intended to build an imperial mentality in the metropole (p.32). All this, however, left the delicate problem of how to justify the exclusion of the colonial subjects and the denial of citizenship (p.33).

This was done by disassociating nationalism from citizenship. It was justified in terms of a patriarchal family model: the solidarity which existed within such a family and notions of 'tender' benevolent paternalism. All this, the author points out, excluded republican notions of fraternity (p.33). The debate was both imaginary and real – heterotopic or effectively enacted – in that it constructed a mental artifice amidst the reality of colonial networks of imperial circulation which bonded the empire that made possible the notion of an African France and raised the possibility of the colony becoming a province of France (p.34). With reference to Marx and Lefebvre and their explanations on the role of ideology that is not meant to unmask ideas or mediate lived reality, the open contradiction lived on: Colonies were included in an expanded national vision of imperial nationalism that included racialised colonial subjects who were also deemed irreconcilably different and excluded from the republican polity (pp.38, 39).

National-imperial tensions were palpably evident in the colonies. Colonial welfarist political rationality begins to be practised against the background of an overarching welfarism which emerged as a series of social and economic projects in a post-liberal age before and after World War One (p.49). With reference to Foucault's treatment of political rationality, the abandonment of liberalism for welfarism and the shift from colonialism as a 'civilising mission concerned with economic exploitation and individual behaviour to a colonial humanism oriented towards economic development, native welfare, and the management of indigenous populations' (p.50), are presented as evidence for 'the contradictory rationality of colonial rule' (p.43). It shows the state had

begun to concede that racial superiority and the idea of a civilising mission were no longer adequate grounds for colonial subjugation (p.51).

In Chapter 3 Wilder talks of the ideological architects of a derivative of colonial welfarism, colonial humanism in both the pre- and post-war periods. He traces the media outlets and institutions such as the Ecole Coloniale and associated institutions that existed to elaborate on the outlines of colonial humanism and which mediated between science and government. As such, the intimate relationship between colonial ethnology, governing strategy and political authority (pp.52-75) is exposed. As a result, the author is able to conclude that 'colonial ethnology was at once an important relay in the circuit of political rationality and one of its most distilled products' that helped create a network of disparate elements including various institutions and a decentralised public to re-conceptualise the imperial order (p.75).

In the fourth chapter, colonial humanism which amounted to more than an ideology and was a strategy and method of rule, an instrument racialising native populations (p. 76, p. 78), is circumscribed. At this point in time the attempt was made to 'understand' custom and codify customary law without, however, creating general or fixed legal codes for natives (pp.105-107). The modernisation strategies and the developmentalism of the inter-war years in French West Africa intended to have an interventionist state fund a coherent economic policy that would rationalise and specialise colonial production. However, these attempts to expand production were bedevilled by conjunctural crises at a time of the Depression. More importantly, structural contradictions intervened. Here there were dual imperatives working against each other. There were those of the social conservation of the traditional collective, support for chiefs and what was anticipated to go with it, political stability versus those to do with promoting social evolution and the promotion of bourgeois family practices, property laws, formal education and individualism. These cross currents at work in colonial administration amounted to a form of government compelled to use both at the same time. As a result, preservation and transformation happened simultaneously and colonial reform was unevenly realised (p.117). All in all, the effect of 'development' was to exacerbate 'native' impoverishment and erode French authority at a time when socio-economic change bred resistance and agitation (pp. 92-5).

The subsequent chapter looks at nationality and citizenship against the background of the contradictoriness of colonial policy to both modernise and primitivise Africans, promote social evolution and prohibit civil society (p.119). Colonial education policy demonstrated the contradictory tendencies from the application of colonial humanism. Where schools on the one hand were to produce 'traditional' Africans, higher education on the other was meant to create "new natives" who were to act as "interpreters with regard to the masses…the educators of backward races"' (p.120-1). In the wake of nationalist opposition from newly educated elites, opposition was initially dismissed

as a manifestation of isolated malcontents or blamed on outside agitators (p.123). But the stereotyping of Africans as big children marked another phase in this process of racialisation, fixing differences by an insistence on customary civil status and allowing for arguments to deny Africans citizenship (p.126-7). At the same time, the periodic expansion and contraction of rights for the 'originaires' of Senegal who enjoyed nominal citizenship rights, indicated that citizenship was not so much shaped by law but by politics (p.129). Colonial citizenship as an issue therefore brings out the imperial nation-state's underlying tensions.

The colonial state's preoccupation with controlling an incipient civil society in order to demonstrate that an inclusive 'political immaturity' was now a permanent condition of African colonial existence (rather than the exclusive 'biological inferiority' as before) meant that two contradictory things were intended – to include Africans in the French nation on the one hand but at the same time to exclude them from the French polity (p.143). Paraded as proto-individuals, semi-nationals and subject citizens, Africans found themselves in an ambiguous and impossible situation of socio-political disorganisation in which they could not retreat into a pre-colonial past of cultural wholeness nor advance to fully fledged citizenship. This created openings for political dissent.

Following on from this, the sixth chapter looks at the possibilities for anti-racism in the metropole during the inter-war years. It pursues the question of how Africans could hope to take recourse in egalitarian republican values or to 'nativism' to overcome their state of limbo when republicanism politically excluded them and indigenous authenticity itself was a product of colonial valorisation (p.150) Here Negritude, as a cultural movement which rejects assimilation and engages with the issues raised by colonial humanism about the relationship between race, culture, nationality and citizenship is looked at. The social and educational backgrounds of some of its progenitors, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Leon-Gontran Damas and Aimé Cesaire and their 'palavers about Negritude' as colonial students at university in France (markedly influenced by Leo Frobenius' *History of African Civilisation*) that produced a self-conscious African community – including members of the African diaspora – is considered. Group discussions in and around citizenship, black patriotism, republicanism and humanism emanate both from the African community's participation in French metropolitan civil society and its marginalisation within it (p.158).

Discovering cultural specificity did, however, not mean precluding black people from participating in modern politics, nor did its formulation lead to a one-sided nativist primordial retreat that rejected the West. The focus on culture was an attempt to promote a new cultural politics (organised around journals and cultural salons involving translations of African-American writing, poetry readings and novel writing) for colonial elites of African

descent intended to create an alternative public sphere that was also to raise the levels of a transnational, pan-African consciousness (p.173-4) in order to transcend racial self-hatred and class divisions and push the project of identity politics within the black community to the point where race becomes a political not an ontological claim (p.187; p.191).

The Negritude movement functioned in two ways, as an alternative public engaged in a discourse on national-imperial politics and as a 'counterpublic that insisted on political equality as culturally distinct Negro-Africans' (p.197). During the inter-war years however, there also emerged a Pan-Africanist and black internationalist movement – centred around the Ligue de Defense de la Negre (LDRN) and later the Union des Travailleurs Negres (UTN) – struggling to organise colonial workers, overturn colonialism and support world communist revolution through entertaining relations with the Comintern and the Parti Communiste Francaise (PCF) (pp.180-1). Members of the Negritude movement and colonial students organisations were, however, unwilling to engage in any political activity with the black militant Left as this might also threaten their government scholarships (p.183).On the other hand, as the PCF put its anti-colonial stamp on anti-colonial black metropolitan politics, it in turn, was unwilling to recognise black nationalism as an autonomous radical movement and to collaborate with black radicals and race conscious black reformers (p.184). The relationship remained a tense one. However, all colonial groups fed into a broad anti-fascist, anti-colonial and Pan African movement which in pragmatic and strategic ways sought to make colonial grievances known to the metropole, and, backed by the Popular Front, advocated a new imperial federalism which linked black cultural nationalism with social democratic humanism (p.194).

With reference to Senghor and Damas's writing, Chapter 7 engages with cultural politics and cultural nationalism in its engagement with colonial humanism. The author finds that Negritude is not to be seen as radical and in some ways complicit with the colonial order it contested (p.202). 'Negritude writers became implicated in the elaboration of colonial humanism even as they formulated an alternative black humanism' (p.203). But he finds, contrary to post-colonial scholars engrossed in post-national geopolitics that look for explanations and categories beyond the nation-state, when looked at on the scale of 'Greater France as a spatially dispersed and multicultural political formation, Negritude's multiple commitments to republicanism, Panafricanism and cosmopolitanism' can be explained at the level of the specifics of the nation-state and can be seen not to have been contradictory (p.204).

Therefore, when it comes to this form of cultural nationalism, Damas's critique of Republican colonialism traces a cultural-political vision that avoids the alternatives of humanist universalism and nativist particularism (p.229). Senghor in turn is shown to imagine an alternative Greater French nation where

Africans, without being culturally assimilated, are politically fully integrated. Senghor wished for a Greater France, an imperial federation, that was to be cognisant of a novel cultural formation that was 'Afro-French' and 'international' and an outcome of colonialism (p.236) but also an example of black culture with its universally important contribution to aesthetics that gives space to a hybrid African humanism. This humanism is one where the person (rather than an individual) is empowered by being in unison with the universe and has his/her roots in a (mythical) black society that is inherently democratic and socialist (p.247).

The last substantive chapter looks at the critical and poetic writings that confront colonial rationality and engages with the rationalist impasse faced by Negritude when confronted by racial logic and unreason. In its writings and poetry, Negritude can be seen to link a liberal discourse with a post-liberal discourse grounded in racial alterity and irrationality positing a site of engagement of the self-critical, real, utopian, romantic, dreaming, rational and irrational African intellectual. As such, examples of Cesaire and Damas' poetry and writings and their imagery and responses to them by commentators such as Sartre are analysed in some detail, since all are an attempt to 'transform the imperial-space time in which they were nevertheless rooted' (p.293).

The author who expresses a number of intentions at the beginning of the text does not fully pursue these to the end of the book. His most constant theme, that of exposing the living contradiction that is French colonial rationality, its mythology as opposed to French colonial practice and control, however, remains the most constant, developed and useful. The book exposes much of the official and unofficial socio-political-literary discourses within and next to the French colonial-imperial state, unravelling much in the sociology of the imperial project that was France before and after the formative inter-war years. As such, sociologists, social theorists and historians of colonialism interested in the political-philosophical underpinnings of its French variant in Africa, as well as students of International Studies interested in explaining the mental, mutual and often complementary nature of the special relationship between France and Francophone Africa up to the mid-1990s (after which it begins to rupture) or those interested in explaining the discourse in and around citizenship and identity, will all find their pickings in this publication. At the present time, when the world finds itself in a post-Westphalian phase and grapples with the need for a dialogue between Western universalising precepts and the South's (or Africa's) need for recognition of its social values and voice, the book provides a illuminating insight into the earlier complex (rather than the later) writings of Negritude engaged in a cultural/political project in another time and place of expanding the boundaries of the French imperial state. However, the exercise of 'linking republicanism and Pan Africanism, humanism and culturalism, cosmopolitanism and nativism, vanguardism and populism, political engagement and cultural production' (p.253), its expansive

creativity and utopianism also provides a starting point for looking at the notion of a inter-civilisational dialogue on how African culture can inform an alternative universalism, an emergent world polity or world citizenship.