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victims than he included in this book. He did, however, set a valuable path for future research.

Michael Stasik

Devisch, Rene. 2017. *Body and Affect in the Intercultural Encounter*. Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa / Leiden: African Studies Centre. ISBN-10: 9956-764-01-9; ISBN-13: 978-9956-764-01-3. xvii + 308 pp.

This book makes a profound attempt to understand and explicate African notions of the body as well as interbodily, intersubjective and cosmocentric modalities. The book is timely and valuable in a number of respects: first, in its focus on interbodily, intersubjective and cosmocentric modalities the book contributes to critiques of the Western imposition of individualistic notions on otherwise collectivistic African cultures. In this sense, the book contributes insights to discourses around African Ubuntu and its underlying collectivism. Second, in its focus on interbodiliness and the topical notion of “affect” the book contributes insights from contemporary Western philosophy that is premised on speculative realism and relationality. However, unlike abstract scholarly philosophical works that often engage in discourses on the body and affect *in abstractu*, Rene Devisch’s book is premised on his long immersion in the African Yakaphones’ activities and thoughts systems. Based on the author’s lengthy stay with the Yakaphones, the book engages with the intricate and intriguing African practices of and perspectives on healing cults, sorcery and rituals. While carefully explicating the Yakaphones’ practices, Devisch exposes ways in which Africans are woven in terms of the body-group-world weave within which there are various forms of reciprocity, co-resonance and co-naturality of life forms in the African universe.

In chapters one and two, which build on the author’s long ethnographic experience including participant observation among the Yakaphones, readers are informed about how researchers can weave themselves in their informants’ universes, how they can observe the everyday lives of their hosts and how they can share the sensory

experiences, comprehension and communication by participating in family councils, divinatory consultation and rites of passage such as funerals or initiations. It is from such immersion in the life worlds of the Yakaphones that Devisch begins to understand the African notions of the body, interbodiliness, reciprocity, exchange, identity and spatial organisation. To make sense of the ethnographic data Devisch relies on phenomenology, which studies people concretely in their everyday life where their meanings and relationships with fellow human beings and with things are studied. His phenomenology also focuses on borderzones where the local and the global intersect. From such a phenomenological stance, Devisch is able to uncover the multilayering and differentiation with the Yakaphones – he is able to trace relations, strategies, meanings, connections, becomings, unfoldings and power strategies of the Yakaphones.

In chapters three, four and five, Devisch argues for the multifacetedness of local epistemologies, multiculturalism, and multidisciplinary researches that he understands *as richness even in understanding poverty*, including impoverished societies such as Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo). Thus, while arguing a case for recognising the wealth embedded in multifaceted understandings of local practices and knowledges, the author proceeds to expose how the post-independence collapse of state services in Zaire resulted in poverty, conflicts, self-questioning in relation to the alienating colonial past and the politics of the belly. Thus, alienated in a context of a collapse of state services, the Yakaphones are noted to have resorted more to ancestry, rituals, facial masks, and dancing masks which are recognised as manifestations of ancestors who promote bravery, manhood and vitality. However, situated in the local-global modality where Africans are often deemed to have inherited some institutions from the colonial, which has transmogrified into the global, questions of ancestry and heritage in Africa become complex. Underlined in this question is whether Africans have ancestry in the colonialist cum globalist. In this sense, while post-independence African states sought to establish sovereignty and autonomy, the author shows that the African mask is in fact a dense intermediary space which gives shape to intergenerational and interworld weave in Yakaphone culture.

Chapters six, seven, eight and nine effectively underscore ways in which, while the post-independence African state sought to

establish sovereignty and autonomy, the Yakaphone universe on the other hand is noted as having stressed interconnectivity, affectivity, interbodiliness and interworldliness all of which create and sustain vitality and balance between different fields. So, in stressing the interconnections, Devisch notes that cults of affliction and healing maintain a place alongside biomedicine, folk curative practices and neo-pentecostal or like-minded independent prophetic healing communes of the sacred spirit. Thus, underscoring interworldliness and interbodiliness as opposed to autonomy and sovereignty, Devisch explicates the dynamic and culturally structured weave of the fields of the sensory and orificial body; of the family or in-group (the social body), as well as the life-world (the cosmocentric body) (p. 141). However, this interbodiliness and interworldliness need not amount to assimilation such as attempted by the colonial missionaries. In this sense, Devisch argues for a model of the world based on Yakaphone African endogenous knowledge, in which the individual is inserted into the group, lifeworld and interworldliness, which recognises interconnections without necessarily assimilating the other. In this regard, for Devisch, various forms of affliction are signs of transgressions and a lack of integration in relations at various levels.

Thus, the book under review is rich with ethnographic insights from the author's lengthy empirical engagements among the Yakaphones. It offers empirically-based insights to contemporary philosophical discourses on affect, relational ontologies, personhood and epistemologies. While the book presents ethnographic insights that straddle the local and the global, the problem in this book is that instead of developing a theory on the basis of African data, it uses exogenous phenomenological theories in order to understand Africa. Similarly, while the book delves into African cosmologies, it focuses primarily on ancestors to the neglect of ancient African conceptualisations [often denied by missionaries] of the existence of [a sovereign] God. Since the discounting of pre-colonial African conceptualisations of God has been used for centuries, especially since the colonial era, in order to deny the existence and separations between good and evil in Africa, it would be imperative to avoid this missionary-inspired trap in contemporary ethnographic treatises. Once distinctions are made between good and evil, it becomes possible to interrogate how it is possible for people to relate in worlds marked by good and evil spirits, good and evil medicines, and so on. This is a fundamental question

this book could also have addressed, particularly in a world where some are defined as the “axis of evil,” as “terrorists,” as “animals” to be sanctioned and hunted down, and so on.

Artwell Nhemachena

Horáková, Hana and Werkman, Kateřina (eds.) 2017.
***Knowledge Production in and on Africa.* Wien: LIT Verlag,**
290 pp.

It was an excellent decision of the committee organising the Viva Africa conference, the biennial conference of African Studies in the Czech Republic, held at the Metropolitan University Prague in 2015, to choose “Knowledge Production in and on Africa” as the conference’s title. In the call for papers, the convenors stated that “Africa is misrepresented twice: by the ways knowledge about it is selected by gatekeepers of knowledge and by the deliberate suppression of knowledge on Africa.” They thus underlined the fact that the production of knowledge as well as the way knowledge is disseminated are affected by existing power relations.

The book edited by anthropologist Hana Horáková (Metropolitan University Prague) and political scientist Kateřina Werkman (Charles University of Prague) is the outcome of this conference, presenting most, albeit not all, of the contributions to the 2015 Viva Africa conference. In her introductory notes, Hana Horáková takes up the central ideas of the call and summarises the following chapters, thus giving the reader a helpful overview of the book’s content.

The book at hand is an interesting work because it clearly shows where and how knowledge about Africa is produced. Most contributions are detailed case studies arguing convincingly how stigmatising visions on Africa have been and are being created, maintained and modified. However, the title of the book is slightly misleading; the question of how knowledge is produced within Africa and by Africans is addressed to some degree, but the main focus of the book is on “Knowledge Production on Africa.” By describing how external actors and (post-) colonial dynamics evoke negatively-coloured mythical images about Africa, almost all articles implicitly hint at the debates initiated by