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Ways of Seeing: Beyond the New Nativism. Introduction

Achille Mbembe
Special Issue Editor

In placing too much emphasis on the themes of identity and difference or economic marginalization, a number of analysts have conferred on Africa a character so particular that it is not comparable with any other region of the world. Worse, they have lost sight of the different ways in which networks and social relations all over the continent are being transformed and institutionalized in new forms. The rise of new sites for accumulation, the reconfiguration of economic and political systems, the recomposition of gender relations, the fragmentation of nations into competing war-zones and “fiefdoms,” the struggles over particular sites and resources, the partial imposition of a market road to capitalism: All are as much part of a complex reworking of old, historical social relations as a response to changed external circumstances.

Over and above this, the various forms assumed by these processes in different countries are the expression not of a state of anomie, but of a process of transnationalization. The rhythms and logics of this process are played out in multiple ways. Almost everywhere, however, the process itself accentuates the conflict between a cosmopolitan and a nativist vision of identity and of African culture. This is precisely what the contributions in this special issue of the *African Studies Review* illustrate, each in their own way.

The idea of compiling this special issue came from the editors of the journal, Mitzi Goheen and Ralph Faulkingham. The first and central part of the issue comprises articles focusing on what might be termed the “new archives” of contemporary African life. The third part consists of critical reviews of the most significant works written by African researchers living in Africa and published by international publishing houses over the last

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five years. These reviews are preceded by a reflective essay by Françoise Vergès that takes a different form from the other pieces but intersects with them in suggestive ways, especially in its consideration of the problem of spatialization and boundaries (discussed in the studies by Simone and by Niger-Thomas) and that of subject-formation (examined by Biaya, Nuttall, and Posel).

The primary aim of this special issue is to highlight a significant body of social science research conducted *in* Africa by African researchers living and working there—as “insiders.” Without erecting geography or place as an absolute in the calculus of knowledge production—and, especially, without fixating on whatever autochthony might be—this issue was conceived with the goal of giving a voice to those who have remained in Africa. There is no presupposition that the way they see, and what they see, whatever it might be, is fundamentally different from what Africanists and those in exile from Africa in the West (the “outsiders”) write on the same topics. Indeed, there is no single way of “seeing” Africa among those who have remained here. Here, as in many other spheres of contemporary African life, plurality is the norm.

Yet a close examination of the articles collected here does reveal, at times, a distinct sensitivity on the part of these scholars, ways of “writing Africa” and interpreting contemporary social life which are indeed differentiated from the dominant narratives. As is well known, two accounts have dominated academic discourse on Africa up to now. The first, rooted in the framework of developmentalism, takes political economy as its central discipline, particularly the Marxist-dependentist and neoliberal versions. In Africa, the crisis of both the equilibrium theories of neoclassical economics (which itself is akin to a reworked modernization theory) and the structural-functionalism of Marxism-dependentism is partly the result of their lack of concern for the spatiality of material life and their lack of recognition of the social and cultural mediation of economic systems in general.

As the essays by Simone and Niger-Thomas in this issue point out, a new economic geography of Africa is in the making. This economy is characterized by a multiplicity of organizing principles, networks, and institutions, all constituted through social practices in particular spatial contexts.¹ The combination of these new spatial configurations on both sub- and supraregional geographical scales, and the diverse organizing principles of actually existing socioeconomic systems, means that we cannot posit a one-way path to economic transformation in Africa. Nor can we keep relying on the trinitarian model of state, market, and civil society to account for the microfoundations of social, economic, and political regulation in post-colonial Africa.

The process of reterritorialization itself is neither the simple outcome of voluntarism nor the effect of structural determinism. Driven by social actors in negotiation and interaction with formal, informal, and overlapping boundaries, this process is constituted of and through both discursive

representations and material practices.² A stylized, formalized approach to economic life, very close to mathematical reasoning, fails to grasp this diversity and complexity. Such a failure partly explains why in Africa, neoliberal positivism and Marxist dogmatism have led to the replacement of the figure of the researcher with that of the expert/consultant and the activist/militant. Both are more concerned with stating what Africa *should be* rather than with describing *what Africa actually is*. The first is driven by the concern for social engineering, while the second is mired in the production of pseudo-revolutionary political utopias. Both have a relationship with the object of knowledge (in this case, Africa), which is essentially theological.

The second type of account that dominated academic discourse on Africa during the last quarter of the twentieth century is nativism, an ideology of difference par excellence. The relentless critique of this trend has not succeeded in putting it to rest.³ Over the years, the corpse persists in rising again and again, and the fantasies kept alive around the phenomenon of globalization seem to give it wings each time. In the social sciences, the most privileged disciplines of nativism were, until recently, history and anthropology. In the humanities, it was ethno-philosophy.⁴ To these two disciplines should be added a new form of historicism. The latter has taken over a mode of reasoning which, by making use of analytically dubious and ideologically loaded categories, as well as a series of primary dichotomies (citizen versus subject, natives versus settlers, victims versus killers...), claims to explain, almost always in a mechanical and literal fashion, events or processes as complex as colonialism and its aftermath, the nature of the postcolonial state, and even genocide.⁵

The articles collected in this volume depart fundamentally from these "ways of seeing." The link between the different contributions is the way in which they track and reveal the paradoxes embedded in macro- and micro-processes of transformation of space, power, and subjectivity in a context of fluctuation, mobility, and extreme spatial polarization. In doing this, these studies bring up a number of theoretical and methodological questions which I would like to expand upon.

Cities, Boundaries, and Territorialities

As a starting point, Abdumaliq Simone forcefully brings back what Fernand Braudel called the "territorial economy" at the center of current tensions over the relationship between Africa and what is termed "modernity." He does this by starting from the metropolitan character of African cities—a perspective usually neglected in African studies. He then reinterprets the process of metropolitanization from the angle of the mastery of large spatial expanses—otherwise expressed as "the complex entanglement with the world."

Simone's study is interesting on two levels. On the one hand, while avoiding the all-purpose notion of globalization, it shows clearly how the composition of new African identities is inseparable from a certain practice of space in general and of certain ways of imagining the world in particular. Indeed, the "world" as a category of thought is one of the most impoverished concepts of African philosophical reflection. To a very large extent, the confinement of Africa to area studies and the inability of African criticism to think in terms of the "world" go together. These two factors are crucial in explaining why the study of Africa has had such a feeble impact on the life of the various disciplines in particular, and on social theory in general.⁶

On the other hand, Simone shows the benefit of reading social change from the perspective of spatial formations (in this case, the city). Elsewhere, this concern with spatialization and this attention to megalopolises corresponds to a phase of sophistication in the analysis of the transformations of capitalism on a global scale.⁷ The implications of such developments for research are beginning to be felt, if only in terms of questioning the territorial nation-state as a preconstituted geographical unit of analysis for social research.⁸ Because of the iron clad "developmentalism" and the persistent influence of Marxism-dependence on studies of Africa, however, neither new analyses, nor new configurations of the market or of capitalism, have been considered sufficiently in local research.⁹ Hence the continuing difficulty in responding to the question of how the global economy is rooted, in many different ways, in territorial-historical African structures.

A superficial examination of the dynamics at work leads to at least two hypotheses. The first has to do with the phenomenon of territoriality and spatial polarization. In contrast with other regions of the world, the transnationalization of African economies is not a result of the expansion of foreign direct investment or the intensified deployment of information technologies, the effect of which would be the compression of time, the elimination of distance, the speeding up of the circulation of goods, and the ever-increasing abstraction of the means of payment. Rather, it is a result of the emergence of new extractive structures and mechanisms, the aim of which is to convert territories into resources and power.

As I have shown elsewhere, in the regions of the world situated on the margins of major contemporary technological transformations, the material deconstruction of existing territorial frameworks goes hand in hand with the establishment of extractive or militia economies based on the destruction of "superfluous" populations and the exploitation of raw materials. The profitability of this kind of exploitation requires the exit of the state, its emasculation, and its replacement by fragmented forms of sovereignty.¹⁰ In the majority of cases this process of conversion has just one name: war. The second hypothesis is that, in this new equation, cities and boundaries occupy strategic positions.

In fact, a close relationship links these phenomena to the shift in the modalities of Africa's integration in the global economy over the last quar-

ter of the twentieth century. In effect, without entailing any agglomeration or massive center of growth, an atomized capitalism has developed over the debris of a rent economy formerly dominated on one side by state companies controlled by the factions in power, and on the other side by monopolies for the most part dating from the colonial era and operating in captive markets. The dichotomy between the rural and the urban economy, or even between the formal and informal economic sectors, characteristic of the immediate postcolonial period, is more blurred than ever. It has been replaced by a diffracted economy, without any obvious natural core, which is composed of several nodes entangled with one another and which maintain changing and extremely complex relationships with the local environment and with regional and international networks. What emerges is an increasingly polymorphic economic geography in which territoriality is differentiated and parcelized among multiple institutional and regulatory forms that are not clustered around a single predominant center of gravity.

From this extreme fragmentation has emerged, often within the same country, a multiplicity of economic territorialities, occasionally nested in each other and often separate. It is in this context that the mining, timber, or oil enclaves have become critical thresholds at the intersection of complex spatial and institutional formations. Whether coastal or landlocked, the enclave economies are essentially extractive. They are, in practice, disconnected from the rest of the national territory, or they are linked to it only by tenuous, often informal, networks. In contrast, they articulate directly with the world market and in many cases invalidate the hypothesis of the continent's marginalization. When they are not at the center of war-like logics, the enclaves tend themselves to be contested spaces. Sometimes controlled by multinationals to which the state extends—or in fact delegates—a parcel of its sovereignty, sometimes in collusion with dissident armed formations, enclave economies constitute a symbol of osmosis between trade and militarism reminiscent of similar processes in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹¹

A further aspect of the transnationalization of African economies is the emergence of clear-cut zones and corridors which are aimed at creating appropriate conditions to welcome companies into financially delimited and tax-free spaces. Just like the enclave economy, that of the corridors is entirely oriented toward exports and is therefore particularly responsive to global demand and vulnerable to the volatility of the market. The splitting up of African economic space can also be seen in the increased importance assumed by capitations, nature reserves, and parks—extra-territories which are exploited by tourism companies and local and international dealers. Between these two territorialities zones of flux exist, perfect examples of sites of informality which are always found in the vicinity of ports, airports, and large regional metropolitan areas. As Margaret Niger-Thomas illustrates below, boundaries constitute an almost perfect example of these zones of flux.

Simone's study clearly shows how, in this complex mosaic of disjunctive and interpenetrating nodes and scales, the relation of private and state actors to geographically distant localities and places has extended, deepened, and intensified. New sources of income, or, quite simply, new means of livelihood are no longer to be found exclusively in self-enclosed territories controlled by a sovereign state. Complex dynamics of earning profits have emerged. They have led to an unprecedented revival of the imaginaries of long distance. This revival is translated, in turn, into an increase in flows of migration and the experiences of displacement (forced displacement or displacement linked to the search for work or to religious considerations), one result of which is a renewed cycle of diaspora formation.

In the same manner, local communities are reconstituting themselves around a labyrinth of commercial and religious networks, parallel institutions and associations, secret societies, vigilante groups and militias, prosperity churches, and therapeutic movements.¹² Most of these networks are the result of an overlap between the state and the various tentacles of the shadow economy. Some are homegrown, others are local satellites of international organizations. Still others are linked to war and to violence. This is particularly true of armed groups. Some are part of healing organizations and new religious cults, one of whose principal functions is to treat misfortune and hardship while at the same time conjuring the new faces of evil.¹³

The heterogeneity of the logics set in motion by these different actors explains, to a large extent, the fragmented nature of their actions and the ferocity of the ongoing struggles for access to external financial resources. It also bears witness to the accelerated pluralization of African societies. In the absence of genuinely democratic institutions, this pluralization currently results in the confluence of the two configurations of violence which until recently were otherwise relatively separate from each other, but which now mutually reinforce and stand in for each other: the violence of the market set off by the intensified competition for private property and the means of livelihood, and the social violence made uncontrollable because the state has lost its monopoly.

If Simone's study is particularly concerned with the reality of metropolitanization and its effects on overcoming long distances, the essay by Margaret Niger-Thomas focuses on the practical questions of overlap and the zones of intense flux represented by boundaries. Niger-Thomas's approach draws from a methodological tradition which combines fieldwork in multiple locations, life stories (*récits de vie*) and an analysis of the microdimensions of everyday life.¹⁴ She shows how, far from being airtight partitions rendering the monopoly of the state as a defined territory, borders have become places of bargaining where the rules of an a priori limiting space are constantly being turned upside down.¹⁵

In examining what happens on one or both sides of the border, Niger-Thomas gives us a glimpse of the way in which a spatial order not only

organizes a set of prohibitions but also a set of possibilities, most of which concern the daily struggle for survival. In so doing, she seems to suggest that “actually existing economies” in Africa are those economies where the protagonists are constantly on the move, displacing material things, inventing others, crossing boundaries, improvising, and going beyond the limits fixed by the state, and, indeed, the market itself. This struggle is itself strongly gender-connoted. Her essay records significant shifts, negotiations, and ruptures in the domestic relationships of women and men—shifts conventional African feminist scholarship has been slow to take into account. At the same time, she reveals the ongoing conflicts between personal autonomy and the hierarchy of sexual power and subordination.

Lifestyles and the Aesthetics of Pleasure

If there is a sphere of African contemporary life which the two *doxa* mentioned above have neglected, it is that of sexuality, pleasure, and lifestyles. This is all the more puzzling since sex and gender norms have historically been central to the structure of power relations and to the organization of cultural categories in Africa. The role sexual pleasure plays in contemporary struggles for public power, cultural influence, economic life, and class categories is, in most contexts, astounding. Sexuality is entangled with broader questions of lifestyle, pleasure, happiness, risk, and death; with the aesthetics of the body; with desire, sensuality, fecundity, and subjecthood. It represents the most important site where new African identities are staged, performed, and enacted.¹⁶

By means of a reexamination of the notions of femininity and masculinity among the youth in Dakar, Tshikala Biaya works with a kind of archive generally neglected in African research and moves us a little closer to studies done elsewhere.¹⁷ In choosing to base his analysis on young people—a precarious category if ever there were one—Biaya succeeds in demonstrating the unstable nature of these phenomena. He also reveals the failure of different authorities (religious authority, political authority) to police their significance, much less to regulate them, while at the same time highlighting the ongoing contest over the authority to determine the boundaries of individual autonomy, and to demarcate public from private life.

Biaya makes it clear that there is no lifestyle, no regime of sexuality, no aesthetic of pleasure which is not inscribed in a social geography at the center of which is a constellation of authorities (the state, religion, the family, money) and a universe of signs. Let us take, as an example, the family, which has long been a site of patriarchal authority. He asserts that in the context of the severe economic fluctuation and intense volatility characteristic of the last quarter of the twentieth century, family structures in particular have been affected by social fragmentation. This is especially the case in the large metropolis areas.¹⁸ The main social changes in this sphere

are linked to several factors: the access of young people to employment, the transformation of the position of women in the economic sector as a result of the general crisis, changes in types of union, and sexuality.

The relative drop in the social and economic status of young men—a phenomenon which may not be entirely new but which is certainly fundamental—has unfortunately not been the object of a great deal of study. The percentage of the uneducated and the unemployed in this particular social category has increased considerably. The transition from adolescence to adulthood is no longer automatic, and in some countries the heads of household are older than they have been for some years. The age at which young men first marry no longer corresponds to the age at which they become economically active. The social distance between the young and the social elders is growing, while the distribution of roles and resources between generations is becoming more and more complex. Numerous young men now remain in forms of prolonged dependence, which can only be broken by emigrating or enrolling as soldiers in rebel movements.¹⁹

Relations between men and women, and parenting roles, are also being redefined. The composition of households has changed fundamentally. Married couples without children, polygamous families without collaterals, and single-parent families are examples of the diverse types of families now being formed. Almost everywhere, the mobility of men has a profound effect on the running of households. Partly because mothers and fathers are often no longer resident in the same place, numerous households now have women at their head.²⁰ Male and female roles within marriage are also being transformed as salary earners are increasingly jeopardized and social exclusion increases. A process of leveling out of the status of women and young men is also underway.²¹ All of this has resulted in the proliferation of microstrategies on the part of the social actors. Polygamy, for example, provides the possibility of new strategies on the part of both men and women to solicit resources within the domestic structure in a context in which the activities of women contribute more and more to family income.

While such sociodemographic aspects have been the object of frequent study, this is not the case for the subjectivities induced by these phenomena. This is even more true of the conflictual emergence of a sphere of private life which draws its symbols from global culture. The most characteristic domains of this transnationalization are those of clothing and fashion, sport, and the concern for physical health in general.²² The same desire to open up to the world can also be found, however, in music, dance, and, of course, sexuality.²³ The production of music, in particular, is now dominated by the principle of cross-fertilization. As Biaya demonstrates, these phenomena are carried along by a general movement of privatization and new cultures of the self which it would be erroneous to reduce to individualism or narcissism.²⁴

On the Subject of Race

The two studies by Deborah Posel and Sarah Nuttall both focus on race as their central theme—a *problématique* poorly studied in African studies. Over and above its empirical dimension, Posel's contribution shows how, while the facticity of "race" is not self-evident, its semiotics can be mobilized in totalizing political projects. In that sense, "race" can be read as a "technology." For its efficiency, it then relies on institutional discourses, epistemologies, and officially sanctioned practices. Posel demonstrates in particular, how, by appealing to the fantasies of race, the apartheid regime in South Africa was able for many years to create its own forms of institutionalization.

Behind the screen of race there was an entire set of legal, administrative, and social codes, the aim of which was to perpetuate domination while ensuring the replication of obedience. Posel points out the contradictions in this process and reveals the coarse and absurd nature of classification, the object of which was to convert the logic of racism into a commonsense notion. This being said, the state project to assert racial certainty was not simply a historical construction. As Nuttall suggests, the fantasy of race derived its power from its association with complicated relationships between subjects and their symbolic and unconscious structures.

The material examined by Posel might enrich the debates initiated by Michel Foucault on biopolitics and recently extended by Giorgio Agamben on the state of exception.²⁵ Foucault defines biopolitics as a relationship between government, population, and the political economy. This relationship has the body—and even better, life itself—as its constituting site. It is life itself which power seeks to control, shape, and prescribe within a relationship based on two imaginaries in fusion: the biological imaginary and the political imaginary. Beyond the rhetoric of separation, one might define apartheid precisely in this way. Just as the forms of its spatialization indicate, the state of apartheid, a technology of government as well as a genuine primitive territorial machine, sought, above all, to introduce between state power and its targets a relationship of capture, indeed of captivity.²⁶

It did this not on the basis of a structure of exception (in the manner of an extermination camp), but by means of the normalization and routinization of exception itself. To this end, it relied on a set of cognitive apparatuses (disciplines and knowledges such as statistics) which, combined with a legal and coercive arsenal, were intended to "modernize" the management and administration of the multitudes. In this process, biological theories of race justified the selection of the resources necessary for the reproduction of bare stratified social forms. The problem with this figure of domination was in knowing how to coordinate and control a group of living human beings constituted as a population and how to relate these nonlegal subjects to the universe of labor extraction and the production of

surplus. Was it simply a racialized conflict between capital and labor as a crude Marxist reading would argue? Certainly not, in that economics, politics, and biology all became interwoven in the process.

It is not because apartheid's overlapping of politics, economics, and biology had "race" at the center of its vocabulary that it differed fundamentally from other forms of domination in the rest of Africa. If it is agreed that its two targets were life, on the one hand, and populations (the multitudes) on the other, within a space where populations and resources were converted into power, then it is easy to see how, in the rest of the continent, technologies with exactly this objective have been put into place, notably as a result of wars. In other words, the *war structure* is the equivalent of the *apartheid structure* in contemporary Africa, in that it has become one of the preeminent matrices of the production of resources, the domination of life, and the fabrication of identities.

Sarah Nuttall, in her article, considers the generally neglected question of the subjectivities of race, not by providing evidence of impersonal structures, mechanisms, and devices, but by relying explicitly on two notions: first, the "look," and second, Foucault's notion of "the care of the self." By means of a careful reading of texts written during the last quarter of the twentieth century in South Africa, Nuttall shows how there is nothing absolute about the category of "whiteness." Form rather than substance, "whiteness" is nevertheless marked through and through by the power of privilege. But the cultural semiotics of "whiteness" also reveal its precariousness and point to sites and moments in which its signifying power is unsettled.

It is clear from Nuttall's reading that there is not one but many possible definitions of *white*, and many meanings to the term "white African." In effect, the texts discussed by Nuttall show that even during apartheid the white subject acts, reacts, makes choices, and engages in certain patterns of behavior over others. Nuttall's reading uncovers "ways of looking" and "being looked at" that produce "whiteness" in everyday situations. She shows how, at times, an "incoherent" and "discontinuous" being emerges from such practices, one who consciously fails to conform to the cultural frameworks by which a "white" person is defined. For whites in a country where the majority of blacks were oppressed, "becoming African" supposes a conscious undermining of the regulatory norms through which "race" is materialized. This is, in itself, an ethical work—a work on the self which, in some respects, recalls the earlier forms of subjectivization studied by Michel Foucault.²⁷

The significance of Nuttall's critique of the category of "whiteness" in the representation of contemporary African identities is crucial in this respect. By emphasizing the notion of "becoming," of "look," or of "performance" and "enactment," she agrees with and enriches similar critiques produced in a number of other contexts.²⁸ Even better, her critique of this other form of nativism represented by the racialization of identities opens

the way to a dynamic reinterpretation of a set of cultural practices characteristic of the contemporary Africa which might readily be considered “cosmopolitan.” In this respect we can argue that at least two forms of cosmopolitanism emerged during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The first is a practical cosmopolitanism, of the vernacular type, brought by “migrants.” The majority of these migrants are integrated into the spatial strategies of different networks—of trade, religion, or even prostitution. They commute between their country of origin and their country of reception, thus contributing to an urban network linking Africa to centers within or outside the continent. The cosmopolitanism of these “migrants” rests on their capacity to straddle between distinct cultural, local, or regional identities while leaving room for an intense traffic with the global.²⁹

The cosmopolitanism of migrants has entailed the proliferation of illegal or clandestine spaces. This can be seen in the existence of genuine unofficial towns constituted by so-called illegal immigrants. It can also be seen in the flexible practices adopted by illegal immigrants in the country of reception, and in the xenophobia which contributes to confining them to legal obscurity. In these spheres of illegality, marginality might favor the reconstruction of complex forms of community life. In any case, illegal immigrants generate material and cultural resources in conditions of permanent instability and quasi-absolute uncertainty.

There is a second form of cosmopolitanism which seeks to reconstruct African identity and the public sphere according to the universal principle of reason.³⁰ This form of cosmopolitanism does not seek to reenchant tradition. Its main concern is the emergence of a deterritorialized self. On a philosophical level, this version of cosmopolitanism validates everything that makes Africans identical to all other human beings. As such, it is inseparable from the difficult emergence of a private sphere of autonomy, just as it is opposed to narratives of difference and authenticity.³¹

We are now far removed from both the dead-end of developmentalism, from the dilemmas of nativism, and from the false dichotomies of the new historicism. The history of African identities, is, in fact, marked right through by an extraordinary power of imitation and by a gift—without parallel—of producing resemblances from different signs and different languages. Consequently, there is no “African identity” that is not composed, or better, stylized. This process of composition and stylization consists in gathering together disparate signs, which mean different things in various languages. These disparate signs and fragments of reality are subsequently rearranged around central signifiers which function both as images and as illusions.

Rather than fabricating social and political utopias, the analyst is invited to grasp the springs of this tension between image and illusion and the paradoxes and lines of escape which are thereby made possible. It is precisely these paradoxes and lines of escape which make it such that, strictly

speaking, there is no African identity other than allegorical.³² To a large extent, the articles collected here invite the decoding of this allegory. But in order to decode the allegory, new archives still need to be produced. Furthermore, the repertory of intellectual inquiry needs to be expanded. The texts presented here proceed in exactly that direction.

Notes

1. See for example Janet Roitman, "The Garrison-Entrepôt," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 38, nos. 2–4 (1998): 150–52.
2. See Adrian Smith and Adam Swain, "Regulating and Institutionalising Capitalism," in John Pickles and Adrian Smith, eds., *Theorising Transition: The Political Economy of Post-Communist Transformations* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 25–53.
3. See Achille Mbembe, "African Modes of Self-Writing" and responses in *Public Culture*, forthcoming.
4. See the critique by Fabien Eboussi-Boulaga in *La crise du Muntu: Authenticité africaine et philosophie* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1977).
5. An example of new historicism is Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (London: James Currey, 1996); see also Mamdani *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
6. This is so despite the optimistic views of Robert Bates et al., *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contribution of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
7. See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Neil Brenner, "Beyond State-Centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies," *Theory and Society* 28 (199): 39–78; Saskia Sassen, "Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global: Elements for a Theorization," *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 215–32.
8. Arjun Appadurai, "Spectral Housing and Urban Cleansing: Notes on Millennial Mumbai," *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (2000): 627–52; Michael Burawoy, ed., *Global Ethnograph: Forces, Connections and Imaginations in a Postmodern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
9. On this revived interest in spatialization, see Achille Mbembe, "At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa," in Crawford Young and Mark Beissinger, eds., *Beyond State Crisis? Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press and The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001); see also the studies (in progress) by Sarah Nuttall, Abdumaliq Simone, and Françoise Vergès, "Diasporic Economies and Cultural Corridors in the Southern African Indian Ocean" and Luc Sindjoun, "Les migrations dans le Golfe de Guinée: Entre désétatisation, re-étatisation et transformations de la citoyenneté."
10. See Achille Mbembe, "On Private Indirect Government," in *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 66–101.
11. For similar processes in the nineteenth century, see John Lonsdale, "The European Scramble and Conquest in African History," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). For an analysis of

- recent shifts, see Béatrice Hibou, ed., *La privatisation des États* (Paris: Karthala, 1999).
12. See Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony," *American Ethnologist* 26 (1999): 279–301; "Millennial Capitalism: First Thoughts on a Second Coming," *Public Culture* 12, no. 2 (2000): 291–343; Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamjoh, "Capitalism and Autochthony: The Seesaw of Mobility and Belonging," *Public Culture* 12, no. 2 (2000): 423–52.
 13. Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Ruth Marshall, "Power in the Name of Jesus," *Review of African Political Economy* 52 (1991): 21–38.
 14. Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien: Arts de faire* (Paris: Union Générale des Éditions, 1980).
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 31. See Achille Mbembe, "À propos des écritures africaines de soi," *Politique africaine* 77 (2000): 16–43.
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