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Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo. *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization.* **Dakar: CODESRIA, 2013, vii + 290 pp.**

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, a Professor and Head of the Achir Mafeje Research Institute at the University of South Africa, examines the legacy of colonialism in Africa in *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization*. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's book is "concerned with the invisible entanglement and entrapment of the African continent within the complex colonial matrices of power in which full African decolonization remains a myth and African freedom is reduced to an illusion" (xi). He argues that African nations only politically decolonized, and that Africans are still mentally, economically, culturally, and socially stunted by continued Western domination. Ndlovu-Gatsheni demonstrates an encyclopedic knowledge of post-colonial and colonial theory in his evaluation of current African problems. Utilizing case studies in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa, he shows how African ideas of modernity are borrowed directly from Western concepts of modernity and that Africans must fully decolonize or continue to be ranked at the bottom of world rankings.

He describes a "postcolonial neocolonized world" as a useful term "to capture the structural, systemic, cultural, discursive, and epistemological pattern of domination and exploitation that has engulfed Africa since the Conquest" (3). This dominance did not end with decolonization, but instead continues through today. Ndlovu-Gatsheni is particularly concerned with the impact of continued colonization on African universities and scholars. Discussions of the future of Africa and Africans still rely on Western notions of modernity and progress, which do not necessarily reflect African realities. He calls on Africans to adopt an African mindset to tackle African problems as Western ideals exacerbate the problems that colonialism created.

Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa discusses "three main African problems, namely: the grammar of decolonization, including the question of what is and who is an African; the operational mode of coloniality that sustains Western global dominance and explanations of the entanglement of the 'postcolonial' and 'neocolonial' in present-day Africa" (31). These themes are well developed and argued, but Ndlovu-Gatsheni has a difficult task of providing solutions to the problems he raises. While African borders are a construct of colonialism, as he ably demonstrates in his case studies on Zimbabwe and South Africa, these are the borders we are forced to deal with when discussing Africa and its future. Despots such as Joseph Kony, Charles Taylor, and Robert Mugabe that he discusses are not direct results of colonialism, but rather products of the failure of post-colonial

states. Botswana, Namibia, and Zambia have had relatively stable transitions to independence and have been able to avoid the genocides and violence that have plagued other African nations. Robert Mugabe, who Ndlovu-Gatsheni focuses on as both an African problem as well a symptom of Western intervention in postcolonial Africa, went from being a darling of the West in the late 1960s to an international pariah. Concerns over his rule began during the genocides of the 1980s, not as a result of land seizures in 2000. The strategic interests of Europe and the US often drive Western sanctions, but arguing that the West's interest in humanitarianism and human rights only coincides with strategic interests is too simple of an explanation. Sanctions on Mugabe and his henchman do not benefit the West or the people of Zimbabwe, yet sanctions were still placed on Mugabe.

The book ends with a discussion of various theories on how Africa can fully decolonize. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that “another world cannot be possible as long as the continent and its people are not fully decolonized and the snares of the postcolonial neocolonized world are not broken. This will require an epistemic rebellion that enables the formerly colonized people to gain self-confidence, enabling them to re-imagine another world free from Western tutelage” (263-264). However, he fails to adequately explain how Africa can break free from Western constraints. For better or worse, the world is dominated by Western initiated constraints such as the IMF and World Bank, in addition to the enduring cultural legacies of colonialism. While the rise of the BRIC countries (Brazil, India, and China) has increased South-South investments and interactions reorienting Africa towards the BRICs, however, such a development merely replaces one foreign ideology/power for another.

Paradoxically, one of the strengths of the book is also one of its greatest weaknesses. Ndlovu-Gatsheni clearly has an amazing grasp of social science theory, but the theory often disrupts the narrative and discussion in the book. He continually backtracks to explain theoretical positions in order to make his points, which often only serves to needlessly complicate the argument. Nevertheless anyone interested in the impact of colonialism, particularly on African epistemology, will benefit from his discussion of the still colonized African mind. His examples also come mainly from southern Africa, and with the diversity of Africa it is hard to buy the argument that all Africans remain colonized in the same way. Focusing on the former settler colonies of Zimbabwe and South Africa also skews the evidence as Africans living under white settler rule lived vastly different lives than Libyans under Italian rule or in Cameroon under French rule. All told, though, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa* raises interesting ideas about what it means to be African and the lingering effects of colonialism on the continent.

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