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different art histories and social agencies, a constellation of intersecting belief practices and diverse visual cultures.

Following this tact, his survey excavates connections between ancient water deities in Sierra Leone and the appearance of European mermaid imagery during the colonial age, between representations of mudfish in Yoruba iconography and the 1885 snake charmer lithograph, which has provided the basis of many modern incarnations of Mami Wata herself. This fluid approach is again put to good use in the Drewal's concluding chapter exploring contemporary artists who engage with Mami Wata. A diverse group of practitioners, including Bruce Onobrakpeya, Twins Seven Seven, and Gerald Duane Coleman, are introduced in brief descriptions of their lives and their unique working relationships with the water deity.

The staggering range of Mami Wata visual cultures introduced by "Sacred Waters" and "Mami Wata" testify to the breadth and complexity of African water deities and their accompanying devotional practices. While "Sacred Waters" is not free of organizational flaws, it presents a diverse and intricate subject with ambition and depth. "Mami Wata," by narrowing its focus to a comparably small body of artistic practices, emerges as the more accessible and compelling of the two works. Small complaints aside, Drewal has provided a great service by compiling a number of diverse perspectives that bring the full, elaborate scope of the Mami Wata phenomenon into focus.

Dan Jakubowski, *University of Florida*

**Peter Geschiere, Peter Pels, and Birgit Meyer (eds). *Readings in Modernity in Africa*. London International African Institute, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2008. ix, 226 pp.**

*Readings in Modernity in Africa* is a rousing and groundbreaking book. The book is structured in two parts with twenty five lucid chapters. The authors use a multidisciplinary approach to deal with different dilemmas of modernity in Africa. They succeed in firmly establishing the aim of the book. The authors, by putting forward core issues, both old and new, spur investigation into questions and meanings of modernity in Africa. It is even more impressive to notice an overview of literature on the key topics - modernity and modernization, and new insights in modernity in Africa. The authors, especially in the second part of the book, clearly manifest the fluidity, risk, and uncertainty in modern practices of daily life in Africa. The same practices are unfitting paradigms against the meta-narratives of modernization, a phenomenon that is claimed to more visible through field inquiry.

The twenty-five essays present new and original inquiry. Part I handles genealogies of modernity in Africa. It is subdivided into four parts, which deal with conceptual issues of modernity and try to show how these notions have changed in the African exemplar. In part I (A), the authors strive to give a grasp of the changes from the first decade of African independence to the more recent and complex era of modernity. Part 1 (B) examines how through using reflections on empirical field research that defines the social phenomena

undercuts, the standardizing notion of development. Part 1 (C) presents insights into how traditions are used as alternatives in modern society, especially in the political domain. Part 1(D) handles the themes of personhood and identity in Africa in the dilemmas between colonialism and the time of African renaissance.

Part II of *Readings in modernity in Africa* presents original ethnographic evidence of the changes that are no longer related to meta-narratives of modernization. It is further subdivided into four parts. Part II (A) analyses the fact that understanding contemporary politics in Africa deserves an inquiry into the formal constitutions and the concomitant practices of elites, belonging, citizens, and nation. Part II (B) focuses on the changing contours of African cities as new spaces of modernity, different from the conceptual notions of modernization. Part 2(C) comprises lucid essays which prove that technology exists in Africa; and in that case, technology only needs to be reinvented. This is very much in respect to ethnographic sounds and images in Africa today, as mentioned by the authors. Part II (D) focuses on faith to manifest how contemporary life in Africa is shaped, imagined and controlled. In Part II (E), the authors present ethnographic studies of how due to the fallen African elites, new forms of identities and role models emerge. The authors show that these new forms of identities unfortunately become financial new elites through the risky, informal and Machiavellian way.

The authors also did a tremendous job of providing notes and references that give opportunity for further inquiry by students, scholars, and academics focusing on contemporary Africa. The editors' introduction is quite terse making the book avid of reading. The book's illustrations add to the informative character of most of the essays.

The most striking thing this book offers is the stimuli into the study of contemporary daily life in Africa. The ethnographic essays are not simply given in detail about a single group or country but instead present a portrait of the problems encountered by people living in Africa. Elsewhere, it is striking to imagine the multifarious themes that are handled: Christianity, development, colonialism, sorcery, tradition, identity, social change, cosmopolitanism, postmodernism, and globalization. All these themes provide a lucid corpus on questions of modernity in Africa.

Ngade Ivo, *University of Ghent* and Elong Eric Eboho, *Vrije (Free) University Brussels*

**Joseph Hanlon and Teresa Smart. *Do Bicycles Equal Development in Mozambique*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: James Currey imprint Boydell and Brewer, 2008. xiv, 242 pp.**

Bicycles are not really the focus of this book. Instead, this is an effectively written discussion of Mozambique's experiences with economic change after its war ended in 1992. Hanlon and Smart draw on three decades of engagement with the detailed realities of Mozambique—everything from the practicalities of how to load a bicycle to the state of the roads—and on intricate journalistic, development sector, and government connections. In doing so, they produce not simply a narrative of reconstruction or corruption but rather a politically engaged set of questions, critiques, and proposals that build on what Mozambiquans and others know