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Kletus Muhena Likuwa

Voices from the Kavango

A Study of the Contract Labour System
in Namibia, 1925–1972

Basel Namibia Studies Series 22



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Kletus Muhena Likuwa **Voices from the Kavango** A Study of the Contract Labour System in Namibia, 1925–1972

Introduction by Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie
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Voices from the Kavango explores the contribution that the life histories and the voices of the contract labourers make to our understanding of the contract labour system in Namibia. In particular it asks: is it possible to view the migration of the Kavango labourers as a progressive step, or does the paradigm of exploitation and suppression remain the dominant one? The study highlights contract labourers engaging in a defeating activity and their disappointment with the little rewards which were non-lasting solutions to their problems. The realization of their entrapment under the contract system and the eventual frustrations led to the political mobilization for independence by SWAPO.

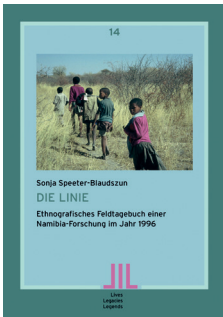
Kletus Likuwa obtained his PhD from the University of the Western Cape for the thesis which resulted in this book. He is the Deputy Director for the Multidisciplinary Research Centre (MRC) at the University of Namibia in Windhoek.

“In allowing the creative side of the oral narratives to emerge, with images and idioms utilized by the migrants themselves [...], Likuwa actually paints an entire world that includes the imaginative lives of the migrants. A fascinating constellation of labour sites and their meanings for these men comes out, and in this respect the author displays his own talent as a storyteller and historical narrator.”

Patricia Hayes

“The book covers a topic of major importance: the role of Kavango in the overall contract labor system that operated in Namibia and beyond [...] At his best, Likuwa treats his interviews both as sources of factual information and as narratives with their own constructions: not as a direct reflection of people’s experiences but as words that are used to relay a construct memory of those experiences.”

Meredith McKittrick



Sonja Speeter-Blaudszun
Die Linie
Ethnografisches Feldtagebuch einer
Namibia-Forschung im Jahr 1996

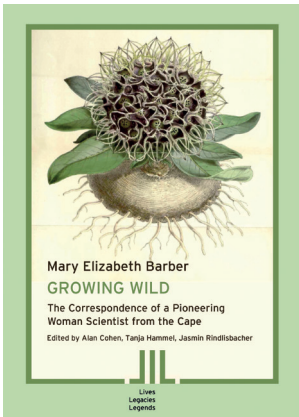
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Die Linie ist das private Tagebuch der Ethnologin Sonja Speeter-Blaudszun, das sie während ihrer Feldforschung 1996 in Namibia führte. Es wurde nicht mit der Absicht einer späteren Veröffentlichung geschrieben; vielmehr verfasste sie es als Quelle und kritische Reflexion ihrer Forschungsreise, die sie zu den Ju|'hoansi in der Nyae-Nyae-Region in der Kalahari durchführte. Insbesondere interessierte sie sich für die Expeditionen der amerikanischen Forscherfamilie Marshall. Diese Forschungsreisen waren und sind für die Ju|'hoansi wie auch für die allgemeine San-Forschung bis heute von grundsätzlicher Bedeutung.

„Mein Tagebuch ist ein Text, der auch den politisch-ethischen Zeitgeist der Ethnologie in den 1990er-Jahren und die zunehmenden Implikationen, die eine ethnologische Forschung für alle Beteiligten mit sich bringt, reflektiert. Anders als bei einem Tagebuch können wir in einer abgeschlossenen Ethnografie nicht erkennen, wie sich die täglich verändernden Beziehungen und die neuen Erfahrungen einer Ethnologin im Forschungsalltag auf die Formung und Gestaltung einer Ethnografie auswirken. Um ‚Objektivität‘ in meinen Beobachtungen zuzulassen, nutzte ich das tägliche Reflektieren im Tagebuch zum Ordnen und Strukturieren und auch als ‚Ventil‘ für meine unmittelbaren Gedanken in Namibia.“

Sonja Speeter-Blaudszun

Sonja Speeter-Blaudszun (1960–2018) promovierte 2004 an der Universität Mainz über „Die Expeditionen der Familie Marshall. Eine Untersuchung zur ethnographischen Erforschung der Nyae Nyae !Kung“. Anschliessend war sie sozialpädagogisch an einer Brennpunktschule in Hamburg tätig.



**Alan Cohen,
Tanja Hammel,
Jasmin Rindlisbacher (eds.)
Mary Elizabeth Barber
Growing Wild**

The Correspondence of a Pioneering Woman Scientist from the Cape

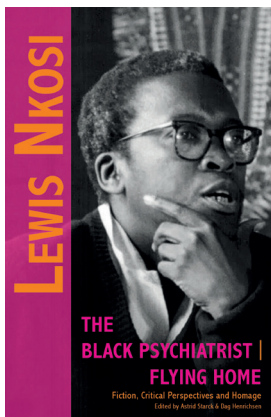
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Mary Elizabeth Barber (1818–1899), born in Britain, arrived in the Cape Colony in 1820 where she spent the rest of her life as a rolling stone, as she lived in and near Grahamstown, the diamond and gold fields, Pietermaritzburg, Malvern near Durban and on various farms in the eastern part of the Cape Colony. She has been perceived as “the most advanced woman of her time,” yet her legacy has attracted relatively little attention. She was the first woman ornithologist in South Africa, one of the first who propagated Darwin’s theory of evolution, an early archaeologist, keen botanist and interested lepidopterist. In her scientific writing, she propagated a new gender order; positioned herself as a feminist *avant la lettre* without relying on difference models, and at the same time made use of genuinely racist argumentation.

This is the first publication of her edited scientific correspondence. The letters – transcribed by Alan Cohen, who has written a number of biographical articles on Barber and her brothers – are primarily addressed to the entomologist Roland Trimen, the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London. Today, the letters are housed at the Royal Entomological Society in St Albans. This book also includes a critical introduction by historian Tanja Hammel who has published a number of articles and is about to publish a monograph on Mary Elizabeth Barber.

“[...] for in all places, and at all times, in peace and in war, botany has been one of my greatest pleasures; and often when we have been driven away from our homes, and had them burned by savages, and have had nothing to shelter us but a waggon for months together, then botany has been my sovereign remedy to drive away care. And often my two little boys would say: ‘Mamma, shall we not ask papa to have the waggon inspanned to go to another place for there are no more new wild flowers here?’”

Extract of a letter from Barber to Dr William Harvey quoted in the introduction to *Thesaurus Capensis* 1859



**Astrid Starck,
Dag Henrichsen (eds.)**
Lewis Nkosi
**The Black Psychiatrist &
Flying Home**
Fiction, Critical Perspectives
and Homage

ca. CHF 25.00 Print | ca. CHF 15.00
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This rich volume is dedicated to the astounding South African writer and literary critic Lewis Nkosi (1936–2010).

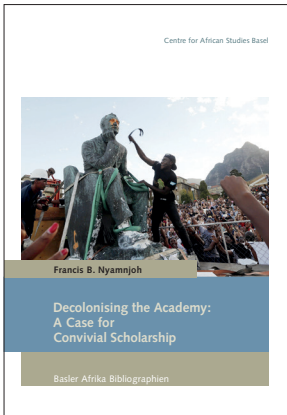
In this book, Nkosi's celebrated one-act play *The Black Psychiatrist* is published together with its unpublished sequel *Flying Home* on the satirically fictionalized inauguration of Mandela as South African president. Critical appraisals, tributes and recollections by scholars and friends reflect on the beat of his writing and life.

An ideal volume for those encountering Lewis Nkosi for the first time, and a substantial enrichment for those already devoted to his work. Edited by Astrid Starck, a literary scholar, and Dag Henrichsen, a historian.

“Much has happened to me that is worth narrating, worth celebrating, in spite of the regrets and sorrows of exile. My life began under Apartheid until I attained the age of 22 and then subsequently lived in many places and societies, in Central Africa, Britain, the United States, Poland, and during a brief sojourn, in France and, finally, in Switzerland.”

Lewis Nkosi in *Memoirs of a motherless child*

CARL SCHLETTWEIN LECTURE



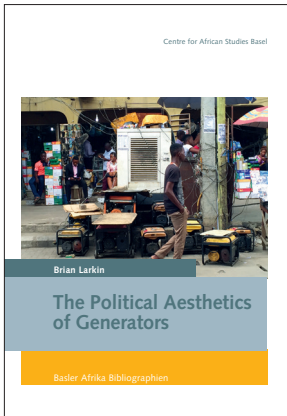
Francis B. Nyamnjoh **Decolonising the Academy: A Case for Convivial Scholarship**

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The scarcity of conviviality in universities, within and between disciplines, and among scholars suggests that the position in and production and consumption of knowledge are far from neutral, objective, and disinterested processes. They are socially and politically mediated by webs of humanity, hierarchies of power, and instances of human agency. Given the resilience of colonial education in Africa and among Africans, endogenous traditions of knowledge are barely recognised and grossly underrepresented. Conviviality in knowledge production would entail not just seeking conversations and collaboration with and across disciplines in the conventional sense but also the integration of side-stepped popular epistemologies informed by popular universes and ideas of reality. Such scholarship is predicated upon recognising and providing for incompleteness as a necessary attribute of being, from persons to disciplines and traditions of knowing, and knowledge making.

Francis B. Nyamnjoh is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town and has taught Sociology, Anthropology and Communication Studies at universities in Cameroon and Botswana. He also served as Head of Publications at CODESRIA. Nyamnjoh received numerous distinctions, most recently the ASAUK 2018 Fage & Oliver Prize for best monograph for his book *#RhodesMustFall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa* (2016). His other monographs include: *Africa's Media, Democracy and the Politics of Belonging* (2005); *Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa* (2006); *"C'est l'homme qui fait l'homme": Cul-de-Sac Ubuntu-ism in Côte d'Ivoire* (2015); *Drinking from the Cosmic Gourd: How Amos Tutuola Can Change Our Minds* (2017); *Eating and Being Eaten: Cannibalism as Food for Thought* (2018); and *The Rational Consumer: Bad for Business and Politics: Democracy at the Cross-roads of Nature and Culture* (2018).

CARL SCHLETTWEIN LECTURE



Brian Larkin **The Political Aesthetics of Generators**

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Like a living being, the generator ingests and expels. At one end of a generator, petrol pours in. At the other, electricity, smoke, fumes, and sound flood out. In Nigeria, generators emerged as a response to breakdowns in the electric grid but are now so broadly disseminated they have become formalized into a system of their own. Ubiquitous in all urban and rural areas, coming in all sizes, their sound, smell and presence is integral to what Nigeria is and how it functions. In this lecture, Brian Larkin examines generators as aesthetic objects, drawing on the older idea of *aisthesis* as a felt experience. He examines how generators shape the technologized, ambient environment of urban Nigeria – how it is one feels, hears, or smells the world one lives in – and how that environment is part of the reshaping of Nigerian urban life.

Brian Larkin is the Director of Graduate Studies and a Professor of Anthropology at Barnard College, Columbia University. He is also Co-Director of the Comparative Media Initiative at the same university and co-founder of the University Seminar on Media Theory and History. His research focuses on the ethnography and history of media in Nigeria, the introduction of media technologies and the religious, political, and cultural changes they bring about. He explores how media technologies comprise broader networked infrastructures that shape a whole range of actions from forms of political rule, to new urban spaces, to religious and cultural life. Larkin has published widely on issues of technology and breakdown, piracy and intellectual property, the global circulation of cultural forms, infrastructure and urban space, sound studies, and Nigerian film. He is the author of *Signal and Noise: Media Infrastructure and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Duke University Press, 2008) and, with Lila Abu-Lughod and Faye Ginsburg, co-editor of *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain* (University of California Press, 2002).

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