

poetry moves beyond ethnicity, Blackness and Pan-Africanism to produce a universal vision of society. Chapter four argues that suffering of Africans in the world is redemptive as Senghor explains in *Black Hosts*. And finally, in chapter five, Ngong argues that Senghor's offer of forgiveness should be interpreted as a form of resistance to exploitation and the construction of a just world order – a world order in which the West needs to acknowledge the wrongs it has committed against Africans, repent and offer restitution.

Chapter two, about witchcraft particularly, caught my attention – probably because I have written extensively about the phenomena in both my books, particularly in chapter three of *The West African Revival* which argues that the divine healing church Faith Tabernacle was so successful on the Guinea Coast during the 1920s because it mimicked local forms of religious expression, particular anti-witchcraft cults. The Christian battle against witchcraft was taken up by Ngong in this chapter as well, but in a particularly novel and inventive way in his analysis of Senghor's poetry. Ngong argues that Senghor uses this concept of witchcraft theologically as an analogy, linking religious imagery to that of political economy. Framed by the scholarship of anthropologists such as Peter Geschiere, Communion is like witchcraft in the oppression of African peoples by Euro-American society – like witchcraft which consumes human bodies – as communion is the enactment of the consumption of Christ. This has led to the suffering, consumption and death of African bodies. However, all is not lost, argues Ngong. Senghor offers a way out; his goal is to create a new world of friendship and community once again where the 'black child and the white child may walk hand in hand (p. 55)'. Senghor imagines equality of races, ethnicities and nations as eating together, an important African value, as Christians receive the Eucharist from the same chalice. This chapter, like all the others, struck me as a spectacularly inventive text that should be widely read by scholars in a multitude of disciplines.

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The Work of Repair: capacity after colonialism in the timber plantations of South Africa

by Thomas Cousins
Fordham University Press, 2023.

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Thomas Cousins' exceptional contribution – *The Work of Repair* – accounts for the social and historical topology of a timber plantation in KwaZulu-Natal.

He frames it as a site for understanding slavery, colonialism and racialised capitalism; composed of by a complex assemblage of people, machines, plants and animals. The figure of the labourer anchors this composition, positioning the work of repair as the capacity to endure the conditions within the plantation. The isiZulu term *Amandla* – loosely translatable as power, strength or capacity – captures the thick set of relations that sustain bodies, nurture moral projects and situate the capacity to act and forge a more livable world.

Empirically, the book is based on Cousins' research on a nutrition intervention from 2008 to 2010 that was implemented by Mondi South Africa to improve working conditions amongst contracted labourers in their plantations.

Divided over five chapters, his aim is to show how *amandla* brings together moments of a postcolonial scene unfolding within the timber plantation that involves the ordinary yet vital concern with life across material, ethical and biological worlds. In Chapter One, Cousins conceives of this nutrition intervention beyond the simplistic logic of either augmenting labourers' capacity to be more productive or as an extension of corporate social responsibility. Rather, repair is understood as a multiplicity of projects for fashioning a world in and through the space of the plantation by labourers who forge relations of authority and intimacy that sustain bodies and nurture moral projects enduring within this space.

Chapter Two weaves together biographical description with historical analysis, starting with an 'uncanny genealogy' with Cousins' ancestor – Johannes E.S. Henkel, born in 1871 – who helped establish the material arrangements of silviculture, labour, commodity, kinship, sexuality and food described in the book. Combined with the biographies of his main interlocutors, he frames the plantation as a topological space and site for the maintenance and reproduction of labour in post-apartheid South Africa. This topological space is constituted by a history of violent conquest and forced removals – as well as by everyday relations. Repair becomes topological as biographies intersect with the plantation as a particular kind of problem space where workers are sustained to be productive through a dietary regime.

Chapter Three extends the situation of unionisation, nutrition intervention and entrepreneurship. Cousins explores the discursive potential for studying repair through the laughter and communication associated with *umshado woku-dlala* or a 'game of marriage'. This praxiography specifies kinship as a matter of managing nutritive substances as well as establishing, contesting and reformulating grammars of intimacy, desire, norms and law.

Chapter Four is conceptually adventurous, locating repair work where nutrition is mediated: the gut. Via this biosocial anchor point Cousins produces an account of medicinal substances that circulate within the human economy of Durban that help individuals endure the conditions of plantation labour. Despite the controversy surrounding substances used in the fight against HIV/AIDS more generally, labourers pragmatically translate between traditional and modern. As a politics of the living, the capacity to act is staged through the nutritional and curative means that elicit different ethical projects and temporalities in relation to HIV/AIDS.

Chapter Five engages with the spatialisation of the plantation and forms of life that are entangled within everyday relationships, modes of composing labour, calories, policies, markets and calculations. These *plantation analytics* are constituted within a set of distinct historical and spatial referents. What Cousins calls the ‘vicinal politics of repair’ accounts for the ways in which living is made possible in the context of plantation labour within which *amandla* expresses the capacity to navigate particular histories of cartographic violence and an enlivened politics of life.

This is not a book about repair work. It is much more than that. Resisting a singular definition, the book sensitises the reader to the work of repair as the capacity to contain, to receive, to act, to know, to produce, to make. Capacity is both situated action and an engagement with the multiplicity of topological forms that bear down on the question of what it means to live in a postcolonial scene set in the context of a timber plantation. In these terms, *amandla* is that which is required in, and emerges from, the ordinary work of repair. Ultimately the concept of *amandla* points to the conditions of possibility for forging persons as ethical actors in a particular postcolonial zone of labour and extraction.

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Democracy and Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: Governance, Political Economy, and Party Politics 1999–2023

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Democracy and Nigeria’s Fourth Republic provides a comprehensive critique of Nigeria’s Fourth Republic (1999–), the longest democratic dispensation that Nigeria has enjoyed since gaining political independence in 1960. Before 1999, Nigeria was mostly governed by successive military regimes, except the first six years (1960–1966) of its independence (The First Republic), a brief return to democratic government, 1979–83 (The Second Republic) and a botched Third Republic (1993). The Fourth Republic therefore offers a longevity that creates opportunity for a more detailed assessment of the principles, practices, and consolidation of democracy in Africa’s most populous nation.