

The author therefore argues, and rightly so, that Nigeria is neither a failed state nor a developmental state, but rather an intermediate state, capable of episodic economic reforms but falling short of actually driving industrial transformation. Using Lagos State, the commercial capital of Nigeria, as an example, the author provides a rich account of the political foundations of economic diversification emanating from within the country. By way of contrast, Usman also explains the political foundations of Nigeria's failed attempt at transitioning to agro-industrialization in Kano State. These examples not only reflect the inherent contradictions in Nigeria's economic experimentation, but also offer useful insights and lessons for understanding what has worked and what has not.

In a departure from most works on economic diversification, which stop at deconstructing the causes of economic stagnation, the author concludes by offering useful recommendations for policymakers on what can be done to address the salient issues identified. These recommendations include the need to: conceptualize economic diversification as a political project of development; stabilize Nigeria's volatile balance of power; develop a shared vision for transforming the Nigerian economy; and proactively tackle market failures as a priority for a post-oil Nigeria. Her final recommendation highlights the critical need to update our mental models on the challenges of economic development.

Overall, the book is well researched and well written. It also inspires a sense of renewed hope and urgency, addressing what needs to be done to get Nigeria from where it is to where it ought to be. A must-read for students, scholars, policymakers and stakeholders interested in understanding the politics, challenges and opportunities of emerging economies and the all-important subject of economic diversification in an increasingly complex world. I strongly recommend *Economic Diversification in Nigeria* as a go-to source for an in-depth understanding of Nigeria's attempts at economic diversification, beyond the soundbites.

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Bénédicté Savoy, *Africa's Struggle for Its Art: History of a Postcolonial Defeat*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press (hb US\$29.95/£25 – 978 0 691 23473 1). 2022, vi + 240 pp.

Although largely an examination of global restitution debates unfolding from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s, *Africa's Struggle for Its Art* could very well serve as a chronicle of contemporary contestations over the fate of Africa's plundered cultural property in Western museums. These debates have surged over the last few years, in part due to the publication of the author's 2018 pathbreaking report on the issue (co-authored with Felwine Sarr). Tracing decades of largely unrealized efforts by African government and cultural leaders to secure the return of their sacred antiquities and

the more successful repressive counter-efforts by European museum elites and their allies, Savoy takes the reader on a journey to understand how today's restitution landscape is rooted in, shaped through and determined by these historical events. Through an intricate mapping of significant actors, institutions and centres of power that comprised the early postcolonial African and European cultural establishment, we learn of the wilful silencing, distortion, discrediting and relegation of individuals and organizations seeking the return of their heritage, a reaction to the unfounded anxieties of obsolescence that permeated the Western museum world during this period.

The study sheds light on the institutional cultures and practices of secrecy throughout European museums that, for decades, have formed a transnational wall of exclusionary solidarity and conservatism meant to subjugate indigenous claims to postcolonial cultural sovereignty. One of the book's significant contributions is the geographic and demographic reorientation of how we understand the history of restitution. Far from being a struggle by Africans on the continent, these early efforts were largely Eurocentric in nature, characterized by internal contestations between government departments and cultural administrators working on both sides of the aisles of morality, legality and diplomacy.

The book's primary material intervention is its apprehension of an immense array of archival sources – many of which had not been studied or available to the public until recently, such as a set of confidential papers from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Savoy places these documents in conversation with simultaneous debates on restitution taking place within disparate geographies across Europe.

Another one of the book's key contributions is its shifting of the periodization of Europe's restitution debates, dispelling the common contemporary myth that today's efforts are the first real attempts to grapple with the fate of Africa's cultural heritage. Yet the book could go further in this temporal reframing through perhaps a mention of restitution debates that both predated and followed these mid-century efforts, helping to contextualize these conversations within the *longue durée* of restitution claims. From Ethiopia's Emperor Yohannes IV's 1872 appeals to the British government for the return of the *Kwer'ata re'esu* and *Kebra Nagast* – a painting and manuscript looted from Maqdala in 1868 – to the political efforts of Bernie Grant, a British Member of Parliament, to secure the return of Benin bronzes from the British Museum and Kelvingrove in Glasgow in the 1990s, restitution struggles between Africa and Europe span at least three centuries. It would thus be productive to situate the mid-century debates examined in the book along a continuum of ongoing restitution efforts.

Contemporary discourse examining the imperial appropriation of African art tends to frame the problem and attempts to redress it within the logic of asymmetrical power relations between the global North and South, or between formerly colonized and colonial peoples, often failing to explicitly account for the centrality of racialized violence in the endurance of these embittered entanglements. While Savoy does, for example, nod to the possibility of the influence of German National Socialist-era racist thought on the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation's denial of Nigeria's restitution requests in the 1970s, there remains ample space for a nuanced discussion of the racial technologies employed during this period, which facilitated the maintenance of a global hierarchy of material dispossession.

Fears that the public disclosure of restitution debates might produce a 'culture war' (as discussed in a 1978 letter Savoy references) are evidence that the rhetoric and tactics employed to undermine restitution efforts a half-century ago do not simply remain with us but were formative in the production of today's contentious cultural property landscape, an ongoing and enduring haunting. As such, *Africa's Struggle for Its Art* is both a warning sign and a roadmap that helps clarify the mechanisms through which postcolonial defeat is reproduced across generations. While the book ostensibly examines the spectre of decades-old European restitution debates, its richness lies in its pertinence to the multiple intersecting 'crises' through which we are living and, perhaps optimistically, a parable for ways to navigate the pitfalls and failures of our forebears as we move through this current moment of institutional decolonization.

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Maher Habbob, *Nubian Proverbs (Fadijja/Mahas)*. Goleta CA: Dotawo (pb US\$21 – 978 1 68571 018 7). 2022, xiii + 146 pp.

Africans generally value their proverbs more than Westerners do. But Western scholars often take the lead in publishing collections of African proverbs. Therefore, any collection of 500 proverbs prepared by a mother-tongue speaker of an African language, well translated into English, is a noteworthy event. Happily, this book is freely downloadable, as well as for sale in print form. Habbob reports that these Nubian proverbs were chosen from his collection of 2,000 proverbs. He had previously published a collection of Nubian proverbs translated into Arabic.

This collection is notable for an additional reason: it is from a community speaking a Nilo-Saharan language that is surrounded by speakers of Arabic in southern Egypt. This facilitates comparison with Arabic proverbs and with sub-Saharan communities further south. The book is also important as, according to Habbob, many Nubian children in Egypt have a diminishing identity and competence in Nubian.

Some of the Nubian proverbs are part of broad African patterns. For example, proverbs about animals being unburdened by a prominent part of their anatomy are common across Africa, such as the Nubian 'The camel does not get tired of carrying a hump' (p. 51). Elsewhere in Africa, we find proverbs about elephants not being burdened by their tusks and cattle not being burdened by their horns. Another proverb from this collection is documented in several African countries, including Ethiopia, Tanzania, Burundi and Nigeria: 'A bitch in haste gave birth to blind puppies' (p. 77). It has been documented in only one form of Arabic (not Egyptian but Iraqi).

The collection also includes proverbs that have clear links to proverbs in Arabic and the broader Islamic world. The following is found widely in the Arabic-speaking world, from Turkey to Pakistan: 'A hand holds [only] one watermelon' (p. 90).