

transmissible between humans, albeit at a relatively low rate due to the reduced viral load, and many people may be unaware that they are even infected.

The book also tackles various theories on how the virus that causes AIDS crossed over from simian hosts to humans. Although there is no final conclusion, a number of possibilities are discussed, including the ‘cut hunter’ theory (which suggests that a hunter may have accidentally been infected while injuring themselves handling a chimpanzee carcass) and theories that point to the close contact between humans and primates in forests, where both forage for wild fruit. Fruit that has been bitten into by primates may still be collected and used by humans, according to contributors Tamara Giles-Vernick and Stephanie Rupp, thus opening up the possibility for viral transference. As humans expanded their gardens and as animals, including primates, foraged those gardens in search of maize, bananas and other fruit trees, new zones for infectious overlap were created.

How the virus then initially started spreading among humans is the theme of the next three chapters, focusing on Kinshasa, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau. Schneider, the editor, concludes the book by summarizing the main hypotheses of the various contributors and evaluating their differing viewpoints.

Anyone with an interest in the emergence and spread of HIV will benefit from reading this book. More importantly, this knowledge will greatly benefit epidemiologists as we await a possible new zoonic virus.

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Nomi Dave, *The Revolution’s Echoes, Music, Politics, and Pleasure in Guinea*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press (hb US\$89 – 978 0 226 65446 1; pb US\$30 – 978 0 226 65463 8). 2019, 195 pp.

Adrienne J. Cohen, *Infinite Repertoire: On Dance and Urban Possibility in Postsocialist Guinea*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press (hb US\$105 – 978 0 226 76284 5; pb US\$35 – 978 0 226 78102 0). 2021, 190 pp.

Nomi Dave’s *The Revolution’s Echoes* and Adrienne Cohen’s *Infinite Repertoire* seem to go hand in hand. The first book explores the relations between music and politics in Guinea between 2008 and 2013, discussing the legacy of the cultural revolution under Sékou Touré’s rule from 1958 to 1984. Similarly, Adrienne Cohen offers an in-depth analysis of dance performances in contemporary Conakry, retracing the changes dancers had to adapt to from socialist times until liberalization. Both books deal with the ambiguous dynamics between creativity and authority and highlight the crucial importance of emotions and feelings to both individual subjectivation processes and

community building. Pleasure in playing and listening to music is at the heart of Dave's book, while Cohen focuses on discipline and imagination. Both argue that art and entertainment at the grassroots level contribute to shaping power relations and thus their studies offer a lens into the complex interactions between state institutions and ordinary citizens in authoritarian systems.

The stories behind the books also share commonalities, reflecting the authors' deep embeddedness in Guinea and their practice-based methodologies. Dave had been living in Guinea as a lawyer and humanitarian worker in the 2000s before studying Mande music and conducting fieldwork from 2009 to 2017. Her analysis builds on both her experience of Guinean institutions as a refugee protection officer and her close relationship with Guinean musicians. Cohen also provides original and extensive ethnographic observations. She studied Guinean ballet for three years as part of a private troupe in Conakry in the early 2000s and then worked with migrant artists in New York City before starting her fieldwork in 2010. She focuses on two major elements of Conakry's ballet dance scene: the private ballets where she had been rehearsing and the urban ceremonies she attended as a dancer/observer. The least we can say is that participant anthropology is at the core of both approaches. Dave's and Cohen's extensive commitment to music and dance provides us with sensitive, rich and unique insights into Guinean culture, shedding light on the complex intertwining of politics and aesthetics.

Dave raises two important – and quite haunting – questions when it comes to Guinean postcolonial history: why did pride and pleasure come alongside pain and terror during Sékou Touré's era? And did the revolution ever come to an end? The first chapter is devoted to the history of national bands during the Guinean revolution. Leaning on existing literature and interviews with elderly musicians, Dave discusses the artists' agency, their creativity in reinventing traditional repertoires and, most of all, their unwavering support for Touré's authoritarian regime. She also explores the audience's feelings, especially the pleasure of self-recognition in performing the nation.

The next three chapters focus on the revolution's legacy in present times and deal with the idea of accommodation. Dave examines three different, yet similarly cautious, attitudes towards politics in diverse musical settings. The elderly musicians of the former national bands are used to meeting at La Paillotte, a bar and concert venue in Conakry, which is also a place of shared nostalgia for the cultural revolution. Resenting Guinea's loss of political and cultural prestige, they avoid taking part in contemporary disputes over Sékou Touré's legacy, which the author attributes to 'strategic guardedness' (p. 72). In Chapter 3, she explores the evolving Mande tradition of *jeliya* through the example of the Kouyate family, one of the best-known musical lineages in Guinea. Dave highlights the multiple social dimensions of praise singing, which evade a simplistic dichotomy between supporting dictators versus telling them the (unpleasant) truth. Eventually, she focuses on the neotraditional Soso scene, exemplified by the group Espoirs de Coronthie, which has attracted an audience outside Guinea. Even though these musicians present themselves as rebellious youth committed to political change, Dave shows how they in fact remain very cautious and quiet when it comes to criticizing politicians: 'the songs offer stirring critiques of the situation rather than of those who are responsible for it' (p. 114). This politics of silence was particularly conspicuous after the massacre of 28 September 2009, when unarmed citizens, demonstrating against the presidential candidacy of a military junta leader, were shot and women raped by armed forces in

the main stadium of Conakry. Conversely, in Chapter 5, Dave explores an instance of political dissent: the 2013 release of a song entitled 'Takana Clash Alpha Condé' by reggae star Takana Zion and the social unease it created: 'While the sensual effervescence of much Guinean music rests on naming, self-recognition, and the evocation of collectivity, history, place and pride, many feel that musical dissent leads towards uncertainty, anger and a loss of knowing oneself' (p. 156).

Cohen addresses similar questions, but her book insists on the transformative power of dance in contemporary Guinea. She examines how dancers and drummers have reacted to major historical trends, such as the change from socialism to capitalism or the transfer of rural practices to urban contexts. Throughout the book, she highlights the socializing role of dance for both the individual and the community. The first part explores the ambivalence of creativity in authoritarian systems. The institution of ballet was set up under Sékou Touré's rule as a nation-building tool of the state, but the power of dance largely exceeded mere ideology. This is why the ballets have survived the end of cultural nationalism. Cohen suggests that elderly directors of private troupes continue to ask for state support today – even though they know they will not get any – in order to remind young dancers of the idealized relationship between state and citizens, and more specifically artists. Moreover, both dancers and directors comply with a rather gerontocratic and patriarchal authority within the ballet, and they regard the ballet 'as a productive structuring force, training young artists to be disciplined and to take courage as they make their way toward adulthood' (p. 80). The history of ballet thus illustrates the complex balance between autonomy and authority, freedom and security, which, in Cohen's view, is also at stake in the way in which ordinary citizens experienced the change from socialism to capitalism.

In the second part of the book, Cohen explores the creativity and imagination of young dancers in *dundunba* and *sabar* ceremonies, and the vast range of emotions their performance conveys. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on *dundunba*, the most popular dance and social ceremony among ballet artists in the capital. The author analyses the evolution of *dundunba* from its rural origins to its contemporary urban versions, focusing on gender issues and interpreting the subtle modernization process some of these dances underwent. Particularly interesting is her interpretation of *gigoteau* – individual improvisational dance performed within *dundunba* ceremonies – as both a means for young dancers to cultivate individual distinction and a way of paying tribute to elders. *Dundunba* is a space where artists debate mixture and purity in dance and percussion, defining which steps are essential 'core steps' (which must be danced in their original rhythm) and which are 'passport moves' (which can be taken from one rhythm to another). This urban blending signals 'a new approach to categorizing dance that denies nationalism or ethnicity as primary categories of organizing the social order' (p. 113). Finally, Cohen discusses the social meaning of the Senegalese imported ceremony *sabar*, which has become extremely popular for wedding parties. The excess displayed in *sabar* ceremonies – be it through hypersexualized dancing, money throwing or electric amplification – points paradoxically to a shared feeling of precarity that epitomizes the neoliberal era, due to the exposure to global markets and the retreat of the state.

In the end, both books offer us a rich reflection on time, including change and continuity, historical legacies and imagined futures. They demonstrate how ordinary people articulate past, present and future, not only through words and thought, but also with their very senses and bodies. Adrienne Cohen and Nomi Dave help us

understand the shared emotions and feelings of Guinean people coping through unsettling times. They also provide fruitful explanations of the politics of silence and the cautious attitude that Guinean artists so often endorse. Finally, the two books remind us of the dire need to reconstruct the history of postcolonial Guinea, and to illuminate the disputed feelings stirred up by the revolution. In that respect, and from a historian's point of view, one may regret that the historicity of the revolution remains a blind spot in both books. The Touré era tends to be analysed as a whole, and although Guineans may remind themselves of 'the revolution' as one and the same moment, it was in fact made up of different episodes and times. Additionally, the musicians' and dancers' experiences could have been more clearly put into perspective with those of other groups, especially educated elites, who tend to be more critical of the revolution's legacy. Highlighting the diverse experiences, including intergenerational tensions, and controversial memories of the revolution could help us better understand social change before and after 1984.

Essential reading for researchers specializing in Guinea, *The Revolution's Echoes* and *Infinite Repertoire* may also enthrall anyone interested in cultural nationalism, post-socialism, urban modernity or the interaction between politics and culture in contemporary Africa, and beyond.

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Angela Lewis, *Chinese Television and Soft Power in Africa*. Abingdon and New York NY: Routledge (hb £135 – 978 1 0323 2883 6). 2024, 142 pp.

Angela Lewis explores Chinese influence in Africa through the prism of satellite television. Specifically, she analyses how StarTimes, a private pay-television company, provides programming in markets that Western companies consider unprofitable, and how it has successfully become a Chinese diplomatic instrument that reaches 30 million Africans. While a private company with a different approach from Chinese state media, it remains supported by Chinese banks and fits into China's broader foreign policy strategy. Drawing on a dataset of media publications about StarTimes from 2015 to 2020 and interviews conducted in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia, Lewis shows how public diplomacy can be 'unstable territory' shaped by struggles between vested interests within an influencing country, the realities of a target country, and the objectives of a non-state company (p. 6).

The book has six chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. Lewis begins the book by discussing the framework, which situates StarTimes as a 'hybrid' actor: a 'non-state, private company' driven by profit but nevertheless connected to the Chinese 'government through public-private-partnership (PPP) deals' (p. 4). Ultimately, the company's programming, access to television and employment