

UNICEF t-shirts. Whereas his conversion to being a soldier had come with ease, Beah's transition out of soldiering proves a more challenging road.

While in the army, Beah reveals he survived on a strict regimen of "smoking marijuana, and sniffing *brown, brown*, cocaine mixed with gun powder" and replaced sleep with war movies such as *Rambo: First Blood* and *Commando*. The aid workers whose task it is to rehabilitate the young soldiers are not equipped with positive counterparts to undo the children's potent addiction to drugs and blood. Far from thanking their rescuers, Beah and his fellow soldiers lash out, struggling to overcome the combination of withdrawal and post-traumatic shock. Nevertheless, Beah eventually prevails over his nightmarish past to become a living example of his own words: "children have the resilience to outlive their sufferings, if given a chance."

Through his autobiographical account, Beah presents an alarmingly close view of a war that, for many of us, was lost in the myriad of international conflicts that get buried inside the fold of our daily newspapers. His unusual coming-of-age story grapples with questions of war, children, and the relationship between them with an honesty that is both brutal and inspiring. Through his story, Beah makes sense of the senseless and humanizes the inhumane with surprising grace, reminding readers of the power of social justice literature. More than one child's therapeutic exercise, *A Long Way Gone* gives voice to hundreds of thousands of children who cannot speak or have simply never been asked. Thus Beah transitions from victim, to violator, and finally to advocate, living proof of the complex yet powerful place of children in war.



Gloria Chuku

Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960

Routledge, 2005

320 pages

\$90

Reviewed by Saheed Aderinto

Gloria Chuku's *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria* hinges on the premise that although colonialism reconfigured gender relations among the Igbo in an unfavorable manner, the creative ingenuity of women, as they adapted to these changes, allowed them to occupy an indispensable position in the economic transformation in southeastern Nigeria. In other words, instead of following the convention of chronicling how and why women were allowed only to play second fiddle in the colonial economy, Chuku extends the state of knowledge by positing that: "More than any other social groups in the region, Igbo women had not only demonstrated their receptivity to new opportunities but had also contributed most to the sustenance of the colonial export and the domestic economy of southeastern Nigeria." This argument, as unique as it is, does not fully describe the vital contributions of Chuku's work to the limited body of scholarship on women's and gender studies in Africa, especially in the area of economic history.

African historians have seriously neglected the changing role of women, to the extent that few book-length works exist on the economic history of women, especially during the colonial period. Generally, women's economic activities have been treated as part of a larger historical study of women.

Of the eight chapters in this book, the first two provide background to the study by looking at the Igbo region before the 19th century and the role of women in its economy. Chapters three to six examine women in various economic activities and ventures, such as agriculture, local industries, trade, and craft. The rest of the book discusses the place of women in resistance movements and offers a historical and comparative analysis of their economic role. Although Chuku uses gender and economic history as analytical frameworks, the book is also well grounded in the political and social history of colonial Nigeria. Obviously, Nigerian history during the colonial period cannot be done properly without a good working knowledge of political and administrative history. Chuku does not discuss Igbo women's economic history as a monolithic historical experience but weaves it into the broader historical developments of the period. The bibliography and literature review establishes the author's knowledge of the large and growing body of works on this aspect of African history. Also, she presents a large body of archival and oral sources, which testify to the originality and thoroughness of the research. The book is thus a good addition to the list of excellent titles published by Routledge's African studies series.

It is conventional to begin any research on Nigeria's history during the colonial period by presenting the precolonial background. In the case of *Igbo Women*, this common trend is justified by the irrefutable position that colonialism reconfigured the pattern of gender relations among Africans. The overt and covert policies of colonial masters and missionaries paved the way for new forms of social, political, and economic order. Following this convention, Chuku takes us into the history of women and gender relations in Igboland before the advent of colonialism in order to show the nature and extent of changes that colonialism brought. Before colonization, Igbo women were actively involved in all economic spheres. Although women among some Nigerian groups did not cultivate, Igbo women were active cultivators. Also, contrary to the common notion that Igbo women did not cultivate yam, Chuku shows that Igbo women in some parts of *Ndi-Olugbo* zone grew yam. Moreover, in precolonial times, women had their own land, separate from their husbands. They determined how and when to use the proceeds accrued from their farming and processing activities. Igbo women were actively involved in all the phases of palm oil and kernel production during the period of the so-called "legitimate" commerce. Division of labor was also practiced: while men cut the palm fruit and pounded the fruits, women and children carried the branches to the processing centers to process and crack the kernels.

The integration of precolonial economies into the vortex of colonial domination and expropriation did not lead to the death of women's agricultural activities. Based on the significant position the women played as farmers and food processors, Chuku suggests that, "women held their families' bowls or stomachs." Their activities also extended to the areas of salt production, pottery, and textile industries. The fact that these economic activities were carried out exclusively by women allowed them to effectively register their significance and indispensability.

What is obvious from the data presented by Chuku is that Igbo women at various times had to resist and adjust to the changes unleashed by colonialism. In adjusting, they devised new ways of making themselves relevant in the wake of oppression. The story of the discriminatory practices of the colonial government in the implementation of agricultural policies is important in this respect. With colonialism, men and boys were trained to use new agricultural implements and were allowed to take over the production of palm oil and kernel from women, who had monopolized this activity in precolonial times. Colonial policies pushed men into the palm product export industry while women took over the production of food crops from men. The forceful conscription of men to road and railway construction and in the mines, coupled with urbanization and rural-urban migration, also removed a large number of men from the rural areas, leaving the women with the task of food production. This development contributed significantly to the repositioning of women's economic energies from colonial times onwards.

Urbanization and the monetization of the economy also constituted a serious blow to the role and status of women. Colonial urban centers were designed primarily to maintain a large pool of competitively cheap male labor. Women were not in any way prepared to partake in the new opportunities that colonial capitalism brought. Discrimination was not unnoticed as women tried to contest the advantages men held economically. The masculinization of colonial urban centers extended to the establishment of township markets, as seen in the case of Onitsha modern market. How men monopolized international trade and pushed women to the less profitable domestic and petty trade is an intriguing story. According to Chuku, the history of masculine-domination of Igbo market is not cultural but a development that was precipitated by colonial economic and political policies. The profiles of some Igbo middlewomen and merchants provided in the book establish how inventive these women had to be. They managed to break through male-dominated spaces in spite of the threats posed by patriarchy.

How did women react to the numerous unpalatable policies of colonial rule and the institution of patriarchy? Aside from the popular Aba Women's War of 1929, there are other less known albeit important cases of Igbo women's resistance to colonial domination. Chuku builds on the existing body of literature on women's resistance by itemizing and discussing the less known episodes, as well as the instruments and strategies adopted. She discusses the various issues and circumstances at stake in each of the cases. A deduction that can be made about resistance to colonial rule is that women were not hapless when circumstances that threatened their survival emerged.

Undeniably, Chuku offers a well-researched study of Igbo women's economic history. Her book charts a new course in African women's economic history and is a welcome addition to the presently limited scholarship on Nigerian women's economic history.



María DeGuzmán

Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-Whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire

University of Minnesota Press, 2005

372 pages

\$25

Reviewed by Anna Stewart-Kerr

María DeGuzmán's *Spain's Long Shadow* quickly establishes itself as a critical text in whiteness studies, here interpolated by a third term in what is conventionally a black-white binary. That term, as the book's title suggests, is the "off-white" Spaniard. While multiple theorists in the last decade have sought to deconstruct whiteness and its supposed black-white binary in America—with arguments about the black as a convenient Other to white "individuality" (Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*, 1992), white trash theory (Wray and Newitz's *White Trash*, 1997), ethnic groups "turned" white (Jacobson's *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 1999 and Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White*, 1995), and the fundamentals of class and economic stratification (Roediger's *Wages of Whiteness*, 1999, and Michael's *The Trouble with Diversity*, 2006), to name a few—DeGuzmán is the first to extend the conversation to include Spain and competing imperial ambitions in the New World, thus offering an innovation within this critical field. What she ultimately, and successfully, accomplishes is not so much a contemporary deconstruction of racially-mediated consciousness as a carefully researched history of developing Anglo-American identity, positioning the Spaniard as a constructed, influential Other that scripted the Anglo-American role within the Americas and came to operate as a racial and moral category of negative difference. As DeGuzmán explains in the introduction:

The fundamental claim of this book is that the construction of Anglo-American identity as "American" has been dependent on figures of Spain. Figures of Spain have been central to the dominant fictions of "American" exceptionalism, revolution, manifest destiny, and birth/rebirth; to Anglo-America's articulation of its empire as antiempire (the "good" empire that is not one); and to its fears of racial contamination and hybridity.

DeGuzmán's work also intersects with America(s) studies in terms of positionality: that is, she claims that important America(s) work must not only look to the immediate hemisphere, existing along the North-South axis, but the imperial powers from the Old World that largely constituted Anglo-American identity in the New World as well (the East-West axis). Her reading of nationalistic identity formation, then, becomes a spatial, geographic model that attempts to "move" in all directions. Locating much of her theoretical support in postcolonial studies and psychoanalytic theory, DeGuzmán convincingly claims that Spain functions as both totem and alter ego/imago for Anglo-America—an internalized "mirror image" of identity and disavowal. In framing this methodology in her introduction, DeGuzmán underscores the "double effect of the *imago*, that it elicits both identification and aggression." Anglo-American identity, she contends, depended on Spain as an "American-made shadow," an "image in the mirror experienced as external threat rather than internalized reassurance." Ironically, though, such an emerging Anglo-American identity ultimately appropriated (and implicitly identified with) many of