

of purpose among all stakeholders, NGOs, various government departments, research institutions, the private sector, farm organisations, as well as farm workers is considered paramount to minimizing the impact of HIV and AIDS on the agrarian sector.

The final chapter of the book, "Land Movements and the Democratization process in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Neo-Liberalism", underscores the need to recognize the importance of addressing the land question in terms of contemporary equity and historical justice. The author, Sam Moyo, argues that these are crucial parameters within which broader political reform and democratization questions must be addressed. He underscores the fact that the land occupations in Zimbabwe are located in the global quest for land, and also chronicles the FTLRP phase. He further suggests that social movements, including the land occupation movement, can provide some progressive moves in democratization and land reform. He notes that the negative feedbacks that emerge from such movements are mostly short-term against the long-term benefits of assuaging historical grievances and equitable distribution of productive resources.

The book ends with a conclusion and a way forward. The editor of the book, Medicine Masiwa, argues that in redistributing land to the black majority to achieve political stability, the government was correct. However, he is quick to point out that the method that was used to transfer the land was not the best. Because of the violence that accompanied the last phase of transferring land, significant damage was caused to the economy. As a way forward to rebuilding the shattered economy and the agricultural sector in particular, Masiwa identifies confidence building by government in its land reform and in the economy in general as the most crucial starting point. The need to strengthen and co-ordinate the institutions dealing with the land issues, consistency, transparency and sustainability are underscored as also crucial to the recovery process.

***A Nose for Money.* Francis B. Nyamnjoh. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers Ltd. 2006. [ISBN: 9966-25-427-7; Price: Kshs: 350 US\$: 5 Euros: 4**

Reviewed by Owen B. Sichone*

This is the story of the street savvy but (in school terms) poorly educated Prospere, a citizen of Mimbo-land (a sort of drunkard's haven) who manages through fate and drive and ambition (essential tools for the get-rich-or-die-trying entrepreneur) to change his life-station from beer delivery man to what Zambians would call a /prominent businessman/ with friends in high places.

There is, however, something unclean about the way Prospere becomes prosperous and the author has not spared anyone in his condemnation of the politics of the belly and penis. But maybe we should not hasten to denounce 'prosperity by any means' because it may in fact be the only way that capitalism works. Consider the following: what do we associate big name brands like Barclays Bank or Cathay Pacific with if not civilised and honest business practice? But British pirates, vandals, slavers and opium traders became the knighted owners of international banks and airline fleets, prime ministers and even archbishops - so should we really expect capitalism in Africa to be without corruption? Everyone "oils the lips" and "scratches the back" of people in high places in order to get at Nigerian oil, Zambian copper or Russian gas. Lest we forget, George Bush II has an awful lot of Texan tribesmen in his cabinet. It would seem therefore that our Prospere's fault is not his dishonesty, tribalism or selfishness but rather that he lacks the IQ to make the best productive and long term in-

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vestments that can launder the smell of corruption off his ill-gotten wealth.

Prosper is by no means a self-made man, but that is not the problem - not even Bill Gates can make such a claim. The main difference between Mimboland (and by extension African) capitalists and their European, Chinese or Malaysian counterparts is that even after becoming "better customer" to all the corrupt state officials who hand out lucrative contracts to the best giver, he like Fanon noted a long time ago, apes (literally) the French and thus produces nothing for his country. It is not only the */sapeurs/* that think Paris is heaven and that silk is to be worshipped at the altar of elegance and ambiances. It is Mobutism après Mobutu and it has become too authentic for our health. Conspicuous consumption that is not backed by productive industry soon turns into a form of social and economic tuberculosis.

Corruption like Ayi Kwei Armah demonstrated, again, quite a long while ago now, eats up everything and the decadent economy that revolves around the thighs and buttocks of juicy Moniques and Charlottes has an element of self-destruction about it and will certainly not be able to compete against the rest of the world or even allow Mimboland citizens to 'expect power always' (with apologies to NEPA) when they press the electric switch on the wall, or clean water when they turn on the taps.

In the book Mimboland heads the list of the most corrupt countries in the world, and probably performs equally impressively on the infant mortality, illiteracy, malnutrition and low life expectancy charts. The business of Mimboland government appears to be inflicting anxiety, disease and dictatorship on its population while using vast amounts of money bribing opinion makers to prevent disgruntled elements from tarnishing the good name and image of the republic. I know a man from Ghana who likes visiting Zimbabwe – enough said.

A Nose for Money is heir to a long line of witty satires on social life, especially out of Cameroon, and although most of Nyamnjoh's predecessors wrote in French, there is a certain affinity with Mongo Beti and Ferdinand Oyono which marks this book as out of Cameroon and not Kenya (where it was published) or Nigeria. Nyamnjoh's book can be read at different levels and works perfectly for both young readers who may encounter it (as many of us first came across Chinua Achebe or Wole Soyinka) as a secondary school set book or for more advanced observers of life, death and madness in postcolonial African politics.

It is good that Africans can still laugh to keep from crying but it is also a worry that we have still not managed to come to grips with the Man of the People who has so far managed to monopolise political power in most countries. Is there always going to be one more bridge to cross? Indeed if you read this together with Ngugi's opus magnum */The Wizard of the Crow/*, you will not know whether to laugh or to cry. The question is, as the proverbial Tanzanian peasant once asked: when is this independence going to end?