through rumour, anecdote, and the reinterpretation of unfamiliar European medical techniques and technologies, deploying a wealth of oral and archival material. The impact of his arguments fades somewhat when the emphasis shifts towards 1930s discourse on race, education and development. The chapter which considers the debate between Gilks and Paterson, on the one hand, and Gordon, Vint and Trowell, on the other, seems to this reader the least convincing, with the ideological content of the debates removed from the context of the medical practice of the individuals concerned, the colonial science they espoused (in all its intimate linkages with veterinary practice, conservation biology, anthropology and ecology), and the texture of European–African relations which animates the bulk of Olumwullah's argument elsewhere.

In this respect, the arguments put forward do not always keep step with the increasing complexity of the colonial enterprise. Thus, while we see insensitive and unconsultative state policies on public health in the wake of World War One resulting in a flight into the arms of missionary medical care (unsurprisingly misinterpreted by missionaries as an evangelical success rather than a local survival strategy with ideological and political ramifications for 'Nyoleness), the contribution of missionaries to the evolution of public health education and rural medical care and training remain uncommented on. While the interpenetration and interaction of development and death, accompanying 'Nyole attempts to accommodate rupture within continuity and resulting in the contestation of the authority of biomedicine in colonial Kenya, are all rendered convincingly, the tensions between 'Nyole Christians, educated and trained African medical workers, and peasant intellectuals are not fully brought to the fore.

Our reading of this text is unnecessarily complicated by the omission of a glossary, compounded by a cursory and incomplete index. That some of the theoretical distinctions employed threaten to become distractions can be seen from the relegation of substantial portions of the theoretical exposition to footnotes to the first three, largely conceptual chapters, dealing with health and healing, AbaNyole worldviews, and 'Nyole cosmologies. A series of maps would also have been a useful addition to what is a dense, complex and intriguing work.

JOHN MANTON
University of Oxford


Clive Glaser's book on successive generations of youth gangs in Soweto makes it clear that South African society witnessed many 'lost generations' before the phrase gained currency in the early 1990s. The 'lost generation' of the 1990s refers to activist youth whose school careers were interrupted by protests and boycotts in the context of a general confrontation with the apartheid state. Failing that struggle credentials alone did not equip them sufficiently to benefit from the new opportunities, some of these former activists turned to various other strategies. They were not obsessed with wresting political power from the apartheid state but to more immediate strategies of survival. While some of the more adventurous preyed on whites in downtown Johannesburg, most gangs lived on fleecing fellow blacks: waylaying workers returning home with their Friday pay-packets, picking pockets in trains, robbing children who were sent for groceries, collecting extortion money from township businesses. They were not obsessed with wresting political power from the apartheid state but to more immediate strategies of survival, securing their 'rights' over the girls in their own territory, harassing school-going youth and fighting off competing gangs. The gangs provided young men with companionship and with a sense of masculinity and power in a society where black people generally featured as powerless subjects. Hounded by police, condemned by the pass laws to a life in the shadows, and unable to find legal employment, substantial numbers of unemployed youth turned to stylish clothes and flashy cars. Subsequent generations of gangs, whose members grew up in the relative isolation of Soweto, were less exposed to such cosmopolitan influences and became in a way more 'Africanised'. Apart from the changes over time, Glaser distinguishes three different types of formations: the 'big shot' gangs, the 'small time' criminal gangs and the non-criminal street-corner networks.

The imagery of American movies became fundamental to the subculture of the tsotsi—a term of uncertain origins. Glaser suggests that one possible origin is in the American gangland slang word 'zoot-suits', used to describe the narrow-bottomed trousers that became popular among urban African youth in the 1940s. But he thinks it more plausible that the word derives from the South Sotho word ho tsotsa, which means 'to sharpen', referring to the shape of the trousers. Tsotsi were scornful of youth who took school seriously. Glaser underlines that opting for gang membership did not necessarily always happen because of a lack of other choices. Faced with a dreary school routine or poorly paid casual work, gang life could seem much more adventurous, exciting and rewarding.

While ethnicity was rarely a feature in the formation of urban township gangs, it was an important factor in mobilising protest against white gangs. Some of the almost homogeneous Sotho-speaking areas of Soweto such as Naledi, Moletsane and Mapetla were never penetrated by gangs because they were dominated by a powerful Sotho ethnic association known as the 'Russians'. These older men, patrolling the streets in large numbers, were reputed to take fierce reprisals in response to tsotsi harassment. In the 1970s, the makgotla, tribunals run by adults who attempted to discipline unruly youth by public
chapters of the book that cover the twentieth century. Giliomee also argues that 1948 should not be seen as such a definitive shift in racial policy, pointing out that "an elaborate system of racial segregation was in place by the 1920s, and indeed that it went back as far as the 1890s (pp. xvii, 290–296, 301–314). He further challenges the orthodox view of the 1948 election victory, contending that it was not the result of an upsurge of mass nationalist sentiments after the 1938 Great Trek centenary and the formulation of apartheid ideology, but rather that "the crucial turning point was the Afrikaner nationalists' outrage over the country being taken into the World War on a split vote, confirming in their eyes South Africa's subordination to British interests, and the disruption brought about by the war effort" (p. 446). In The Afrikaners Giliomee also seeks to redress some of the imbalances in the existing historiography of South Africa by focusing on previously neglected areas. The three areas he identifies as needing further attention are "the importance of religion as a social-political force' (pp. xvi, 454–464), the role of women in Afrikaner nationalism and proto-nationalism (pp. xvi–xvii, 231 f., 256, 334, 375 f.), and "the interrelationship between language and nationalism" (pp. xvi, 215–219, 223 ff., 361–369, 376 ff. and 401 f.).

Giliomee writes in the introduction to his book that it "highlights the divided nature of the dominant white group, the British–Afrikaner rivalry for status and economic power' (p. xv), yet he does much more than that. He also reveals the divisions within Afrikanerdom, the degree of variation between Afrikaners. Giliomee avoids stereotypes, and his analysis is subtle and incisive, revealing the complexities of South African history and ambiguities of Afrikaner identity. As Giliomee reminds his reader in the introduction: 'The Afrikaners were both a colonised people and colonisers themselves, both victims and proponents of European imperialism' (p. xiv).

For my part, I would like to have seen the inclusion of a bibliographical essay in Giliomee's book, and it seems to me that those who don't read Afrikaans might find a glossary of the Dutch and Afrikaans terms that pepper the text helpful (as indeed would be the inclusion of a detailed chronology), but these are mere quibbles. Encyclopaedic in its detail, The Afrikaners is nonetheless eminently readable and well paced for a book that runs to almost 700 pages. Accessible to both specialists and non-specialists alike, this is a book likely to become a classic work.

JO DUFFY
Department of Historical Studies
University of Bristol