



# Savage Constructions: The Myth of African Savagery

*Wendy C. Hamblet*

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Savage Constructions composes a critical examination of the popular assumption that violence is an essential quality of certain ethnic or racial populations. Wendy Hamblet challenges the supposition, all too common in the West, that darker-skinned peoples are inherently violent. To challenge this myth, Savage Constructions offers a theory of subjectivity transformed by historical violence. It rethinks how African peoples, once living in simple neighborly communities more democratic and egalitarian than modern states, have come to the condition of abjection, misery, and fierce aggression, in which we find them today. This rethinking she argues that Western affluence is built upon slaughter, slavery, and colonial oppression, and suggests that prosperous nations of the West owe a great debt to the societies they trampled en route to their prosperity. This work is important because newly independent nations of Africa are a primary example of a much vaster phenomenon. Western powers continue to sack poorer, weaker countries through covert intrigue, outright war, crippling debts, and unfair global labor and trade policies. The violences continue because many Westerners still harbor metaphysical assumptions about the supremacy of white Christians over less 'civilized,' darker-skinned peoples. These assumptions depress the possibilities of ethnic minorities within the West, continue to influence foreign policy and frustrate global relations, and ensure that the overwhelming collateral damage of modern wars is color conscious. Savage Constructions will appeal to all levels of scholars and students.



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