In 1996, the sub-Saharan African country of Ruritania launched a massive waterworks improvement project, funded by the Normesian Development Bank, headquartered in Urbania, Normland, and with the guidance of Shilling & Partner, a consulting firm in Mercatoria, Normland. Far-Fetched Facts tells the story of this project, as narrated by anthropologists Edward B. Drotlevski and Samuel A. Martonosi. Their account of the Ruritanian waterworks project views the problems of development from a new perspective, focusing on technologies of inscription in the interactions of development bank, international experts, and local managers. This development project is fictionalized, of course, although based closely on author Richard Rottenburgs experiences working on and observing different development projects in the 1990s. Rottenburg uses the case of the Ruritanian waterworks project to examine issues of standardization, database building, documentation, calculation, and territory mapping. The techniques and technologies of the representational practices of documentation are crucial, Rottenburg argues, both to day-to-day management of the project and to the demonstration of the projects legitimacy. Five decades of development aid (or development cooperation, as it is now sometimes known) have yielded disappointing results. Rottenburg looks in particular at the role of the development consultant (often called upon to act as mediator between the other actors) and at the interstitial spaces where developmental cooperation actually occurs. He argues that both critics and practitioners of development often misconstrue the grounds of cooperation—which, he claims, are moral, legal, and political rather than techno-scientific or epistemological.

My Personal Review:
"Far-fetched facts" is the most important book written since Hirschman's "Development projects observed". Based on intimate knowledge of such
projects, it shows, dispassionately, why these projects are doomed to fail in their present form. Yet the book is neither pessimistic nor are its insights limited to development projects only. Its conclusions can be applied to all projects undertaken in the contemporary multicultural world. Rottenburg suggests a pragmatist solution of the present impasse. By maintaining, consciously and temporarily, one illusion of the Enlightenment - of a language that signifies the actual world and is accessible to all who want to speak it - it is possible to reach understanding that can then be translated into local vocabularies.

Apart from its important message, Richard Rottenburg's work is also a literary achievement. Using the rhetorical form of a parable, he is able to tell a story that transgresses disciplinary borders and renders interesting even the most mundane technicalities of a project. It is an accomplishment that may be difficult to imitate, but it is certainly worth admiration.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
Far-Fetched Facts: A Parable of Development Aid (Inside Technology) by Richard Rottenburg - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!