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useful addition to the volume would have been maps of the various countries and regions under discussion. When attempting an understanding of historical processes that have spatial dimensions, such aids can be most informative.

References Cited:

Scott, James.

1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa, edited by John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (1999), xi, 318 pp.

Reviewed by Edgar V. Winans, Department of Anthropology, University of Washington.

In a preface to this volume of essays, the editors remind us of the lively debate about the concept of civil society that has animated some quarters of the intellectual landscape over the past decade and a half. This has been not simply a discussion in the pages of scholarly journals. It engaged many activist intellectuals, especially in the last days of Soviet control over its empire. The question has been not simply of the existence of civil society. There is also discussion of the relevance of civil society to certain forms of state. Some authors have reiterated the long-standing Western view that state power must be balanced by a moral understanding that is embodied in civil institutions. These cannot be mere extensions of a state bureaucratic order, but are voluntary social formations arising out of bonds of common interest and belief. This is the essence of liberal democracy, the very foundations of the liberal state in such a view.

This discussion extends beyond the question of the Soviet Union to consider the post-colonial world more broadly. It is argued by some that Western colonialism, forged in the same timeframe as the liberal state itself, precludes the emergence of the liberal state in its colonial dependencies. These authors maintain that civil society is a consequence of the particularities of Western history and thus has been rendered untenable by the forms of authoritarian centralization practiced in the colonial world. These commentators have therefore found disorder and civil war in the post-colonial world to be a product of the imperfect nature of the successor states. It was in this context that the workshop that gave rise to this volume was convened at the University of Chicago.

Within the rubric of a workshop convened under the Committee on African and African-American Studies at the University of Chicago, the Comaroffs and a group of young colleagues, some still graduate students in 1996 when the discussions began, worked on these issues from the particularity of their individual field experience in a range of African locations. They hailed from several of the social sciences, and brought quite different sorts of understandings to the project. This volume offers closely argued analyses from closely observed circumstances in a number of African countries, mostly Anglophone, but including also Francophone nations. It profits from the differing perspectives the various authors bring from their several disciplines.

In the introduction, the Comaroffs note that while Liberal thought has theorized a distinction between the state and civil society from the time of the Scottish Enlightenment, Jurgen Habermas and his followers gave a new dimension to the distinction through the notion of "communicative action", an idea given form in an era of globalization and the pervasive nature of the media. It is not only through the media that the State seeks to mold its citizens, but may it be also within the media that its critics seek to hold the State accountable and maintain the social values upon which the State forms its policies? Despite the power of these distinctions, there remain serious reservations that the whole mode of thought is Eurocentric and misleading if applied in non-Western contexts.

If the liberal state in Africa is simply an export of Western colonialism that lacks the pluralistic forms of civil society that check its power in the West, then the question arises whether associational forms exist outside the Western tradition which can fulfill this role. The initial formulation does not contemplate this possibility and could be seen as simply an imperialist mode of thought justifying Western action (or inaction) in the global economy.

In the introductory essay by John and Jean Comaroff, and in the nine cases explored by their collaborators,

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the authors offer reflections on central ideas within liberalism as well as very particular demonstrations of why Africa is highly relevant to contemporary debate on the nature of social relations where transnational corporations, the global market and media power challenge both the state and the voluntary associations of the West.

The introduction by the Comaroffs leads us through a broad range of philosophical and political writings in which one finds both the utopian ideals and the awkward contradictions that have accompanied colonialism, and that have been the basis for harsh criticisms of post-colonial state forms. For a reader only broadly familiar with the literature on these philosophical issues, the essay provides an excellent review and critique.

The introduction is followed by a penetrating discussion of "Imperial Paris" by Gary Wilder which lays bare the difficulties of the distinction between citizen and subject in the French African territories, the political privileges of *évolués*, and the permanent disabilities of colonial subjects. For the sizable number of overseas African and Caribbean residents of Paris between the wars these contradictions were of a different order than those experienced by African students at Oxford, or merchants and professionals resident in London. The conception of the *cité* in French thought is of the freedom to participate in the political community, not the freedom from government constraint that the English tradition imagines. This allowed the colonials to participate in French politics in a self-identified array of associations which could be expected to comment and advocate from their particular interests in a form that became important in creating political institutions in Francophone Africa as well as in Paris. This notion also broadens our idea of the nature of the state/civil society relation.

Elizabeth Garland revisits society and state in the Kalahari in an essay which takes us several steps beyond the well-known literature of the "Bushman" as represented in the books and films familiar to recent generations of students. The perpetuation of the "Bushman" as our "primitive contemporary" has generated a host of interventions on behalf of this imaginary of early social life. She argues that the people of the Kalahari must somehow survive not only the rigors of the natural environment, but also those of NGOs and governments animated by such conceptions.

The complex political path of Uganda is the subject of an essay by Mikael Karlstrom who does not flinch at the empirical maze created by the crosscutting power of clan heads and county chiefs, ancient kingdoms and a landed gentry that resulted from British policies in the Protectorate. He argues that the power of kinship to generate large associations for political action, and the force of sentiments surrounding traditional political affiliations to kings and princes form a base on which people strive for survival and success in terms which include personal achievement as well, and which offer the potential for a democratic order in the classic terms of civil society/state relations.

Reeling from the multiplicity of kinship affiliations and class distinctions based on wealth in contemporary Uganda, we crash headlong into William Bissell's representation of the dilemmas of British administrators caught in the contradictions of democratic rhetoric and bureaucratic authority embodied in the Zanzibar Protectorate. The long conflict over the use of open space at Mnazi Mmoja on the outskirts of "Stone Town" provides an historical thread for the tracing of power whatever the theoretical constructions of state and civil society might imply.

Mariane Ferme then leads us into the maze of secrecy that is so crucial to all aspects of power in Sierra Leone where the peculiar public display of secret knowledge creates groups of common interest and also destroys them. This is a process that seems to render any distinction between state and civil society meaningless, yet ensures a highly public dialogue on all exercise of power. That civil war has become the constant in this tormented nation does not lessen her analyses, especially in light of the interventions from neighboring nations and international diamond dealers.

Deborah Durham follows with a discussion of contemporary Botswana. Although much of her detailed ethnographic data concern a town occupied by Herero displaced from Southwest Africa in 1904, she argues that the principle dynamic in the politics of Botswana is not ethnic, but rather the conflict between traditional privilege and contemporary equality and opportunity. This conflict between old traditions of chiefly privilege and contemporary notions of democratic personal achievement is played out in every arena of Botswana national life. These competing visions don't preclude the possibility of ethnic competition and conflict, but mostly override it, and offer a form of civil society which acts as a check on an historically constituted conception of kingly power as embodied in the traditional Tswana kingdoms.

In an essay that has relevance for North African nations more broadly, Adeline Masquelier explores a conflict between Muslim sects within Niger and considers the significance of competing visions of the moral order within Islam. These competing visions reveal the lack of consensus that may cause civil society to speak to State institutions in a babel of conflicting claims. If civil society can moderate and regulate the claims and ambitions of the state through its moral consensus, we must also ask if the state can moderate the demands of competing moral visions among its citizens. Can there be a basis for state legitimacy when factions claim exclusive avenues to moral authority?

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In what seems at first a great jump we are introduced to hairstyles in Tanzania in the early 1990's. Amy Stambach contemplates the war of words on the editorial pages of Tanzanian papers that made hair curling among young women a nationalist issue. This was a discussion not just of the costs to the economy of imported curling lotions and implements. It was also a discussion of consumerism, of "white aesthetics" and their debilitating effects, and finally, of the moral basis of society. Individual morality, and perhaps especially, the morality of young females and soon-to-be mothers, can be the key metaphor for the relation between citizen and state. We are reminded of "Mother India", "La Belle France", "Lady Liberty", and all those other images of the strength of women as the warrant of the health of the state.

How crucial this public morality is to the health of the nation is driven home in Andrew Apter's tracing of the historical process of decline in the Nigerian economy and concomitant decline in public trust, in political probity, and in the processes of governance in Nigeria. In a sort of chicken and the egg conundrum, Apter traces the falling prices of oil and the collapsing trustworthiness and transparency of political processes through the rise in criminality of a sort Nigerians call "the 419". This is the section of the Nigerian criminal code that deals with fraud, forgery, impersonation and a host of scams. One is reminded of the hollow mockery of capitalism that followed the collapse of state socialism in the Soviet Union. One is carried towards the conclusion that without a moral consensus there is no state responsibility. Is it also the case that without state responsibility, there is no civil order?

One is tempted to conclude that the focus on State-Civil Society relations is misplaced if it turns on forms of association. One should rather concern oneself with the content of relations. The ideal of the liberal state may carry a heavy baggage of historically specific forms that were forged in the particularities of the West, but these forms are separate from the content of the ideas. In the post-colonial era of global markets and global media these historically situated institutions may not be the vessels of liberal democratic relations among citizens in relation to vast transnational corporations and to states whose powers are visibly limited. Yet it is clearly too early in the game to write off the liberal state as a dead form. The post-colonial world is yet aborning, and the outcome of the processes underway is far from clear. Perhaps what one might say is that this book is good for thinking about these processes and is a useful rebuke to those politicians who consider Africa irrelevant in the geopolitical landscape.

Nature and Culture in the Andes, by Daniel W. Gade. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press (1999), xiv, 287 pp.

Reviewed by Anthony Bebbington, Department of Geography, University of Colorado at Boulder.

This is an intriguing book: partly theoretical, partly methodological, often personal and largely empirical it takes the reader through one geographer's struggle to understand a region. The geographer is Dan Gade, the region the Andes. Gade has worked in the Andes for 35 years now, making him one of the academies' most senior and experienced Andeanist geographers. On the basis of that experience, Gade uses this book to lay out a series of arguments that convey his feelings on how cultural geography and landscape interpretation ought to be practiced; and, by implication, how we ought understand the relationships between nature and culture in the Andes.

To make his arguments Gade combines two conceptual/methodological chapters and a conclusion with seven more substantive chapters discussing particular problems of landscape and cultural ecological interpretation in the Andes. The topics of these chapters are quite varied. The problems they address range from the momentous (have the Andean highlands been deforested or are they natural grasslands) to the more arcane (how do rats, people and environment interact to produce the urban landscape of Guayaquil, Ecuador; why do Andean people not milk llamas and alpacas). Whether treating "big" or apparently "minor" questions, Gade consistently uses his topic to argue that in any interpretation of Andean landscapes, nature and culture cannot be separated. This unity of nature/culture he calls the culture/nature gestalt, a term chosen "to communicate a mutually interactive skein of human and nonhuman components rather than opposing polarities or separate entities" (p. 5). Seen through this gestalt, most ecological formations must be understood as culturally transformed or modified, and social formations have to be understood as mediated through ecological processes. Understanding this skein of relationships, Gade argues, requires a mix of