

deKlerk can hardly be wished away as some obscure writer. One becomes acutely conscious of these omissions and lack of sensitivity when one compares February's study with Stephen Grey's *History of Southern Africa Literature*, which deals much with the same South African obsessions.

I always get suspicious when the author dogmatically argues that only "coloureds" can interpret and meaningfully write about the "coloured" experience, especially when the author goes further and asserts that some "coloured" authors have duped themselves (especially Adam Small) while February alone, and some of his ideological cronies, possess a superior "consciousness." Arguments or insinuations like this should be backed up with proper evidence. In this study they are not.

In sum, this attempt to deal with the "coloured" stereotype in South Africa, while containing many interesting data, lacks theoretical and intellectual rigor. The author's long isolation from events in South Africa has also regrettably resulted in some stultification and ignorance of some exciting recent developments and epitomized best perhaps by some of the work published in Ravan Press's Staffrider Series.

***Rules and Processes: The Cultural Logic of Dispute in an African Context.* JOHN L. COMAROFF and SIMON ROBERTS. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. ix + 291 pp., notes, bibliography, index. \$27.50 (cloth).**

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Comaroff (an anthropologist) and Roberts (a lawyer) focus on dispute processes and the ideas that Tswana—especially the chiefdoms of the Kgatla and Barolong boo Ratshidi in which they carried out extensive field research—have about them. Their major concern is to understand "the logic of these [dispute] processes and, in particular, their location within the socio-cultural orders in which they occur" (p. 3). This they do primarily through the analysis of several cases brought to the chief's *kgotla*, the records of which were translated verbatim by an educated MoTswana.

The major comparative theoretical and substantive conclusions the authors draw from their Tswana field data are likely to provoke heated debate among legal anthropologists. The history of legal anthropology—in fact, anthropology in general, they argue—is marked by two broad, mutually exclusive "tendencies," the *rule-centered* and the *processual* paradigms, which find analogues in the "normative" versus the "interpretative," "formal" versus "substantivist" orientations in general sociology and economic anthropology, respectively.

The rule-centered paradigm is associated with Radcliffe-Brown and his intellectual descendants—notably Gluckman, Fallers, Pospisil, and Hammett—who are criticized a bit unfairly for argu-

ing that valid cross-cultural comparison *may be possible* using the linguistic, conceptual, and institutional categories of Anglo-American law for descriptive, analytical, and perhaps explanatory purposes. The processual paradigm that the authors extol is associated with the writings of Malinowski and his students, particularly Firth and Mair.

The unique advantages of the processual approach to the study of dispute processes include the avoidance of factual distortions common with the imposition on non-Western data categories of Western jurisprudence, which are the result of seeing indigenous rules a priori as "laws" that "have the capacity to determine the outcome of disputes in a straightforward fashion" (p. 14). Again, the processual approach explicitly recognizes the politics of "law," the importance of manipulative strategies, and, as Joan Vincent has pointed out, is capable of handling a whole range of theoretical frameworks, as Comaroff and Roberts's Tswana study clearly demonstrates.

In the introduction and in chapter 2 the authors discuss imaginatively the "essential features" of the sociocultural order of the two Tswana chiefdoms, identifying a set of rules—*primary*, *secondary* (not to be confused with the Hartian ones), and *tertiary*—that provide the framework for strategic negotiations and for the *dialectical* resolution of the paradox inherent in Tswana social life: "the cultural logic" of *ascription* (genealogical reckoning) and the ideology of *achievement* (utilitarian individualism). In chapter 3, perhaps the most analytically provocative one, Comaroff and Roberts examine on the basis of relevant cases the *Mekgwa le melao ya Setswana*, the body of norms that the Tswana see as ordering their daily lives and providing the language of dispute settlement. To argue against Gluckman, Fallers, and others who hold a contrary view, the authors try to show, less persuasively, that *mekgwa* (traditional usages) and *melao* ("laws" enacted by a chief in his *kgotla*) constitute an ambiguous, undifferentiated repertoire of norms.

That the authors' informants—probably "Westernized" migrant workers—never spontaneously made the distinction between *melao* and *mekgwa* or that when made the "categories are only tentatively differentiated, or have no pragmatic significance" (p. 71), may simply reflect the proverbial difficulties faced by the contemporary fieldworker in Africa and elsewhere, who may have to rely on educated or acculturated native informants for the collection of field data on indigenous thought and culture in rapidly modernizing, culturally and racially pluralistic, ex-colonial societies.

Chapter 4 takes up the procedural and institutional characteristics of Tswana dispute processes, again using a variety of cases to explain the systematic variations in the relationships between their form and content. In chapter 5 they analyze skillfully a substantive example of such dispute processes—those arising out of marriage

and negotiation of conjugal status. Chapter 6 follows with an interesting and original discussion of the case of devolution of property (notably cattle) and the definition of kinship relationships. They show that Tswana property devolution is linked primarily to the developmental cycle of the family rather than to death (p. 176 ff.).

In chapter 7, which deals with "rules and outcomes," the authors explicate more fully their arguments about Tswana normative repertoire and the ways by which they are manipulated by the Tswana in the course of disputes in accordance with their calculation of relative advantages and support base, and conclude by pointing out that a "narrowly defined, judicially oriented anthropology of law is viable at best in a relatively few, highly centralized systems" (p. 243). They accordingly insist that the argument for "perpetuating a discrete anthropology of law, if this implies the continued reification of 'the legal,' is not compelling" (p. 249). The analysis of dispute offers, as everyone agrees, important theoretical insights into other cultures.

This is certainly a brilliant book. Nevertheless, contrary to the authors' basic point, the viability of the anthropology of law may depend on how well we are able to integrate, for analytical and explanatory purposes, the contributions of both the rule-centered and processual paradigms in our effort to understand the universal historical processes of the development backwards and forwards of social and legal norms and their correlative sanctions in different cultures. In the sphere of "law," traditional methods of dispute settlement everywhere in Africa are combined with procedures that, despite their foundation on existing indigenous institutions, are nevertheless transformed as a result of the introduction of a Westernized system of courts. It is noteworthy that in response to the request of the colonial administration, Schapera (1938) compiled his influential classic *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, and that, more recently, Roberts acted as advisor on *Customary Law* to the Botswana government.

Again, everywhere in Africa the problem of legal pluralism (associated with Western imperialism and socioeconomic and political changes), of integration of courts, of unification, codification, and harmonization of rules of obligation, in short, the problem of law reform, confounds and complicates the ascertainment of truly indigenous ideas about law and other norms.

***Man Cures, God Heals: Religion and Medical Practice among the Akans of Ghana.* KOFI APPIAH-KUBI. Totowa, NJ: Allanheld Osmun & Co., 1981. xiv + 173 pp., maps, photographs, appendix, bibliography, index. \$18.95 (cloth).**

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This book had best be thought of as embody-

ing a distinct point of view on the role of public health and on the relationship of religion and medicine in traditional societies, one that includes rather than makes salient ethnographic description. The author's background in public health and in religious studies is prominently reflected in the book, giving it a certain novelty, as Appiah-Kubi is not reluctant to cite supporting passages from the New Testament, for example, or expose his concerns for public health policy in Ghana.

The ethnographic focus is on the indigenous healing practices of the Akans, first presented to the scholarly world of anthropology and psychiatry by Margaret Field over 20 years ago. The book opens with a social survey of the Akans, the dominant ethnic group in Ghana, that informs the reader of the nature of matrilineal kinship there, its social and political divisions, and the prevailing religious and philosophical ideas about the nature of individual man, society, and deity. Health is seen as a delicate balance between the individual, society, and the environment, a holistic homeostasis that can be, and is, disturbed by failure to do the right thing, or by kinship conflict, or by malevolence of an evil spirit or witch. As is usual with many traditional peoples, health is not conceived as narrowly medical, but encompasses misfortune in general, and is not restricted to an individualistic perspective, but is recognized as involving societal factors. Appiah-Kubi places much emphasis on this holistic philosophy; when he advocates certain policy considerations for public health, he relates these back to the opening description of the world view of the Akan.

This initial survey is followed by two chapters that describe in detail the spirit-possession beliefs and practices of the Akan, and the role of the priest-healer, a term the author uses to cover the full range of traditional Akan healers. He discusses the role of these people in the context of the cult or shrine in which they operate. These first three chapters carry the main body of ethnographic information. The succeeding four chapters are written from a more polemical point of view. Appiah-Kubi is very much concerned with the interaction of traditional Akan healing practices and the role of Western technological medicine. This theme has received previous treatment in Ghana by Twumasi (1975), *Medical Systems in Ghana*, but it is presented in more drastic terms in the present book. Appiah-Kubi advocates more conscious integration of the two health systems and more deliberate effort on the part of Western scientific medicine to accommodate to the holistic viewpoint of traditional peoples.

It is perhaps for this reason that a chapter is devoted to the role of faith healing and the emergence of indigenous African Christian churches in Ghana. This is followed by a chapter on the relationship between the church and medical systems. In these chapters the author's own religious background is made explicit as he turns to social advocacy absent in more conservative treatises