Finally, Ong investigates the interplay between Malaysian (Islamic) ideology and the image of women generated by their employment in industrial free-trade zones of Malaysia.

These articles reflect both the strengths of the interpretive approach and many of its weaknesses (see Keesing, "Anthropology as Interpretive Quest, *Current Anthropology* 1987). There are two themes at work here: (1) ideology as causal agent in gender "attribution" (influenced by Lévi-Strauss and Ortner) and (2) ideology as reflections of economic and political causal factors (Marxist feminism). The authors often mix these causal agents without attempting to grapple with the issue of what is logically prior. Many articles uncritically identify kinship practices as the source for ideological constructs (Boon, Kuipers, Valeri, Hoskins, Rogers). Valeri explicitly relates Huaulu gender constructs to alliance theory, but ends up explaining it by reference to the "deep structure" of a universal culture/nature dichotomy. Others take a functional approach, such as Keeler's argument that female lack of potency allows them to "get jobs done." There are also some disturbing methodological questions here. Attempts to interpret aspects of the "other" make them sound suspiciously like "us." For example, *their* "potency" (p. 43) sounds like *our* "charisma" and Keeler's status-related analysis of speech pattern usage (p. 133) reminds one of boundary marking with "the Queen's English." Further, although many contributors recognize alternative constructions of gender categories within the same culture, the male voice is habitually the authoritative informant, as with Valeri's analysis of taboos with their source in male feelings, perceptions and reactions (pp. 260-261).

Nevertheless, the book is an excellent resource. The articles should stimulate much useful debate in upper-level gender or regional ethnography courses. It should also initiate many interesting lines of future research.

Ethnography and the Historical Imagination
John and Jean Comaroff
Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992. xiv + 337 pp. $55.00 (cloth), $18.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Joseph R. Manyoni
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This captivatingly provocative book falls firmly into the current genre of critical ethnographic and methodological literature in anthropology. *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* is a *tour de force* of the ethnographic enterprise and attempts to locate ethnography squarely within the boundaries of the broader historical contexts which have shaped the discipline of anthropology in all its manifestations. It evokes not only the intellectual climate that spawned ethnographic interest in "native cultures," but also raises some fundamental questions of epistemology in the construction and presentation of the so-called "savage societies" to Western readers.

The authors depict the current state of anthropology as one riddled with ambivalence towards its enterprise and its "mode of inquiry that appears, by turns, uniquely revelatory and irredeemably ethnocentric" (p. 7). They concur with the pointed observation of Aijimer (1988:424) that ethnography "always has been . . . linked with epistemological problems" (and, one might add, of both conceptualization of research

problems and of ethnographic practice). The authors raise tantalizing questions about the methodology and interpretation of ethnographic research. They draw attention to the sometimes apparent contradictory perspectives of its major proponents, that is, whether anthropology is part of "natural science," as Radcliffe-Brown (1957) would have it, or part of history as advocated by Evans-Pritchard (1961, 1963).

The Comaroffs conclude that "Ethnography . . . is a historically situated mode of understanding situated contexts, . . . each with its own . . . radically different . . . objects and objectives" (pp. 9-10). They fortify this conclusion by recourse to the evidence of cultural historians which, the authors claim, validate our endeavor as ethnographers" (p. 18). They further assert that "cultural history has been adept at revealing that all social fields are domains of contests," particularly in the area of "culture" (p. 18). This postulate is then applied to an analytical re-evaluation of some standard ethnographies, principally Leach (1954), to show that failure to take into account the historical perspective subverts even the most perceptive ethnographic analysis.

In one sense, the book is a methodological excursus in that it re-evaluates the epistemological basis of the ethnographic enterprise and, in another, it is a critique of the hermeneutics of cultural translation of non-Western social systems. The authors find strong support for their argument regarding the affinity between ethnography and history in the dictum of Lévi-Strauss that "Both history and ethnography are concerned with societies *other* than the one in which we live. . . . [I]n both cases we are dealing with systems of representations which differ . . . from the representations of the investigator" (1963:16-17). However, the authors are concerned with a broader conception of "historical anthropology" which goes beyond what they call the parochial idea of Western universal historiography which, nonetheless, ignores other histories outside of the "orthodox practices of periodization in European history" (pp. 19-22). A welter of evidence is adduced from extant ethnographic studies to demonstrate the authors' point that reported ethnographic practices of native societies are often reduced to fictional, neat "scientific" categories of historical anthropology which thus ignore culture ambiguities of the polyphonic representation inherent in empirical facts.

The book is divided into three topical parts on: (I) Theory, Ethnography, Historiography; (II) Dialectical Systems, Imaginative Sociologies; and (III) Colonialism and Modernity. Each part consists of three expository chapters of these thematic motifs and a concluding chapter (post hoc) on the link between ethnography and the colonial enterprise and hegemony. This last chapter is undoubtedly the quintessence of the whole argument of the book, to wit, the inextricable nature of ethnography and history in the colonial context.

Overall, the authors succeed in demonstrating the point of their argument by a judicious use of the "illustrative case-study method," drawn in part from the authors' own extensive studies on African ethnography and partly from historical records on Africa as viewed from a Western perspective. In fact, through constant reference, copious paraphrases and quotations from the authors' previous studies, they impel the reader of the present volume to examine or re-examine these original works. The skilful re-organization of these varied publications into a unified corpus of evidence is successful in supporting the central argument for the unity of history and anthropology. Seven of the 10 chapters are restructured versions from previous publications.

These materials also redirect us to focus on the close affinity between the history of colonialism and the ethnographic enterprise. It is noteworthy that the image of Africa and the African "savage," which informed much of 18th- and 19th-century European perceptions of their colonial subjects, was a combined product of missionary report-

age justifying its civilizing and redemptive enterprise, the ethnographic "scientism" of a budding anthropology and a crude socio-biology supporting crass racial theories.

The book may be recommended for senior undergraduate and graduate seminars and would be certain to arouse passioned intellectual debates about the goal and methods of ethnography. It provokes a rethinking of the epistemological basis of ethnographic interpretations of "other cultures."

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Native Liberty, Crown Sovereignty: The Existing Aboriginal Right of Self-Government
Bruce Clark
Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. 259 pp. $39.95 (cloth)

Reviewer: James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson
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University College of Cape Breton sheds a necessary light on the issue of self-government. Speaking directly from the perspective of the Imperial Crown, this book demonstrates that aboriginal self-government has always been an existing constitutional right. The author's thesis is that Aboriginal sovereignty and Crown sovereignty complemented each other in Canada. The Crown claimed ultimate sovereignty, but promised not to molest or disturb the tribal cultures; this included recognition of the right of self-government. The book continually supports this thesis through a strictly legal analysis. Interestingly, this narrow viewpoint brings clarity and power to the issue.

Without addressing the broader moral, anthropological and philosophical issues, the book demonstrates that it was the immigrants' need for self-government which created the problematic issues of Canadian political thought and identity. This work illustrates that the insecurities and desires of the immigrants twisted aboriginal and treaty rights until they could no longer be recognized. Aboriginal and treaty rights enshrined in prerogative laws were viewed as merely another obstacle in their quest to be the political equals of their mostly European ancestors. The prerogative rights were