context in which women saw themselves more in terms of their roles as workers and managers (producers) within the household, rather than as reproducers. While at the community level there may have existed a myth of male dominance, under the Salazarean State communities were essentially powerless and it was the household that took priority in the lives of rural people. Consequently, among the fisherfolk of Vila Cha, the ideal of a partnership between spouses existed and female autonomy was exemplified by patterns of female inheritance and uxorilocality and a positive identity of women as *trabalhadeiras* (hard-working). By contrast, the male-centred households of the agriculturalists of the same parish, whose wives did not leave their homes, were subject to the constructions of gender and family from a state that legislated male dominance and a church which promulgated female servitude. The women of the wealthier *lavradores*, confined to their homes, were envied by the fisherwomen of Vila Cha *not* for their position within the home, per se, rather for the wealth and status such a role (*dona de casa*) symbolized. Cole goes on to explain how this paradoxical attitude towards women who were *donas de casa* eventually became a source of conflict for young maritime women hired by industries coming into the area during the 1960s. Low wages, coupled with increasing time away from their households, led to a decline in status and autonomy for many of these women and increased social stratification throughout Vila Cha.

By understanding gender as a changing historical and social construction, the meaning of honour and shame in the Mediterranean takes on new dimensions. No longer is shame seen in opposition to honour, nor woman seen as "the other" of man. Cole brilliantly deconstructs this code to demonstrate the system as one of social control applied to both men and women and places the analysis of shame into a context that is not sexuality dependent. By so doing, it reminds us once again of how our theoretical assumptions sometimes misguide us into asking the questions which will produce the answers we expect, rather than seeing the kaleidoscope of meaning and behaviour that exists within every culture.

This book is exemplary in many ways and is a welcome resource for teaching and research in a variety of courses from European cultures and historical ethnography to gender and sexuality. My students thoroughly enjoyed it, as did I.

Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa, Volume 1
Jean and John Comaroff
Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1991. xx + 414 pp. $60.00 (cloth), $18.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Sean Morrow
National University of Lesotho

Historians schooled to seek economic and political motives have sometimes dealt simplistically with missionaries in Africa. Missionaries were generally not drawn from the most socially or economically significant classes and, at least initially, often possessed little understanding of the communities they entered. They became, even so, crucial interpreters (or misinterpreters) of Europe and Africa to each other. Unsummoned and importunate though they were, their activities in incipient or actual

colonies could provide a rich store of metaphor upon which Africans could draw in questioning and challenging authority.

Jean and John Comaroff are well equipped to deal with this area. They have drawn on their knowledge of the Southern Tswana and wide familiarity with the British context to create a rounded work of historical anthropology. As they say, this is not an "event history" of the interaction of non-conformist missionaries and the Tswana. It is an attempt to "trace the contradictions and continuities among the various dimensions and discourses of the encounter between the mission and the Tswana" (p. 292). They range over the intellectual and social history of 19th-century Southern Africa and, in this first volume, of Britain, creating a satisfying picture of the ambiguous missionary presence. It should be added, however, that the best mission studies have, at least since the 1970s, examined many of the themes pursued by the Comaroffs, though seldom in such sharp focus. Works by John McCracken, Ian Linden and Robert Straver come to mind.

The Comaroffs argue, with considerable subtlety, that amongst both missionaries and Tswana overt intentions tended to result in unforeseen outcomes. Mission history must start, they argue, in Europe and they create a picture of missionaries struggling to maintain their hold on the lowest rung of the middle-class ladder, idealizing supposed past social balance and imagining the creation in Africa of the sturdy yeomanry evidently extinct in Britain. Images of Africa, some hostile, some romantically positive, flowed together, culminating in anti-slavery rhetoric which evoked sympathy with Africans whilst rarely questioning their supposed savagery. The contrasting Tswana reality of communities "where human action was never a simple reflection or a mechanical enactment of 'social structure,' [and where] everyday practice could and did produce a subtle, shifting mosaic of social and political forms" (p. 152), is described and the initial meeting of these worlds, which set the agenda for subsequent dialogue, is analyzed. Probing each other's cultures, missionaries attempted to Christianize the Tswana and the Tswana attempted to turn the mission to their advantage. The missionaries tried to separate realms of church and state, a project more revolutionary than they knew, in that it subverted structures based on the indivisibility of the secular and the sacred. Those marginal to Tswana society were promoted within the mission and the way for colonialism prepared. The context of this analysis is a defence of historical anthropology against critical postmodernism and other schools of thought. The Comaroffs "insist on situating methodological discussion in analytical practice" (p. 17). Historians, at least, will enthusiastically agree.

This is in many ways an excellent book. It would be better if it were shorter and if its prose was less mannered. There is a tendency to patronize some of the clerical sources, to which, after all, the Comaroffs' enterprise is greatly indebted. Phrases like "the good reverend," "the good doctor," "the literary cleric" read all too much like sneers. The authors also reveal a certain academic hubris. They argue that a study of this type may "affirm—indeed, chart the way to—revolutionary consciousness" (p. xiii). Possibly. But in a book published by the University of Chicago Press? In this language? With its likely audience? The validity of the academic study of consciousness is beyond doubt. Academics might ask themselves, however, just how significant their role may be in its formation.