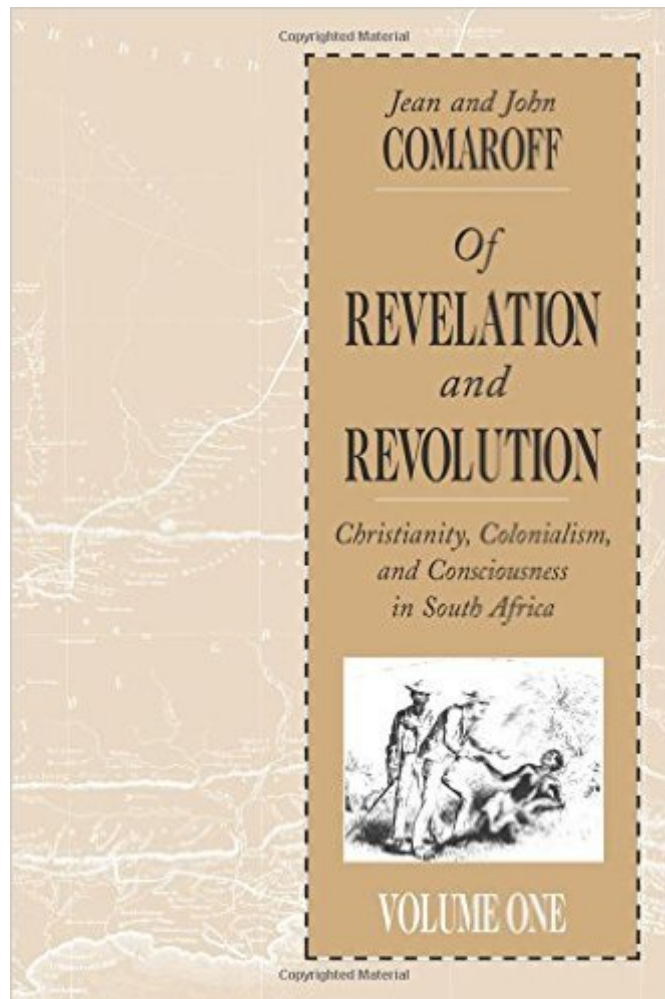


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Of Revelation And Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, And Consciousness In South Africa



Synopsis

"Defining their enterprise as more in the direction of poetics than of prosaics, the Comaroffs free themselves to analyze a vivid series of images and events as objects of analysis. These they mine for clues to the 19th-century contents of the British imagination and of Tswana minds. They are themselves imagining the imagination of others, and they do the job with characteristic aplomb....The first volume creates an appetite for the second."â "Sally Falk Moore, American Anthropologist

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jean and John Comaroffâ™s *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* is a self-described "œhistorical anthropology of cultural confrontation" • (1991:xi) that examines the interaction between Nonconformist Protestant missionaries and the Southern Tswana during the early nineteenth century. A simplified version of the Comaroffsâ™ thesis might run as follows: part and parcel of the European missionary endeavor among the Tswana was an attempt to transform the Tswana people on a most basic level. The changes introduced by the missionaries penetrated all aspects of Tswana life, from the way they practiced agriculture, to marriage and rainmaking rituals. Although these changes helped to cultivate dispositions favorable to the political economy of colonization, they were also fundamental components in the way that the Tswana enacted resistance against their colonizers. Implicit in the

Comaroff's thesis is a version of the Hegelian dialectic: as the missionaries engaged in their program of transformation, colonizing the consciousness of the Tswana, they unwittingly planted the seeds of a self-reflexive perspective through which the Tswana began to see themselves as distinct from their colonizers, and would eventually attempt to overcome this alienation through resistance. Despite an underlying current of Hegelian dialectic, the overt philosophical concern of the Comaroffs lies in the concept of hegemony. As understood by the Comaroffs, hegemony is "that order of signs and practices . . . that come to be taken-for-granted as the natural and received shape of the world and everything that inhabits it" (1991:23). Hegemony, although part of ideology, is distinct from it.

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