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Comparing from below

Emperor Hadrian writes to Marcus Aurelius: “The landscape of my days appears to be composed, like mountainous regions, of varied materials heaped up pell-mell. There I see my nature, itself composite, made up of equal parts of instinct and training. Here and there protrude the granite peaks of the inevitable. But all about is rubble from the landslips of chance. I strive to retrace my life to find in it some plan, following a vein of lead, or of gold, or the course of some subterranean stream, but such devices are only tricks of perspective in the memory. From time to time, in an encounter or an omen, or in a particular series of happenings, I think that I recognize the working of fate, but too many paths lead nowhere at all, and too many sums add up to nothing. To be sure, I perceive in this diversity and disorder the presence of a person; but his form seems nearly always to be shaped by the pressure of circumstances; his features are blurred, like a face reflected in water. I am not of those who say that their actions bear no resemblance to them. Indeed, actions must do so, since they alone give my measure, and are the sole means of engraving me upon the memory of men, or even upon my own memory (and since perhaps the very possibility of continuing to express and modify oneself by action may constitute the real difference between the state of the living and of the dead). But there is between me and these acts which compose me an indefinable hiatus.”¹

¹ Yourcenar, Marguerite, *Memoirs of Hadrian and Reflections on the Composition of Memoirs of Hadrian*, trans. Grace Frick, in collaboration with the author. Farrar, Strauss, and Company, New York, 1963, 24-25.

The novelist who has the Emperor speak these words shows us how to understand this moral “landscape of days”: “The rules of the game: learn everything, read everything, inquire into everything, while at the same time adapting to one’s ends the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola, or the method of Hindu ascetics, who for years, and to the point of exhaustion, try to visualize ever more exactly the images which they create beneath their closed eyelids. Through hundreds of card notes pursue each incident to the very moment that it occurred; endeavor to restore the mobility and suppleness of life to those visages known to us only in stone. When two texts, or two assertions, or perhaps two ideas, are in contradiction, be ready to reconcile them rather than cancel one by the other; regard them as two different facets, or two successive stages, of the same reality, a reality convincingly human just because it is complex. Strive to read a text of the Second Century with the eyes, soul, and feelings of the Second Century; let it steep in that mother solution which the facts of its own time provide; set aside, if possible, all beliefs and sentiments which have accumulated in successive strata between those persons and us. And nevertheless take advantage (though prudently, and solely by way of preparatory study) of all possibilities for comparison and cross-checking, and of new perspectives slowly developed by the many centuries and events separating us from a given text, a fact, a man; make use of such aids more or less as guide-marks along the road of return toward one particular point in time. Keep one’s own shadow out of the picture; leave the mirror clean of the mist of one’s own breath; take only what is most essential and durable in us, in the emotions aroused by the senses or in the operations of the mind, as our point of contact with those men who, like us, nibbled olives and drank wine, or gummed their fingers with honey, who fought bitter winds and blinding rain, or in summer sought the plane tree’s shade; who took their pleasures, thought their own thoughts, grew old, and died.”²

I have taken the liberty of placing our work under the auspices of this long quotation since our problem is, in the end, the same as the novelist’s: that is, how to grasp “historical truth” while acknowledging that “one errs *more* or *less*.”³ Following Marguerite Yourcenar’s example, we

² Yourcenar, 330-331.

³ Yourcenar 331

must account for the shares of chance and necessity in the moral itineraries of historical actors, all of whom are foreign to us in time, space, and their relations of power. It is incumbent upon us to recognise the “indefinable hiatus” that separates individuals from their actions, the incompleteness that constitutes both individuals and their systems, as well as the irreducible historical heterogeneity of that form of political organisation that has become practically universal after two centuries of capitalist globalisation: the nation-state.⁴ And to this ends, the study of “actions” – in the jargon of the social sciences one might speak more readily of “practices” – is indeed our “sole measure.”

From this vantage point, our intervention comes at a precise moment in the historical sociology of politics that has established the reconciliation between the discipline’s two founding fathers, senselessly opposed for more than half a century: Karl Marx and Max Weber.⁵ Indeed, the Holy Family is “back together again.” The works of Mauss, Gramsci, and Foucault appear henceforth as compatible with each other as with those of Marx and Weber. The sole exception would of course be Durkheim, whose methods are decidedly too positivistic to be completely trusted. It would be out of place here to provide a survey of recent critical work in the historical sociology of the State (or of the forms of subjectivity that the latter produces). It is possible nevertheless to draw a number of strategic lessons from the social scientific research of the past few decades, lessons which may help orient our reflections.

Givens

⁴ For an elaboration of this argument, see my *L’Etat en Afrique: La politique du ventre*, Paris, Fayard, 1989 (English translation: *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, trans. Mary Harper, Christopher Harris, and Elizabeth Harris. London, Longman, 1993); *L’Illusion identitaire*, Paris, Fayard, 1996 (English trans, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*, trans. Steven Rendall, et al, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005); *Le Gouvernement du monde. Une critique politique de la globalisation*, Paris, Fayard, 2004.

⁵ Lonsdale, John, “States and social processes: a historical survey,” *African Studies Review*, XXIV (2-3), June-September 1981, p. 140; Berman, Bruce J. and Lonsdale, John, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*, London, James Currey, 1992.

First of all, the idea that “non-European” political societies *have their own particular historicity* is now widely accepted. While of course long negated by imperialist thinking,⁶ this notion has also been rejected by a range of other intellectual traditions. These include scientific or colonial Orientalisms that recognized, and froze, the past grandeur of immutable “civilizations”; the anti-imperialist or nationalist ideologies of Hobson, Lenin, or Fanon; various “developmentalist” theories that emerged in North American political science from 1950 to 1970; and lastly the so-called “dependency theory” even though its initial ambition, as set forth by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, was precisely to give back to Latin American societies their own specific histories.⁷ Gone, then, is the “paradigm of the yoke,”⁸ which postulated the prostration of non-European societies – and in particular African societies – before colonial domination, capitalist exploitation, or the cultural influence of the West.⁹ According to this framework, the colonial period represents at best a temporary digression and at worst a *tabula rasa* and in any case overestimates the impact of the “center” on the “periphery.”

We now know that the colonial situation has its own complex history, and that the latter is far from unequivocal. Colonisations sometimes overlapped. European imperialisms seized provinces of non-colonial empires, such as the Ottoman Empire. These situations gave rise to secondary empires, such as that of Oman, which the British authorities in Bombay helped spread into East Africa. Such periods of domination were able to coexist for relatively long periods of time, as was the case with the Sultanate of Zanzibar and the Congo Free State in the region of Stanleyville/Kisangani.¹⁰ Certain territories even underwent two successive phases of conquest following wars between European powers, as in Tanganyika and Cameroon after the First World War, or the Dutch East Indies in the context of the Napoleonic wars.

⁶ See the important book by Sir Harry H. Johnston: *History of the Colonization of Africa by Alien Races*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1899.

⁷ Cardoso, Fernando Henrique “Les Etats-Unis et la théorie de la dépendance,” *Revue Tiers monde*, XVII (68), October-December 1976, p. 805-825.

⁸ Bayart, *L’Etat en Afrique*, p. 20ff. English translation *The State in Africa*, pp. 2-10.

⁹ This corresponds to what one Iranian essayist has called “Westoxication” or “Occidentosis.” Cf Al-I Ahmad, Jalal, *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West*, trans. Robert Campbell, Hamid Algar, ed. (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1984).

¹⁰ Hunt, Nancy Rose *A Colonial Lexicon. Of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo*, Durham, Duke University, 1999, p. 41ff; 67.

In any case, colonisers and colonised were in constant interaction, and the colonies played an integral role in the modernisation of the metropolises through a series of “reverberations.”¹¹ Most importantly, the history of the colonial situation was embedded in long-term native histories, and this contributed to its political and moral as constituted by the fluctuations of different native actors’ strategies.¹² This was the case even in regions where lineage societies with largely oral traditions predominated, although the absence of local written sources renders the historian’s task more difficult.¹³

“State grafting,”¹⁴ whether during colonialism or globalisation, resulted from local societies’ double annexation of foreign occupation or influence. On the one hand, social groups instrumentalised new political institutions and economic resources in order to further their own ambitions of accumulating wealth and power, a project accomplished to the detriment of (or in contradiction with) other social groups or other political societies. On the other hand, local social groups appropriated the ideas, knowledge, cultural representations, and social practices of the foreigners and, mixing them with their own *Weltanschauung*, gave birth to specific “social imaginary significations.”¹⁵ The latter, understood in terms of “hybridisation”¹⁶ or

¹¹ Cf. for example, Cooper, Frederick Stoler, Ann Laura eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997.

¹² For a recent demonstration, with regard to the *pryayi* of Java, cf Bertrand, Romain. *Etat colonial, noblesse et nationalisme à Java. La Tradition parfaite*, Paris, Karthala, 2005. See also, among other African examples, Emmanuel Terray, *Une Histoire du royaume abron du Gyaman. Des origines à la conquête coloniale*, Paris, Karthala, 1995.

¹³ Cf for example, J. F. A. Ajayi, “Colonialism: an episode in African history” in L. H. Gann, P. Duignan, eds., *Colonialism in Africa. 1870-1960*, Volume 1: *The History and Politics of Colonialism. 1870-1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp. 497-1914; Pierre Bonnafé, *Nzo Lipfu, le lignage de la mort. La sorcellerie, idéologie de la lutte sociale sur le plateau kukuya*, Nanterre, Labethno, 1978 and *Histoire sociale d’un peuple congolais*. Book I: *La Terre et le Ciel*, Paris, Editions de l’ORSTOM, 1987; Georges Dupré, *Un Ordre et sa destruction*, Paris, Editions de l’ORSTOM, 1982 and *Les Naissances d’une société. Espace et historicité chez les Beembé du Congo*, Paris, Editions de l’ORSTOM, 1985; Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

¹⁴ Jean-François Bayart, dir., *La Greffe de l’Etat*, Paris, Karthala, 1996.

¹⁵ Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey, Cambridge, UK, Polity Press, 1987.

“miscegenation,”¹⁷ were equally impervious to the primordial authenticity of “nativeness” as they were to all mechanical imitations of the Other. If strategic analysis may help us to understand the instrumentalisation of colonial situations by native social groups, “imaginary social significations” and “moral economies” definitively evade all forms of utilitarian reasoning.

From these considerations – too cursory to do justice to the wealth of information culled over the last thirty years, or to the debates that have since arisen – one may nonetheless extract a few basic reflections. The first concerns *dependence*. Without negating the concept’s pertinence (nor the asymmetries that it designates), one must interpret it in terms of an historical sociology of action without adhering too closely to the dependentist catechism. In the first place, the native society’s dependence on the occupying power was relative, limited, and often belated; it was not of a structural nature, strictly speaking, but of an historical and contingent one. The real influence of the capitalist “world economy” or the “world system” on the trajectories of non-European societies at the very least has been a source of debate.¹⁸ What is more, dependency did not suspend the initiative of dominated societies – even if the former included, in almost every case, direct military occupation, the alienation of political sovereignty, outrageously hierarchical social relations, and coercive modes of exploiting the work force. Subjection does not exclude the possibility of action on the part of the subjected; indeed, it is engendered by it. Michel Foucault defines power thus as “a set of actions upon other actions,” as “a way of acting upon an acting

¹⁶ Cf. Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*

¹⁷ Serge Gruzinski, *La Pensée métisse*, Paris, Fayard, 1999. English translation, *The mestizo mind: the intellectual dynamics of colonization and globalization*, translated Deke Dusinberre, New York, Routledge, 2002. See also Gruzinski, *Les Quatre parties du monde: Histoire d'une mondialisation*, Paris, Editions de La Martinière, 2004

¹⁸ Cf notably Anthony Reid’s discussion in *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce. 1450-1680*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2 volumes, 1988 and 1993; see also, for example, Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, volume 1, 2003; Anthony G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*, London, Longman, 1973, chapter IV; Robin Law, ed., *From Slave Trade to ‘Legitimate’ Commerce: The Commercial Transition in Nineteenth Century West Africa*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995; or Martin Lynn, *Commerce and Economic Change in West Africa: The Palm Oil Trade in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, or Paul E. Lovejoy, *Salt of the Desert Sun: A History of Salt Production and Trade in the Central Sudan*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action.”¹⁹ It is for this very reason that the colonial situation is not incompatible with the notion of moral economy: the “subjection of men” is equivalent to their “constitution as ‘subjects’ in both senses of the term,” and especially as “moral subjects.”²⁰

In the second place, colonial, para-colonial, and post-colonial situations can all be more or less described in terms of “extraversion.” One can, on the one hand, see “extraversion strategies” as an at least partly conscious and rational process; in this case, one considers “the creation and the capture of a rent generated by dependency and which functions as a historical matrix of inequality, political centralization and social struggle,” following my hypothesis about Sub-Saharan societies,²¹ a process that bears resemblance to “strategic syncretisms” such as the one implemented by Hinduist leaders to stave off Islam, Christianity, and colonialism.²² On the other hand, one can stress the imaginary figures of extraversion and their related social practices, thereby deliberately eschewing utilitarian readings.²³ In practice, these two analyses go hand in hand, if only because there is no such thing as a strategy without an *imaginaire*, and no phantasmagoria without the temptation to rationally implement it, if even in a delusionary mode. For the moment, however, it is essential that one recognise just how commonplace extraversion

¹⁹ Foucault, Michel. “The Subject and Power,” in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, eds., Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982, p. 220. In French: Michel Foucault, *Dits et Ecrits: 1954-1988*, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, tome IV, p. 237.

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, p. 81. (3eme partie, scientia sexualis, 11 pages after the beginning of the section: Histoire de la sexualite, tome 1).

²¹ Jean-Francois Bayart, “Africa in the world: a history of extraversion,” *African Affairs*, 99 (395), April 2000, p. 222. See also *L’Etat en Afrique*, pp. 30ff and John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World. 1400-1800*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998 (second edition), p. 125: “We must accept that African participation in the slave trade was voluntary and under the control of African decision makers.... Europeans possessed no means, either economic or military, to compel African leaders to sell slaves.”

²² Christophe Jaffrelot, “Le syncrétisme stratégique et la construction de l’identité nationaliste hindoue: l’identité comme produit de synthèse,” *Revue française de science politique*, 42 (4), August 1992, pp. 594-617.

²³ Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*

situations, in which “a people whose culture was that of another people,”²⁴ have become; indeed, they are the ordinary condition of globalisation.²⁵ It is equally important to understand that extraversion is not, in and of itself, a manifestation of dependence, nor is it an avowal of weakness: the Emperor Hadrian borrowed from Hellenism to reinforce the central power of Rome.²⁶

The second notion that one may glean from the preceding is that of *trajectory*, as long as one strips it of all teleological, determinist, or mechanist connotations. This concept does not presuppose a causal schema, but rather a focalising operation. Thus, we wish to understand the process of state-formation in the long term, during and after the colonial moment, whether through modes of “importation”²⁷ or “graft,” by paying attention not only to practices of reutilisation, creative derivation, and transference of meaning, whether conscious or not, but also to the continuities – or ruptures – in the progressive accumulation of wealth, power, and social distinction. It appears, then, that state-formation, in both non-European and Western societies, is formed by “concatenations”²⁸ or the “articulation of modes of production.”²⁹ Braudel saw capitalism in this sense as a “late-comer” that “arrives when everything is ready.”³⁰ Nevertheless, the rigidity of usual Marxist theories of concatenation or articulation should be modified, as Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale have forcefully demonstrated: “Articulation was neither a

²⁴ Paul Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry, and the West*, trans. David Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 16. The Roman Empire is one example; we could speak just as easily about Japan, the Dutch West Indies, the Ottoman Empire, or Latin America.

²⁵ J.-F. Bayart, *Le Gouvernement du monde, op. cit.*, chapitres IV, V et VI.

²⁶ Rebecca Preston, “Roman questions, Greek answers: Plutarch and the construction of identity” in Simon Goldhill, ed., *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 86 ff.

²⁷ Bertrand Badie, *L'Etat importé. Essai sur l'occidentalisation de l'ordre politique*, Paris, Fayard, 1992. Eng. trans. *The imported state: the westernization of the political order*, translated by Claudia Royal. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

²⁸ Perry Anderson, *Passages from antiquity to feudalism, Les Passages de l'Antiquité au féodalisme*, London, NLB, 1974; and *Lineages of the absolutist state*, London, NLB, 1974.

²⁹ Cf. Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, in particular pp. 79 and 138, for critical reference to the theory of the articulation of modes of production in French Marxist anthropology (for example, Pierre-Philippe Rey, *Les Alliances de classes*, Paris, François Maspero, 1976.)

³⁰ Fernand Braudel, *La Dynamique du capitalisme* (1985), trans. Patricia M. Ranum, *Afterthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism*, Baltimore (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 75.

consciously instrumental agency of exploitation nor a determined expression of a teleological system “logic,” but rather it was a partly deliberate and partly unforeseen and unintended process of uncertainty and struggle that, while establishing the dominance of capital, rarely corresponded precisely with the intentions or interests of the historical actors. The primary theoretical contribution of the concept of articulation is in helping us to explain more adequately the diverse patterns of the transformation, destruction, and preservation of indigenous societies in colonial Africa.”³¹ Articulation is less the “structural feature of a system” than an “open-ended process.”³²

Having recognised the primacy of the historicity of the State, one is led, in a manner that reflects our preceding critique of dependency theory, to take a certain *distance from the sociology of domination*. Although the latter flourished in the 1960s and 1970s as an antidote to developmentalist irenism, its heuristic limits, ideological presuppositions, and untoward fixation on oppression became quickly visible. The history of non-European societies, regardless of whether or not they were put into a position of dependence, could not *only* be a history of domination – a history of colonisers, subordinate local elites, and their public policies. Under different names and inspired by different sources, a range of voices emerged to remind us of the importance of the actions and subjectivities of the “dominated” themselves. This was, for example, the contribution of subaltern studies in India; *microstoria* in Italy; *Alltagsgeschichte* in Germany; the British journal *Past and Present*’s “view from below”; Michel de Certeau’s *écriture de l’histoire* and his sociology through the “invention of everyday life”; Nathan Wachtel’s reconstitution of a “vision of the vanquished”; and James Scott’s analysis of the “weapons of the weak.” Or, to cite those examples that concern us most directly: Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale’s distinction between “state-building” and “state-formation” in *Unhappy Valley* as well as the work done on the “enunciation of the political” by the revue *Politique africaine* and the Groupe d’Analyse des Modes Populaires d’Action Politique at the Centre d’Etudes et Recherches Internationales (CERI) in the early 1980s. The Groupe d’Analyse des Trajectoires du Politique, which succeeded upon the latter from 1987 to 1994 and was reconstituted in 2004, has encouraged the coupling of an historical sociology of “state-formation”

³¹ Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, vol. 1, p. 138.

³² *Unhappy Valley*, vol. 1, p. 189.

and the analysis of “politics from below” by urging French researchers to appropriate the Berman-Lonsdale distinction.³³

Studying “state-formation” as “an historical process whose outcome is a largely unconscious and contradictory process of conflicts, negotiations and compromises between diverse groups”³⁴ and examining the “moral economy” of non-European societies during periods of colonisation, dependence, or globalisation, one inevitably raises the old question of “*voluntary servitude*.” Peter Brown has shown how the “viscosity” of mentalities in the provinces of the Roman Empire rendered simple coercion vain, thereby necessitating a “persuasive force.”³⁵ The indirect government of the Empire depended upon on the *devotio* of local elites, which was obtained as much by persuasion as by the sword, and the notion of *paideia* assured the reproduction of the ideal of an authority that is benevolent because well policed.³⁶ The bad reputation of Oriental despotism notwithstanding, the Ottoman Empire was based upon similar moral foundations, at least until it fell prey to the exterminating passions of ethnonationalisms.³⁷ However, everything indicates that after the sound and the fury of the “conquest state” died down, colonial empires similarly enacted “ethical” policies, whether the term itself was used (as in the Dutch West Indies³⁸) or elided (as in Senegal or the rest of French West Africa³⁹). They

³³ Cf for example Yves Chevrier, “L’empire distendu: esquisse du politique en Chine des Qing à Deng Xiaoping” in Bayart, ed., *La Greffe de l’Etat*; Béatrice Hibou, *L’Afrique est-elle protectionniste? Les chemins buissonniers de la libéralisation extérieure*, Paris, Karthala, 1996; Béatrice Hibou, ed., *La Privatisation des Etats*, Paris, Karthala, 1999; Françoise Mengin, *Trajectoires chinoises: Taiwan, Hong Kong et Pékin*, Paris, Karthala, 1998; Jean-Louis Rocca, *La Condition chinoise: Capitalisme, mise au travail et résistances dans la Chine des réformes*, Paris, 2005, forthcoming; Romain Bertrand, *Etat colonial, noblesse et nationalisme à Java*.

³⁴ Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, p. 5.

³⁵ Peter Brown, *Authority and the sacred: aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman world*, Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 39.

³⁶ Peter Brown, *Power and persuasion in late antiquity: towards a Christian empire*. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1992, Chapter 1.

³⁷ Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002.

³⁸ Bertrand, *Etat colonial, noblesse et nationalisme à Java*.

³⁹ On the debate between “assimilation” and “association”: G. Wesley Johnson, *The emergence of Black politics in Senegal: the struggle for power in the four communes, 1900-1920*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1971. See also Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: the Republican*

represented, according to Weber's terminology, the transition from *Macht* (force) to *Herrschaft* (domination) to a greater or lesser extent, and in this sense posed the "enigma of a deliberately accepted servitude, integrated by the subject as a component of his personal will."⁴⁰ *Herrschaft* "is the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons,"⁴¹ and "obedience" signifies "that the action of the person obeying follows in essentials such a course that the content of the command may be taken to have become the basis of action for its own sake."⁴²

Following Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Bernard Cohn, and Benedict Anderson, historians and anthropologists have suggested that the coloniser's "invention of tradition" nourished the colonial state's self-legitimation and laid the groundwork for an "imagined community" of the nation – even if both of these notions have been criticised and revised, at times by their own initiators. One aspect of this "invention of tradition" was the joint elaboration, by the coloniser and the colonised, of particularist identities: ethnicity in Africa, communalism in India, or confessionalism in Lebanon. One must remember that acceptance of "voluntary servitude" results from a twofold process of concatenation. The first is constituted by the colonial "invention of tradition," via the recycling of existing cultural material, and by the political and administrative fabrication of particularist identities; the second is the reprisal, within a framework carried over from colonialism, of this "tradition" and these "primordialisms" by nationalist leaders, the sole legatees of empire. The submission of Moroccan subjects to the *Dar-al-Makhzen* – the "physical space of [monarchical] power" as "the system's unique purveyor of symbols of authority" – is one exemplary case among others. Here, we can observe the succession of plurisecular political or religious *repertoires*; the recomposition of the monarchy at the hands of a protectorate regime under Lyautey's inspired administration; and the authoritarian sublimation of dynastic charisma following the recovery of national sovereignty. "The *Makhzen* is, in this sense,

Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997 and Jean-Pierre Dozon, *Frères et sujets: La France et l'Afrique en perspective*, Paris, Flammarion, 2003.

⁴⁰ Pierre Bouretz, *Les Promesses du monde: Philosophie de Max Weber*, Paris, Gallimard, 1996, p. 253.

⁴¹ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, vol. 1, p. 53.

⁴² Weber, *Economy and Society*, p. 215.

more than an institution,” writes Mohamed Tozy. “It is a *savoir-être* and a *savoir-faire* whose terrific efficiency is only operational when interlocutors are culturally in a situation to receive. The strategies of legitimisation and of delegitimation play themselves out on various identity registers.”⁴³

The problematic of concatenation, however, must not become a simplistic mechanism. Nothing permits us to equate the political or symbolic action of native social groups with that of colonising groups; nor can we take for granted the internal coherence of either of these categories. Each proceeds according to widely heterogeneous aims, motivations, and impulses, as well as divergent cultural, political, and social resources. Thus conceived, the notion of “tradition” is a *trompe l’oeil*, a more or less “working misunderstanding,” a fleeting “encounter” or “dialogue.” It can create the appearance of a relatively integral society or colonial system when, in fact, a diversity of disparate space-times prevails. This equilibrium is so “catastrophic” that it casts into doubt the very possibility of true “hegemony” in colonial situations. Even if occasionally sincere, the “ethical” or “assimilationist” pretensions of colonisers clashed with so many interests – at times with the reality principle itself, for instance demographic reality – that they could never be anything but mere chimeras. And indirect administration – the indirect rule of the Victorian Raj, Lord Lugard in Africa, or any administrative, political, or religious intermediation – proved to be at once the necessary condition and the inevitable limitation of the imperial hegemonic project. This situation of radical heteronomy is inherent to the colonial situation itself. In the end, neither the subjection of diverse actors to a tradition “invented” in various and contradictory ways, nor the subservience to the “imagined community” that results can occlude the bureaucracy’s bare conquest of power under the guise of culture and nationalism.

From this point of view, the process of “state-formation” coincides with the formation of what Weber called “the housing [*Gehäuse*] of that future serfdom” to which “men may have to submit powerlessly. . . if they consider that the ultimate and only value by which the conduct of their affairs is to be decided is good administration and provision for their needs by officials (that

⁴³ M. Tozy, *Monarchie et islam politique au Maroc*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 1999, p. 17 and pp. 42 ff.

is ‘good’ in the purely technical sense of rational administration).”⁴⁴ A nightmare that is far from situations of so-called “failed” states, indeed. However, the contemporary “democratic transition” and exaltation of “civil society” do not necessarily change the basic givens of the problem as set forth by Weber, since they permit the economic and even political reproduction of the ruling classes, the cooptation of potential counter-elites, and the extension of bureaucratic power beneath the cover of so-called non-governmental organisations.⁴⁵ Max Weber himself wrote that “first and foremost, modern parliaments are assemblies representing the people who are ruled by the means of bureaucracy. It is, after all, a condition of the duration of any rule, even the best organised, that it should enjoy a certain measure of inner assent from at least those sections of the ruled who carry weight in society.”⁴⁶ With the exception of Eastern Europe, the economic liberalisation and the rehabilitation of multi-party systems that have prevailed since the 1990s are not so much veritable ruptures as incarnations of “passive revolution”: versions of *trasformismo* that ensure the enlarged reproduction of the thermidorian political class in power (China, Iran, Cambodia), an electoral game of musical chairs between segments of the elite (Benin), the continuity of the ruling bloc (Nigeria), or a simple authoritarian restoration (Togo, Cameroon, Gabon).

Nevertheless, the alchemical “enunciation of politics” and subsequent legitimisation of the nation-state inherited from colonisation (regardless of its popular discredit or that of its leaders) should not force us into the *trap of national history*. It is true, of course, that globalisation has rendered this form of political organisation universal, and that independence movements have validated colonial territorial delimitations.⁴⁷ Yet this does not mean that state-formation is a

⁴⁴ Max Weber, “Parliament and Government in Germany under a New Political Order” (1917), in *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 158. (Italicized by the author).

⁴⁵ Bayart, *Le Gouvernement du monde*, pp. 96ff. On the bureaucratic pre-emption of “civil society,” see Thomas Bierschenk, Jean-Pierre Chauveau, Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, eds., *Courtiers en développement: Les villages africains en quête de projets*, Mayence, APAD, Paris, Karthala, 2000, and Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, eds., *Les Pouvoirs au village: Le Bénin rural entre démocratisation et décentralisation*, Paris, Karthala, 1998.

⁴⁶ Weber, “Parliament and Government in Germany,” *Political Writings*, p. 165.

⁴⁷ Bayart, *Le Gouvernement du monde*, chapter 2.

purely national affair. For one, the process concerns territories,⁴⁸ and centralisation plays itself out on the level of the “village”⁴⁹ or segmentary lineage. On the other hand, the emergence of the State is indissociable from its relationship with the international system through diplomacy, war, and commerce. More precisely, it remains tributary to what one calls today “transnational relations,” *pace* the majority of international relations theorists who see the concept as contributing to the so-called “end of territories.”⁵⁰ From these two points of view, then, one must “rescue history from the nation,” following Prasenjit Duara’s provocative formulation,⁵¹ by recognising not only the heterogeneity of territories but also the practices of extraversion and cultural hybridisation that subtend state-formation. Much progress has been made in this direction over the past few years, even if remnants of the national idea continue to pollute the anthropological and historiographical study of various countries and socio-political movements. Our task is now to liberate ourselves from this idea.

In this regard, *the reconciliation between an historical sociology of the State and the cultural turn* of the late 20th century is rich in opportunities, but also in dangers. Although it does not constitute a specific theory of meaning or interpretation, the “cultural turn” in the social sciences reaffirmed the “constitutive role of culture” and rehabilitated the place of subjectivity; in this sense, it contradicted the objectivist approach, inclined to postulate a “homogenous form of human subjectivity across time and place” and determined by material, non-cultural factors.⁵² The first risk of this return to the cultural dimension of social life naturally concerns the latter’s reification and theoretical construction as a holistic, overdetermined totality. Let us say straightaway: to theoretically challenge the culturalist approach and ideology is the *sine qua non*

⁴⁸ Bayart, *L’Etat en Afrique*, pp. 317ff.

⁴⁹ Giovanni Levi, *Inheriting power: the story of an exorcist*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988.

⁵⁰ To borrow the title of Bertrand Badie’s *La Fin des territoires: Essai sur le désordre international et sur l’utilité sociale du respect*, Paris, Fayard, 1995

⁵¹ Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1995. See also Gruzinski, *Les Quatre parties du monde*.

⁵² George Steinmetz, “Introduction: culture and the state” in George Steinmetz, ed., *State/Culture: State-formation after the Cultural Turn*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1999, p. 2.

of any political analysis dealing with so-called cultural practices.⁵³ The second danger of cultural studies has to do with the discipline's privileging of discourse and its lack of concern for the materiality and corporeality of social practices. The third risk, and an almost inevitable consequence, is that the social sciences will fall prey to "magical idealism," or even hermeticism.⁵⁴

In an historical sociology of the State, culture cannot be abstracted from its political economy, the latter understood according to Weber's conceptualisation. But once this has been established, it becomes imperative to understand cultural practices and representations, oneiric and symbolic activities, imaginary figures, passions, values, and corporeality, as long as each is seized within its own historicity.⁵⁵ In accordance with the culturalist credo, culture is indeed constitutive of power relations, exploitation, and solidarity. Gramsci's conception of hegemony says precisely this, and Marx himself, in a cutting pre-Freudian formulation, identified the role of desire in the functioning of capitalism: "in providing for your pleasure, I fleece you."⁵⁶ He defined political economy, the "science of *wealth*," as "a true moral science, the most moral of all the sciences," in pre-Weberian terms: "This science of marvellous industry is simultaneously the science of asceticism, and its true ideal is the ascetic but extortionate miser and the ascetic but productive slave.... Self-denial, the denial of life and of all human needs, is its cardinal doctrine."⁵⁷ And finally he built the foundations of a "praxéologie motrice"⁵⁸ of capitalism: "...."⁵⁹

⁵³ Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*.

⁵⁴ Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1990.

⁵⁵ Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*; Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*; G. Steinmetz, dir., *State/Culture*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, reprinted in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Richard C. Tucker, Norton and Norton, New York, 1972, p. 94.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 172.

⁵⁸ J.-P. Warnier, *Construire la culture matérielle. L'homme qui pensait avec ses doigts*, Paris, PUF, 1999.

⁵⁹ K. Marx, *op.cit.*, pp. 242-243. ["Obectivation de soi et affirmation de soi dans le socialisme," "Premiere critique de l'economie politique"]

It is not surprising, therefore, that one of the first studies to treat a social class as a “community” should have been the work of a Marxist historian: E. P. Thompson’s study on the formation of the working class in England. Nor should it be astonishing that the latter introduced the concept of “moral economy” into scientific debate. German *Alltagsgeschichte*, for instance, drew inspiration from Thompson’s seminal work in the attempt to overcome “a fundamental methodological difficulty”⁶⁰ confronted by “historical social science” (*Historische Sozialwissenschaft*: essentially the school of Bielefeld, but Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Jürgen Kocka in particular). “How is it possible to comprehend and to present the dual constitution of historical processes, the simultaneity of given and produced relationships, the complex interdependence of encompassing structures and the agency of ‘subjects,’ the relationships obtaining among the circumstances of life, production, and authority, and the experiences and modes of behaviour of those affected by these circumstances?” asks, for example, Hans Medick.⁶¹ And, to clarify: “In theory and in practice, historical social science has devoted itself insufficiently to the problem of how to come to know structures such as class relations or relations of production and authority in their ‘structuring.’ These relations are always transmitted through cultural meanings and social practice; we have to know them as changeable and changing components and at the same time as the results of situated actions and experiences of concrete persons, of groups, classes, cultures, and ways of living. For only when these questions are dealt with could the ‘history of society’ be done and written as effective social history, in which the dynamics of historical praxis is shown, rather than as a history of society reduced to the combination of ‘dimensions,’ ‘factors,’ and ‘subsystems’ of the historical process. . . . In this context it is not surprising that only scant attention has been paid to the problem of culture, that is, to the problem of the cultural formation and concretization, conversion and ‘generation’ of structures and situated actions. If culture has become a topic or subject, then only in the sense of a social subsystem that is relatively static and closed off upon itself, but not as a central dynamic

⁶⁰ Hans Medick, “‘Missionaries in the Row Boat’? Ethnological Ways of Knowing as a Challenge to Social History” in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Jan. 1987), 76.

⁶¹ Medick, 76.

and formative moment in the everyday ‘realization’ and transformation of social, economic, and political relations.”⁶²

To remedy this deficiency, his colleague Alf Lüdtke proposes an entirely Marxist direction: “The focus is on the forms in which people have ‘appropriated’ – while simultaneously transforming – ‘their’ world. From this vantage, conditions for action appear ambivalent in their complexity: though given, they are in equal measure a product. These conditions change and acquire nuance within such ‘reappropriations.’ Hence, historical subjects are not detached from the social ‘field-of-force’ (E. P. Thompson). Initially, what this implies is that they cannot be considered ‘autonomous’ personalities. It is not a question of ‘ego strength’ as a counterpole, pitted against social conditions for expression. Individuals and groups do not construct the profile of the modes in which they perceive and act in some sphere *removed and beyond* the web of social relations – no, such a profile is generated *in and through* that very web. Acts in which people distance themselves from social rules utilise (or refer) to socially understood languages, discourses and codes: the matrix of resistance also marks a social relation. Of course, that relation is created anew by the subjects in concrete situations, and in a manner specific *for them*.”⁶³

Our interest in *Alltagsgeschichte* is thus twofold. Firstly, non-European societies “appropriated” the West by and large within the sphere of moral economy. According to a Yoruba proverb, “leaf becomes soap”⁶⁴: men adapt to their new environments by adopting the latter’s characteristics, just as the leaves enclosing bars of traditional black soap dissolve progressively into lather. So, too, in a colonial or post-colonial situation, native societies absorb the coloniser’s culture through the course of cultural or ethical conflicts, often mediated by material practices. John Lonsdale has thus analysed the Mau-Mau rebellion not as a “class war” but as a “moral war”: “That was partly what made it so terrifying to its Kikuyu opponents. Victims were not structurally knowable; morally negotiated reputation was what counted – and

⁶² Medick, 78.

⁶³ Alf Lüdtke, “What is the History of Everyday Life and Who Are Its Practitioners?” *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Lüdtke, trans. William Templer, Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1995, p. 7.

⁶⁴ J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2000, chapter 9.

who, in the bitter parochial conflicts over land, could predict that?”⁶⁵ Again in Kenya, the “clitoridectomy crisis” of 1928-1930 was an early example of a “moral war”; it tore apart the Christians and first nationalists by calling into question representations and practices of sexuality.

Secondly, the subjectivity of actors, heretofore a topic of irrefutable importance, can no longer be conceived of in terms of the autonomy and individuality of subjects. Subjectivity is defined, rather, as a process of subjectivation, according to Foucault’s understanding of the term – a process that “constitutes moral subjects” through the production of “lifestyles.” The *constituted* subject matters less than the *constitution* of the subject; the subject’s action less than the action that produces the Subject (and in which the action of the subject participates).⁶⁶ Let us listen to Hadrian again: “To be sure, I perceive in this diversity and disorder the presence of a person; but his form seems nearly always to be shaped by the pressure of circumstances; his features are blurred, like a face reflected in water.”⁶⁷ “Lifestyles” are produced and practiced through “everyday activities in which an element of ‘repetitiveness’ predominates”: “this perspective, as elaborated by Peter Borscheid, asserts that via repetition, ‘everyday thinking and action become pragmatic,’ because routines function to ‘relieve’ the individual of constant uncertainty or doubts.”⁶⁸ One hears here an echo of Max Weber’s “quotidianisation” (*Veralltäglicung*), yet another source of inspiration for the German “historians of everyday life.”

Panels

Restoring the historicity of non-European societies; distancing ourselves from the “grand narratives” (*grands récits*) of the nation; understanding the actions of an ensemble of social groups that legitimise or contest “domination” (*Herrschaft*); and attending to the “quotidianisation” of the “conduct of life” as stylisations of moral economies that constitute the

⁶⁵ B. Berman, J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

⁶⁶ J.-F. Bayart, *Le Gouvernement du monde*, *op. cit.*, pp. 198ff and “Total subjectivation”, in J.-F. Bayart, J.-P. Warnier, eds., *Matière à politique*, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-253

⁶⁷ Yourcenar, p. 24.

⁶⁸ Lüdtke, “What Is the History of Everyday Life?” *op. cit.* p. 5.

legitimacy of “domination,” “voluntary servitude,” and hegemony: these are the four pillars upon which we may lean in order to move forward.

Our conferences can be arranged into three general categories. The first concerns the moral economy of actors, or of particular actors, involved in state-formation. The second interrogates the juncture between political ideas and the moral economy of the State. The third considers the connections between transnational relations, the moral economy of actors, and state-formation.

There is no need to stress any further the synergy between the production of “conducts of life” and the production of relations of power and social inequality. Weber, Elias, Foucault, and Bourdieu are there to help us in this analysis. Similarly, we are well aware today that colonial situations, as well as contemporary globalisation, function not only as historical experiences of oppression, alienation, and anomie, but also as experiences of subjectivation insofar as they “constitute moral subjects.”⁶⁹ On the other hand, it is perhaps not superfluous to underscore the importance, for Weber, of “social strata” as “carriers” (*Trägerschichten*) of “conducts of life” that give rise to the development of “types of men” (*Menschentum*); the latter are often “created by the conjunction of components of religious origin and components of economic origin.”⁷⁰ In effect, these two concepts appear to be directly related to Weber’s theory of multicausality and his opposition to all monistic determinism.⁷¹ They intervene at the precise point where the “granite peaks of the inevitable” meet “the landslips of chance” of which Hadrian speaks.⁷² What is more, the social strata that are “carriers” of different lifestyles – *as well as to their recomposition over time* – are key elements in the long-term historicity of non-European societies. Literate bureaucrats in China, Brahmans in India, warriors in Japan, *priyayi* in Java, merchants in the Indian Ocean, prophets in Central Africa, *marrani* or slaves in the Atlantic Ocean: each of these social categories played a crucial role in the imbrication of moral

⁶⁹ Bayart, *Le Gouvernement du monde*, *op. cit.*, chapters 4-6.

⁷⁰ M. Weber, *Sociologie des religions*, Paris, Gallimard, 1996, p. 138.

⁷¹ S. Kalberg, *La Sociologie historique comparative de Max Weber*, Paris, La Découverte, M.A.U.S.S., 2002, pp. 96ff.

⁷² Yourcenar, 24-25.

economies, the production of “traditions,” and the “imagining” of the nation throughout the course of the mercantilist and imperial “encounters.”⁷³ Furthermore, the phrase “carrier strata” (*Trägerschichten*) immediately implies the presence of social institutions that the latter inhabit, especially over a *longue durée*. Sanctuaries, *comptoirs*, Islamic charitable endowments (*waqf*), plantations, and pilgrimage sites exemplify the historicity of non-European societies without necessarily obliterating the newer social institutions that emerged during the last two centuries of globalisation: schools, hospitals, businesses, armies, clerical religious organisations, non-governmental organisations, all vectors of “universal bureaucratisation.”⁷⁴

Against this backdrop, the analysis of “conducts of life” pertaining to a “moral economy” and understood in relationship to State-formation stands to gain from a passably enigmatic notion that John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman have used to describe the latter process: “State-formation – *the vulgarization of power*, and state-building – its cultivation, were contradictory processes that complemented each other.”⁷⁵ Although subject to a systematic inventory (and the approval of John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman!) we might nonetheless say that this expression, “the vulgarisation of power,” has at least three different connotations, thereby allowing us to see the interconnection of three perspectives: moral economy of the state, political economy (in Weber’s sense), and *Alltagsgeschichte*.

1) The vulgarisation of power, made up of “self-serving actions and trade-offs,”⁷⁶ concerns the relationship between social groups and State power, and in particular the strategies employed by individual groups or private actors to co-opt public policies. The term refers to “social division” and the “corruption of authority”⁷⁷: in other words, to accountability and moral economies of power and ethnicity, two recurrent issues in John Lonsdale’s work. Thus defined, the vulgarisation of power may at times overlap with the appropriation of colonial structures by

⁷³ Cf for example Bertrand, *Etat colonial, noblesse et nationalisme à Java*, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Weber, “Parliament and Government in Germany,” *op. cit.* p. 155.

⁷⁵ Berman, Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁷⁶ *Ibid* p. 5

⁷⁷ *Ibid* p. 37

native social groups, for example “the ability of a growing minority of Africans to use colonial institutions to further their own interests.”⁷⁸

2) At the same time, the vulgarisation of power presents itself as a logic of accommodation between state and market: “the building of power was subverted by the power of markets, in capital, labour and commodities.”⁷⁹ The vulgarisation of power belongs to an historical sociology of capitalism and the state, whose paradoxical character was underscored by Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch, and which Marx, Braudel, and Perry Anderson revealed to be founded upon concatenations. The concept notably designates the straddling of positions, between power and accumulation, as examined by Cohen and Kitching with regard to Kenya. It refers more generally to the process of “privatising the State” (Béatrice Hibou) by means of diverse “discharges” (*Verpachtung* or *Überweisung* according to Weber). Here, the vulgarisation of power speaks even more pointedly to processes of primitive accumulation, the constitution of social inequality, even the formation of a dominant class.

3) The vulgarisation of power also coincides with the co-opted indigenous elites’ appropriation of the “foreign” colonial State in “deep, familiar cultural terms.”⁸⁰ In this sense, the term concerns the transition from a “Conquest State” to a “second colonial occupation” (or “ethical” colonisation, in the case of the Dutch West Indies), and intersects with the problematic of hegemony as described by Gramsci. It thus speaks implicitly of the “invention of tradition” which binds together the colonial “encounter” or “dialogue,” legitimates “domination” at the hands of native or foreign elites, and permits the “imagining” of the nation as the “housing” of bureaucratic servitude.

In each of these senses, the vulgarisation of power comprises the “quotidianisation” of lifestyles, themselves constitutive of domination and in particular of bureaucratic domination. We must grasp them not only in their discursive dimension, but, as we have said, in their imaginary

⁷⁸ Ibid p. 192

⁷⁹ Ibid p. 36

⁸⁰ Lonsdale, “Les procès de Jomo Kenyatta. Destruction et construction d’un nationaliste africain », *Politix* 17 (66), 2004, p. 167.

practices, their materiality, and their “techniques of the body,” following the latter’s conceptualisation by Marcel Mauss and Pierre Bourdieu. Veritable hegemony cannot exist unless domination is literally incorporated into the day-to-day “repetitions” of routines and “common sense.” Thus, the “Perfect Tradition” of Javanese *priyayi* or the Moroccan *Makhzen* exercise their control as much through driving attitudes and comportmental aesthetics as through discourses and signs.⁸¹ And “resistance,” which emerges from within power relations rather than opposing them from the outside, is mediated by the same “corporeal hexis” that forms the basis of domination. Hence the attention that one must pay to the conflicts of subjectivation that so often have the body, whether of the indigenous person or the coloniser, as stake or support.⁸² Under globalisation, nothing has changed: the body remains just as polemical as it was during the colonial period.⁸³ Here Foucault’s concept of “governmentality” as the “contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self”⁸⁴ is certainly more precise than that of hegemony.

The question one must pose from historical situation to historical situation is this: can the vulgarisation of power – as a “conduct of life” fashioned through extraversion, authenticity claims, and “numbed imperatives”⁸⁵ that white or indigenous bodies inherited from particular histories – indeed be considered “the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from the practical sense”⁸⁶? Is it pertinent, in a colonial or post-colonial situation, to speak of a “body hexis” as a “political mythology realized, em-bodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking”⁸⁷? In short, is this a veritable *habitus* founded upon precise corporeal techniques; forged by “deep-rooted

⁸¹ Tozy, *Monarchie et islam politique au Maroc, op. cit.* ; Bertrand, *Etat colonial, noblesse et nationalisme à Java, op. cit.*

⁸² The literature on this subject is immense. See, for example, E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies. The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2001.

⁸³ Bayart, *Le Gouvernement du monde*, chapter 6.

⁸⁴ Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton, eds. Amherst, the University of Massachusetts Press, 1988, p. 19.

⁸⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990, p. 69

⁸⁶ Bourdieu, p. 68

⁸⁷ Bourdieu, p. 69-70

linguistic and muscular patterns of behaviour” either reactivated or neutralised by diverse performative rituals of power; a mode of being that *gives rise to “resistance” itself* across the various incarnations of “tradition,” such as religious or millenarist movements, “nationalisms,” or cultural movements like dance or fashion? One cannot respond to this type of question unless one takes into account the complex historicity of “quotidian” corporeal practices, what Bourdieu calls “values given body, *made* body.”⁸⁸ But in order to do so, we must go beyond the all-too-unequivocal conception of the *habitus* offered by the author of *Le Sens pratique*, as well as the often caricatural definition of the discipline that hinders much work of Foucauldian derivative.

At the same time, the driving praxeology of domination cannot simply abandon the sphere of ideas, for these ideas are more often than not made of flesh and blood, even if they are matrices of power and inequality. Too recall the eminence of intellectual, ideological, or religious movements in the process of state-formation and the vulgarisation of power is not to fall back into the errors of magical idealism. Liberalism, socialism, nationalism, fascism, communism, the great universal religions, as well as “portmanteau” concepts such as “reform” – including bureaucratic, Islamic, Christian, nationalist, liberal-democratic or socialist-communist reform – have all configured political and economic hierarchies between social groups. These ideas are also composed of particular modes of conduct, often antagonistic and easily discernable thanks to their material or corporeal manifestations. The liberal, the communist, the reformer, or the religious believer do not necessarily share the same material culture; they do not dress or wear their hair in the same manner; they do not participate in similar forms of entertainment; nor do they, at times, share the same forms of sexuality.⁸⁹ To be interested in ideas means embracing much more than the simple words or writings of those who profess them. It also requires one to observe this evident truth, which theoreticians of international relations curiously neglect: social institutions and transnational cultural movements, in addition to markets and imperialism are carriers of most grand ideologies of state-formation and the vulgarisation of power. This was the

⁸⁸ Bourdieu, p. 79

⁸⁹ With regards to India, Cf, for example, C. A. Bayly, “The origins of swadeshi (home industry): cloth and Indian society, 1700-1930” in A. Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, chapter 10, and E. Tarlo, *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*, London, Hurst, 1996.

case with the various incarnations of political Islam, Christian democracy, communism, socialism, liberalism, fascism and nationalism.⁹⁰ One can, moreover, say the same about techniques of the body and material culture, which have gone hand-in-hand with the worldwide circulation of ideas.⁹¹ Whatever the regional military integration, here or there – within the framework of the Warsaw Pact, for example, or more recently that of NATO – there is nothing more national than an army; each one has gone so far as to elaborate its own style of marching, an illustration that Mauss rightly uses to discuss his concept of “body techniques.” Nevertheless, the rate of global diffusion of the military drill and the bureaucratic uniform was lightning-fast: their spread did not fail to raise conflicts of subjectivation in countries where Western military attire offended native moral economies.⁹² The universalisation of the military march provided the army *qua* social institution a good portion of its “corporeal hexis,” just as the idea of the nation endowed it with its ideology and its pathos.

Throughout this colloquium, we have underscored the importance of transnational relations in the elaboration of moral economies and state-formation not simply for the sake of fashionableness or scientific sociability. From the point of view of both moral economy and state-formation, the transnational dimension has been decisive. To recognise this fact is to paradoxically nuance, or clarify, Prasenjit Duara’s provocative watchword, “rescue history from the nation.” For in many cases, as Duara himself has shown, when one studies transnational relations, it is the nation, and the state, that one rediscovers.⁹³ Not that the formation of the nation-state has been the alpha and the omega of the social for two centuries; it has been nourished by multiple “lines of flight” of globalisation, rather than being locked in a zero-sum game with the latter. The phenomenon of “long-distance nationalisms”⁹⁴ is a frequently cited illustration: diasporas, such as Jewish and Armenian communities across the world, maintain

⁹⁰ See for example A.-M. Thiesse, *La Création des identités nationales. Europe XVIII^e-XX^e siècle*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1999.

⁹¹ Bayart, *Le Gouvernement du monde*, *op. cit.*, chapter 6.

⁹² A. Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969, pp. 78-79 and 177.

⁹³ Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, *op. cit.*

⁹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*, Londres, Verso, 1998, chapter 3.

memories of a largely national character. Similarly, the “social remittances”⁹⁵ that migrants repatriate, and which often take the form of familial, sexual, educational, alimentary, vestimentary, or political norms, do not necessarily contradict their sentiment of national belonging.⁹⁶

In the end, state-formation (and the formation of an international system of states) is one facet or function of globalisation. This becomes particularly evident when one considers the elaboration of the moral economies of the political. These latter are bound up in societies’ long-term histories – their relationship with their environments, the structure of their political fields, their practices of wealth-accumulation and solidarity. The moral comprehension of state, goods, money, and social alliances does not occur in a vacuum; rather, it is tributary to a society’s relationship with Others and Otherness, whether religious, cultural, commercial, political, or military. In this regard, however, extraversion is indissociable from the concatenation, or conjunction, of long-standing native ideas, on the one hand, and ideological or normative borrowings, on the other. C. A. Bayly has demonstrated this with respect to *akhlaq* literature and the *swadeshi* movement in 19th century India, and Béatrice Hibou has done the same with regard to reformism in Tunisia. These studies verify once again the fact that globalisation does not erase historicity – in this case the historicity of social or political ideas. In West Africa, Western notions such as Enlightenment and development “encountered” congruent native representations of progress, and from this encounter emerged a number of movements, such as neo-traditionalist Yoruba “cultural nationalism,” whose aim, both socio-political and religious in tenor, was to acquire and adapt imported modernity.⁹⁷ The Young Ottomans appropriated the bureaucratic

⁹⁵ P. Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001.

⁹⁶ F. Adelhah, “Partir sans quitter, quitter sans partir,” *Critique internationale*, 19, April 2003, pp. 141-155 and “Le retour de Sindbad. L’Iran dans le Golfe,” *Les Etudes du CERI*, 53, May 1999.

⁹⁷ Cf J. D. Y. Peel, *Ijeshas and Nigerians. The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom, 1890s-1970s*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983 and *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, *op. cit.*, in particular with regard to the Yoruba notion of *olaju*. See also A. Mbembe, “La palabre de l’indépendance. Les ordres du discours nationaliste au Cameroun (1948-1958)” in J.-F. Bayart, A. Mbembe, C. Toulabor, *Le Politique par le bas en Afrique noire: Contributions à une problématique de la démocratie*, Paris, Karthala, 1992, chapter 5 on the enunciation of “independence” in Bassa terms of *Nkaà Kundè*.

Tanzimat by drawing upon Islamic political ideas.⁹⁸ And in Iran, the constitutional movement of 1906 was heavily inspired by the “Circle of Justice” theory,⁹⁹ whereas today political programs such as Reconstruction, Reform, economic modernisation, environmental protection, or urban planning all fall under the label of “fertilisation” (*abadani*).¹⁰⁰

Question

Our initial curiosity about the synergy between moral economies and state-formation in non-European societies comes down to “study[ing] forms of experience. . . in their history,”¹⁰¹ throughout different moments or configurations of globalisation; these forms emerge at the intersection of the national, the local, and the global, and at the confluence of diverse temporalities of greater or lesser duration. We must apprehend, at once, the processes of universalisation and the “reinvention of difference” (James Clifford) with which the former are consubstantial. The conceptualisations of power and inequality that are incarnated by these processes require additional clarification. From this point of view, the advantage of Foucault’s “governmentality” is that it articulates the relationship between state-formation and “technologies of the self” (and notably of the body) by seizing, in one and the same movement, domination and the resistance to domination, by restoring all the ambivalence and contingency to the process of subjectivation.¹⁰² Foucault’s concept defines, in a complex and dynamic way, historically-situated “governments” and grasps them in their irreducibility, echoing Paul Veyne’s analysis of the evergetic city.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ S. Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought. A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1962.

⁹⁹ N. Sohrabi, “Revolution and state culture: the Circle of Justice and constitutionalism in 1906 Iran” in Steinmetz, ed., *State/Culture, op. cit.*, chapter 8.

¹⁰⁰ Fariba Adelkhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2000.

¹⁰¹ Michel Foucault, “Preface to the History of Sexuality, Volume II,” *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New York, Pantheon Books, 1984, p. 334.

¹⁰² Bayart, *Le Gouvernement du monde, op. cit.* and “Foucault au Congo” in M.-F. Granjon, *Penser avec Michel Foucault: Théorie critique et pratiques politiques*, Paris, Karthala, 2005, chapter 5, as well as *L’Etat en Afrique, op. cit.*

¹⁰³¹⁰³ Paul Veyne, *Le Pain et le cirque: Sociologie historique d’un pluralisme politique*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1976.

In comparing processes of state-formation or different forms of adherence to moral economies, as well as “governmentalities,” “hegemonies,” and “dominations,” an inevitable question is raised: does this intellectual operation make sense? Historian Giovanni Levi’s answer, in his seminar at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, was yes: if we mean by comparison the sharing of questions and not of conclusions. His was an ethos of curiosity. Thus understood, the comparative enterprise is first and foremost a conversation between different researchers, fields of study, and fragments of history. This is, of course, the original meaning of “colloquium.” There are certainly more unpleasant exercises, and it is reassuring to know that comparative politics is not soluble in moral economy.