The core of their argument is that in dealing with parties in Africa, the relation of money, violence, and political process is a mystery that neither their book nor the available literature allows them to illuminate. This conclusion is valid if one takes into account only the works cited in their bibliography. But it could be expanded by looking into other pathways, such as those explored in French literature on the subject. All the relevant questions they pose in this domain fit into the field of political science as applied to sub-Saharan Africa. The simple transfer of paradigms and methods of a discipline developed in North America for contexts in the countries of the North is often faced with insurmountable difficulties that the authors clearly articulate. The answers they await will have to come from long-term qualitative anthropological research. But how many political scientists are ready to invest years of research in the field to address these issues? Conversely, how many anthropologists are sufficiently interested in the political science debates to gain the necessary mastery of the field and to orient their research to these ends?

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Abdeslam M. Maghraoui. *Liberalism without Democracy: Nationhood and Citizenship in Egypt, 1922–1936.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006. xx + 192 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $74.95. Cloth. $21.95. Paper.

The question of how to assess the impact of the "West" without eliding the internal dynamics of change animates many new studies on the history and politics of Egypt. Indeed, the very meaning of the "colonial" in Egyptian history is subject to reexamination. Abdeslam M. Maghraoui attempts to do this by providing a cultural analysis of why liberalism failed in Egypt during the interwar period.

Relying on a linguistic definition of culture derived from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, and drawing on the discourses of a handful of liberal reformers whom he terms "secular modernists," Maghraoui charts the unconscious workings of Egyptian liberalism as essentially the expression of the desire to become "Other," that is, to become European. The exclusionary politics of identity that resulted were, he asserts, the bases of liberalism's failure in Egypt. This heavy-handed application of Lacanian metaphors of self-recognition (such as the "mirror stage" of infants) to explain Egyptian political maturation—or lack thereof—is problematic, to say the least. As a historian of the interwar period in Egypt, I have objections to this study that are primarily of a historical nature and may be overly empiricist; but it is precisely the author's failure to attend to history as more than a reservoir of "telling moments" that undermines the potential theoretical contribution of this work both to history and to the

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author's own discipline of political science.

The promise, as well as the fundamental flaws, of this study might be gleaned from chapter 1, "Colonialism as a Literary and Historical Phenomenon." Leaving aside the very general and dated observations about the usefulness of such postcolonial theorists as Bhabha, Spivak, and Said in developing a nuanced understanding of the colonizer-colonized relationship, there is some value to the author's reading of Lacan alongside Fanon in order to foreground the intangible factors behind the appropriation of liberalism in Egypt. Maghraoui writes, "To reduce the appropriation of Western political institutions to some objective reality, whether social, economic, or cultural, would be equivalent to confusing 'desire,' which is mental, with 'need,' which is physical, thereby privileging biological instinct over meaning in the march toward achieving emancipation" (35). He thus proposes an analysis of cultural artifacts—all textual in the narrow sense—in order "to uncover the logic that structures Egyptian liberal discourse."

In the following three chapters, the 1923 constitution and a select number of passages from books and newspapers published mostly during the interwar period—including a clumsy foray into late eighteenth-century accounts of the French occupation and the modernization of state and society in the nineteenth century—are analyzed in order to expose the underlying logic of "colonial liberalism," which, as far as I can tell, is a wish on the part of some liberals to become European by (re)making Egypt in the image of Europe. The immediate consequence of this alien identification was the definition of Egyptian citizenship and national identity in cultural terms—which in effect excluded from the new political community the majority of Egyptians whose primary identity was still "Arabo-Islamic." In the final chapter, the author surveys some of the democratization literature to demonstrate how institutional and structural approaches alone cannot explain the absence of democracy in the Middle East: "Missing in these approaches," he says, "is the interplay between politics, culture, and identity" (140). He argues that the incessant focus on politics and the emphasis on the formation of subjects through the use of language categories were constitutive features of liberalism itself. These features make it more evident, and therefore more easily subject to critique within colonial contexts.

Along with the analytical and empirical shortcomings that reduce complex processes of subject formation in colonial modernity to a simplistic and antiquated model of cultural diffusion, Maghraoui's insights into the workings of colonialism and liberalism lack meaningful contextualization (55). Missing from his discussions and bibliography are the recent contributions from Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Saba Mahmood, and Timothy Mitchell, to name only a few of the major figures.

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