

Editorial Foreword

VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS The first essay responds to our call for articles on deep histories of the present, wide-angle lenses “combining past and present as a unitary field of vision” (*CSSH* 2005: 233).

Judith Adler shows the lineage connecting themes of current wilderness debates with fourth-century Christian ascetic movements. Such movements idealized empty spaces as the most fitting habitat for ascetics, by virtue of whose existence the world and human life was preserved, a reevaluation of wilderness propagated more widely by the Christianization of Rome. The tradition of ascetic primitivism has its origins in practical forms of early philosophical anthropology and speculative psychology, and is perpetuated in tropes of wilderness as a book of nature, an educator superior to schools, a space whose purity is necessary for the survival of the world, and a wild space that humans are called upon to protect or transform. As millennial traditions of narrative continually offer themselves to our thoughts about the radical transformation of our planet, the author suggests, historians of late antiquity might find themselves “well situated to throw new light on deeply motivating rhetorical tropes of emerging bitter debates.”

DISCIPLINING AND PUNISHING As the state-building practices of disciplining traditional societies come under closer scrutiny, the next two essays illustrate how very important it is to determine who, exactly, is the disciplining agent or what groups are contending over the disciplining power, and how, in practice as well as in law-making, the power of disciplining is deployed.

Early modern states in Europe intruded upon traditional practices to civilize and modernize society, creating the rational discipline necessary for the transition to capitalism—so says a growing body of literature on social disciplining in western Europe. **Sheilagh Ogilvie** closely examines the evidence for social disciplining in eastern Europe, specifically Bohemia, under the very different conditions of a “second serfdom” and refeudalization of the state, arguing that we cannot reach sound conclusions for Europe as a whole without a comparative perspective encompassing west and east. Eastern European societies, her evidence shows, engaged in a process of social disciplining similar to that in western Europe, but without leading to the modernization of the state and the promotion of capitalist markets. Part of the difference is that it was the manor and the peasant commune that were the agents of the process, not the state; and social disciplining regulations were selectively applied by these agents to advance their interests. These

findings for eastern Europe lead to a new reading of the process in Europe generally: “Social disciplining was not an expression of the modernizing forces of the state and the market, but rather of the traditional corporative organization of European local society.”

Oswaldo Pardo follows the jurisdictional dispute between the secular authorities and the mendicant orders of friars who played so exceptionally large a part in the social disciplining of early colonial Mexico. Charged with the conversion of the indigenous peoples, the mendicant orders preferred to retain the authority to discipline and punish errant Indian converts rather than cede authority to secular courts, and missions came to be outfitted with shackles and lock-ups. In their jurisdictional contests with the secular authorities the religious orders could always claim superior knowledge of Indian custom. Shaving the head of the criminal had a double appeal, being traceable to Nahuatl custom and conformable to a model of the disciplining friar as teacher and the punishment as a public penance, whence it could be represented as both indigenous and Christian. Head-shaving was later banned by the Crown to curtail missionaries gaining criminal jurisdiction over colonial subjects, on the basis of competing claims about native custom. The Crown’s position provided a template for future laws limiting missionary authority. Ultimately the friars’ claims of superior knowledge of Indian custom were not sufficient to keep the Indians from coming under secular laws, and their practices of imposing public penance had to give way before the growing jurisdiction of the secular legal system.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE The next two articles examine how diacritics of national, colonial, and religious difference are produced and replicated across time.

József Böröcz analyzes an open letter signed by prominent Hungarian intellectuals thanking France for taking in Romany refugees from Hungary. Identifying France with Europe and Europe with goodness, the letter also implies that France is the model and end of development for the Hungaries of the world. Europe as the “meaning-giving agent of modernization” leaves Eastern Europe occluded, lost in a blind spot of prevailing ideas of modernization and nationalism, according to the author. Drawing upon the subaltern studies theorists Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, and Ranajit Guha, he proposes we re-read the modern histories of statehood and geopolitics in Eastern Europe with tools adapted from the literature of postcolonialism, highlighting similarities between “the rule of colonial difference” and “the rule of European difference” that lies within Europe, dividing east from west. The centerpiece of the article is a pair of classic Hungarian poems, one on the oppressive nature of the international coffee trade, the other in praise of the French Revolution as an international model. The second poem imitates the first but to entirely opposite effect, showing

concretely how the idea of revolutionary France as model cancels out (occludes) the critique of (west) European imperialism. (See also the author's other *CSSH* articles, "Travel-Capitalism: The Structure of Europe and the Advent of the Tourist," 1992: 708–41; and "The Fox and the Raven: The European Union and Hungary Negotiate the Margins of 'Europe,'" 2000: 847–75.)

Mahua Sarkar has interviewed middle-class Muslim and Hindu women in Calcutta and Dhaka, women whose life histories encompass and give personal testimony to the partition of British India into the Republic of India and Pakistan. The author shows how personal memories negotiate constructions of Muslimness that were normalized within British and Hindu nationalist discourses. Private, individual memory is not prior to or innocent of nationalist narratives but, to the contrary, is powerfully shaped by them, whether negatively or positively.

SEEING STATES The concluding set of articles concern different ways in which states are rendered visible to us, and the nature of the resulting images. The first concerns kinglists of the Inka state, rendered unclearly through colonial documents but which may be clearly seen with aid from archaeology; the second the formation of national publics through the performance of national commemorations in India and Turkey.

R. Alan Covey, responding to our call (*CSSH* 2004: 3), has produced a fine example of the melding of archaeology and history. The 1586 chronicle of Balboa has been used for the last sixty years to establish the Inka succession to kingship and imperial expansion. New archaeological evidence, the author says, calls the plausibility and completeness of the succession into question, especially the father-to-son succession for twelve generations, which is also shown to be implausible through worldwide comparison. The kinglist was established in the heat of debate between Sepulveda and Las Casas about the legitimacy of Spanish conquest. The main effect was a kinglist that simplified the succession by eliminating collaterals who had ruled, giving a misleading idea of Andean succession practices under the Inkas, which the author corrects.

Srirupa Roy argues that so far from the public sphere being a space for rational-critical discourse autonomous from the state, as Habermas says, publics are produced by the state, through visual practices and political rituals such as those of national commemoration, though they do so in varying ways. Thus in India, Republic Day celebrations produce the public as *variety* and *difference*, while Turkey's comparable celebrations produce the public as *sameness* and *uniformity*. National days of commemoration are occasions to speak of *lack*, of goals in the national project that are not yet met. While forming concrete images of the public, national commemorations also make the state visible; they become occasions for "seeing a state."