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Editorial Foreword

BEING CHINESE ABROAD One of the world's oldest and largest civilizations, China has produced a diverse array of immigrant and diaspora populations. In the modern world system, the Chinese abroad have been manual laborers, merchants, scholars, farmers, venture capitalists, shopkeepers, crime lords, refugees, and political activists. Despite radical changes in their socioeconomic and political status over the last four hundred years, the Chinese in diaspora have been repeatedly subject to essentializing models of racial and cultural difference. The factors that have sent millions of Chinese overseas, and the specificities of their adaptations to life in new worlds, are sidelined by accounts of commercial success (or exclusiveness, or inability to assimilate, or model minority status) that locate Chinese identity in places and times that have not been shaped by the process of migration itself.

Kwee Hui Kian and **Sasha Auerbach** show us how movement and new contexts of community formation endlessly reshaped what it meant to be Chinese in the late British Empire and over five hundred years of migration into Southeast Asia. Auerbach emphasizes the importance of class distinctions, inviting us to look through and beyond race in roughly the ways Chinese immigrants in England and Australia tried (and often failed) to do. Kwee Hui Kian unpacks the methods of Chinese commercial success, finding durable and transportable means of establishing credit and building networks of support based on place of origin and religious ritual. In each case, economic inequalities and cross-cutting solidarities internal to Chinese diaspora communities are reshaped in new surroundings, a negotiation that sets new conditions for migration, settlement, and return.

COLONIAL KNOWLEDGE COLLABORATIVE The great oddity of early critical scholarship on Orientalism is just how Orientalist it now seems. For Edward Said, the Middle East was a product of the Western colonial imagination. He was reluctant to explore how (and to what extent) Arab and Muslim subjects had participated in the construction of Orientalist knowledge; it was enough to admit they had internalized it. Not all colonial knowledge was collaborative, after all, and collaborations were seldom pursued on equal terms. Still, the decision to focus critique on the forms of Orientalism that predominated in the metropole, in European languages, was an obstacle to more nuanced accounts of how colonialism actually worked. Now that most post/colonial scholars have adopted the doctrine of the co-creation of metropole and colony, tradition and modernity, self and other, the key analytical challenge is no longer to grant agency to the subaltern (a gesture that contained elaborate

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misrecognitions of its own) but to trace the institutional and interpersonal relations through which post/colonial knowledge, as an unequal dialogue, has assumed its hegemonic, oppositional, and counterintuitive forms.

Samantha Iyer and **Gregory Mann** take us to the offices, libraries, seminar rooms, prisons, and other workshops where colonial knowledge was made through close, often vexed collaborations between rulers and subjects, between old and new political regimes, and between eclipsed and ascendant theories of global change. Iyer traces American versions of "development" back to early population debates in colonial India, an engine of demographic knowledge that was maintained by British and Indian policy makers and public intellectuals. Colonial demography, Iyer contends, influenced the early-twentieth-century American approaches to immigration and assimilation that would eventually give rise to development theory. Giving even closer attention to personal connections, Mann considers how the partnership of Georges Balandier and Mamadou Madeira Keita, who worked together in a French research institute in Guinea in the late 1940s, affected their subsequent careers. Balandier would become a leading figure in francophone postcolonial studies; Keita became a prominent anti-colonial activist in West Africa and a well-placed politician in Mali and Guinea. Their career trajectories, which overlapped in the archives in Conakry, soon diverged, leading to government posts, professorships, exile, and imprisonment, but as Mann argues, their commitments to anti-colonial activism and engaged social science continued to evolve in parallel, like "strands of a double helix."

THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND INDIAN POLITICS After generations of service to regnant theories of capitalist development, disenchantment, and individualism, Protestantism is now caught between its status as a religious tradition and its role as a gateway to secular modernity. It is hard to say if this is a privilege or a handicap. The global profile of Protestantism is changing rapidly. In matters of doctrine and worship, the Pentecostal faith healer and the Calvinist pastor differ from each other markedly, and the worldwide spread of their churches corresponds to equally pronounced differences in social class and political style. Although Protestants have tried to be in the world but not of it, they transform political culture almost everywhere they go, and in keeping with divine command, they have gone "into all the world," not only to "preach the gospel to every nation," but to colonize, buy and sell, enslave, dispossess, and rule. The Protestant ethic is more visible, and its effects are harder to explain in conventionally religious terms, the further one moves from its point of origin in Europe. One could argue that Protestantism, as a discursive tradition, has not been exclusively Christian (in its core message or its worldly effects) for most of its history.

With colonial Madras as their backdrop, **Rupa Viswanath** and **Bernard Bate** explore the translation of Protestant motifs into popular Indian politics in

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the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The conversion of "untouchables" to Christianity, a process that required an authentic, freely-given confession of faith, prompted Hindu elites to question whether such conversions were undertaken sincerely and without "material allurement." As Viswanath argues, this tactical response to Protestant notions of individualism turned authenticity into a central aspect of public religious culture in India, and recent anti-conversion laws are based on the lingering suspicion that the poor cannot make spiritual decisions that are genuinely free. In his analysis of a parallel trend, Bate describes how the advent of a Tamil political public in the 1920s was influenced by Protestant preaching styles. Local political leaders, modeling their speeches on the sermons of Christian missionaries, began to speak directly to workers, lower castes, and women. Just as Protestant clerics appealed to the hearts and minds of individual sinners, a new generation of Indian orators enlisted ordinary people in anti-colonial politics by addressing them in their native languages, a tactic that reproduced much of the ideology of conviction (and authenticity) that underlay Christian missionizing efforts.

AGREEING TO DIS/AGREE The unanimous vote is an ambiguous political event. It can stand for shared convictions or fear of punishment. It produces jubilation in some cases, discontent and muttering in others. Consensus can be difficult to generate and even harder to maintain. In modern nation-states, where the field of agreement can hold millions of actors, political consensus necessarily produces large cohorts of "losers," opposition (loyal and otherwise), minority constituencies, and marginalized views. This is why unanimity is a specialized tool of governance; it eliminates opposition altogether, but it can also prevent realistic decision making. When complete agreement is important, the issues at stake have a doctrinal, existential feel, and dissent, if it persists, can lead to banishment, the show trial, or political fragmentation. Insistence on unity, on a shared interpretation of events, is the moment at which democratic impulses morph into other modes of authority, belonging, and truth.

Jane E. Goodman and **Alexi Arieff** and **Mike McGovern** consider the costs and benefits of political agreement. For Goodman, who studies reformist theatre troupes in French Algeria, unanimity is literally acted out in plays that showed political reformers bringing Algerians to a unified support of modernity, science, Islam, Arab culture, and (eventually) national independence. This political message produced and demanded total agreement, a theatrical effect that, Goodman argues, reflected village patterns of decision making, Islamic ideas of oneness, and solidarity in opposition to French rule. Staged unity also foreshadowed problems that would explode during the Algerian civil war of the 1990s. Arieff and McGovern confront a political scene in which political agreement is interwoven with claims to historical truth. This blend threatens the stability of Guinea, a nation in which unified support for

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the Ahmed Sékou Touré regime has been replaced by a collective desire to make sense of the purges and repression (but also the solidarity and national progress) that marked Guinea's post-independence political culture. Calls for retroactive justice, truth commissions, and public apologies have been divisive and could trigger ethnic conflict. The "real truth," Arieff and McGovern suggest, is lodged between calls for retribution and reparation, and Guineans must now decide which outcome is the firmer foundation on which to build new visions of national unity.

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