

Editorial Foreword

SOCIAL LIVES OF CLASS Class structures define and constrain but, other than as a heuristic or second-order analytic, they never stand free and apart. Class is practiced—activated and embedded in everyday acts, in bodies and words as well as in institutions and regimes of rule and exchange.

In “Social Theory and Everyday Marxists: Russian Perspectives on Epistemology and Ethics,” **Anna Kruglova** offers an ethnography of a vernacular Marx as he lives on in the mundane routines, negotiations, and discourses of inhabitants of a provincial city, Perm. Many of the key terms and phrases relied upon by academics in critical theory reappear in the everyday schemas, stories, and histories of these Russians—in technologies of self, the practices of affective and sexual give-and-take, and in the ways they describe the moral economies of work, labor, and rest as alternated between the city and the countryside homestead, or *dacha*. Kruglova conveys not only the quotidian afterlives of social theory but also, and more critically, the ways in which anthropologists’ theoretical stories and the narratives informants tell each other in their workaday existences mirror and mimic each other. What is the work of critical theory when such theory is already the native tongue?

Jonah Stuart Brundage interprets the transformation of an early modern warrior class in Europe into a class of landed aristocrats. In the classical case of France, Norbert Elias famously argued for the rise of the monarchic state as the key to this pacification. Brundage focuses instead on the counter-case of England, where the state long remained weak yet a similar decline of violence occurred. Brundage finds his documentary evidence in the changing nature of the hunt, which initially mimicked warfare by foregrounding the event of “the kill,” but came to later highlight “the chase,” and the spectacle of gentry at leisure. He argues that violence declined in England as the landowning class, faced with losing much of their power after the emancipation of serfs, began to master the language of law. In this argument, the decline of violence was less due to the unfolding authority of a monarchic state than to the growing devotion to promulgating written laws in the House of Commons. This latter hailed a new set of literary, bureaucratic, and legal skills that came to characterize the aristocratic class, and eclipse the techniques of war.

The problem of the making of gentry or properly socialized elites is likewise central in **Pamela Kea** and **Katrin Maier**’s study of what they call “prestige migration.” Inverting a long colonial and postcolonial tradition of elite Nigerians sending their children to Britain for education and polishing, many present-day Britons of West African origin, now resident in London, choose

to send their children to elite African boarding schools. The aim of this new diasporic form, a Lagos-to-London nexus reversed, serves to provincialize Europe but also to cultivate certain characteristics deemed as now virtually lost to Britain but still vital in Africa. These include respect for elders, appreciation of heritage, and moral values of hard work and discipline. These values are cultivated via corporal punishment, among other techniques, viewed as a traditional practice of socialization in Nigeria. Kea and Maier show that corporal punishment at Nigerian boarding schools is a legacy of nineteenth-century British missionary schools. Thus, and paradoxically, the nostalgia for “African values” (in this case usually Yoruba) is actually inflected by the brutal severity of British colonial education.

TEXTUAL PRESTIGE Three essays in this issue take up the question of textual production and its nineteenth-century yields in political and legal contexts where multiple authorities existed in collusion or contest. **Sonia Neela Das** leads us to nineteenth-century French colonial India, Pondicherry, where a relatively minor colonial press—that of the Mission Étrangères de Paris—undertook a radical quest. It sought nothing less than the perfectibility of language in its texts, in the form of Tamil grammars, dictionaries, and other books. This textual production served as a site of convergence of Jesuit Catholic and scientific ideals, as well as their inverse, such that notions of religious falsehood, scientific error, and linguistic irregularity were also joined and rendered as interchangeable signs. If Orientalist text production generated new representations of colonial subjects, it also set in motion new ideas of authorship, translation, and perfection. Even more, the quest for the perfect texts freed of irregularities served, Das shows, as a cipher of putative imperial victory in the contest between French and British colonial regimes. These Tamil texts circulated well beyond French India to other sites of the empire, including French Guiana, carried by Tamil-speaking indentured laborers.

Texts assume a different sort of prestige in **Jessica M. Marglin’s** essay, “Written and Oral in Islamic Law,” which explores the ontological status of documentary versus oral testimony in Islamic law. The standard view is that in Islamic law, oral testimony of witnesses was privileged over documents. Since only Muslims were permitted to bear evidence against another Muslim, Jews and Christians should have been at a severe legal disadvantage in the Islamic world. Yet this was hardly the case. Marglin demonstrates that Jews made constant use of the courts in Morocco to resolve disputes, including with Muslims, and often with success. Among other strategic moves, they used notarized documents that could obtain a status roughly equivalent to oral evidence. Such documents certified and stood in for a given number of testimonies presented before a notary, comprised of a class of professional scribes known as *‘udul*, “just witnesses.” In the Moroccan Islamic courts where the Maliki school of shari’a law obtained, Jews and Christians played on a more even legal field

than has been suspected. Marglin's intervention opens important questions about the relationship of the written to the oral in the historiography of Islamic law.

Intellectual textual production in the form of textbooks, newspapers, poetry compendiums, and commentaries is the topic of **Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular's** study of late nineteenth-century Bosnia, "Alternative Muslim Modernities: Bosnian Intellectuals in the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires." This was a site and moment of change from Ottoman to Habsburg control. It was also a complex crossroads of peoples—Slavs, Muslims, Ottomans, and Habsburgs—and a dense confluence of forces, including imperial policy, intellectual currents, and linked economies. Amzi-Erdogdular's essay unpacks a set of key texts and the lives of their authors, a cohort of intellectual elites that served as social agents of a processual modernity. This was a modernity not imposed from without, but rather developed from within Islam. Moreover, as Amzi-Erdogdular demonstrates, it was intellectual continuity rather than rupture that characterized the Habsburg takeover of Ottoman Bosnia Herzegovina.

REGISTERS OF INDIGENEITY The Indigenous exists at multiple levels: in the historical embedding of a people with a given landsite and ecosystem most obviously, but also in language, politics, religion, and a lived experience of separateness from settler-states and their progeny. Still, Indigenous peoples' survival depends in key respects on settler-states and their diverse codes and degrees of recognition. Essays by **Uditi Sen** and **Krista Maxwell** each explore registers of recognition that, though applied to dispossess indigenous peoples' of autonomy, were presented as liberal or humanitarian interventions: the construct of "empty land," or *terra nullius*, in Sen's contribution; and the construct of the Indigenous "child-victim," in Maxwell's.

Sen considers how the Andaman Islands shifted from a putative penal colony to a sacred and redemptive space of Indian nationalism and heritage, complete with Indigenous "reserves" for the Jarawas after Indian independence in 1947. Yet this version of settler colonialism masqueraded as the development of "backward" land, and the "protection of the aboriginal," yielding insidious new acronyms, from PTGs—"primitive tribal groups"—to PVTGs—"particularly vulnerable tribal groups." Sen shows how the casting of indigenous Andaman Islanders in this role was indelibly imprinted with depictions of geographic emptiness.

Maxwell explores the oscillations between contempt for Indigenous dissidents in Canada like the Mohawk and (performatively) heartfelt sympathy for the Indigenous child-victim. Bridging them is a public policy of "Aboriginal healing" crafted by the state to address the historical trauma caused by the Canadian residential school system, which mirrored Australia in its child-removal interventions. Why, Maxwell poignantly asks, is the Indigenous child-victim, whether past or present, such a convenient foil for the public cultures of

settler states? She answers that such performances of “settler-humanitarianism,” “settler-sympathy,” and “reconciliation” coopt practices of actual Indigenous healing, disfiguring them to mask historical processes of domination. In this new version of dispossession, moreover, actual Indigenous children are neutralized in their rightful capacity as social actors.

AUTHORITARIANISM: A REVIEW ESSAY Authoritarianism has risen again, not only on some rogue-state margin but in the very center of power, radically remaking the global order and its visible futures. **Michael Meng** presents an incisive review of both new research and recent translations of classics by Kojève and Foucault that remain prescient for any historically sophisticated understanding of authoritarianism in its present modes. Meng directs our attention to narrative as a buttress of authoritarianism, and how such narratives work in a given moment of crisis. Hardly “summer reading,” but definitively *must* reading.

Famously and not without reason, *CSSH* is often viewed as a formidable if slow-moving traditionalist in the world of academic journals, whether in its privileging of rigor over flash, its hands-on editorial process in a world of increasing automation, or its long-familiar deep-green cover. But *CSSH* is also at the cutting edge of social science research and its communication. Today we are proud to announce the launch of a new website and welcome **Susanne Unger** to our staff as its curator. The new *CSSH* site includes features like “Behind the Scenes,” where authors present short reflections on the actual research process that led to their essay, and “Under the Rubric,” where two or more authors in a given issue exchange ideas on a shared topic salient to both their articles. It also presents the latest in course syllabi, revisits classic essays a decade or more after their first publication to ask their authors about what has changed and, under the subheading “In Dialogue,” convenes roundtable conversations on pressing issues of our time. The *CSSH* portal thickens and deepens our print journal in manifold ways, filling in the visual surround, listening carefully to the ambient noise, and presenting crucial new resources for reflection. Please visit the site, at <http://cssh.lsa.umich.edu/> to join the conversation. We’ll see you there.
