

Editorial Foreword

Culture and Politics. Intellectuals have never been more generous in granting autonomous significance to art—nor more uncertain of where to locate its meaning. Kenneth George's essay addresses, indeed exemplifies, one of the problems of our times. Two contradictory interpretations of a single work provide his focus but not the answer. In reflecting on this problem, George takes us beyond the artist's intent and leads us past issues of modernism and socialist realism, imperialism and national purpose, through forests of political purpose, across the plains of state oppression, and over historical divides. To impose so much on artistic form is not new (in *CSSH* see, Geertz, 2:2; Ackerman, 11:4; Shiff 15:2; Cliffords, 23:4; Cameron, 27:3), although the specific pressures on art in Indonesia are very much of our time. As the accompanying review essay makes clear, even music, despite the purity of abstractness, was invested with social and political meaning in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. The modern change lies rather in our relationship to high art.

Motive, Sin, and Salvation. Sabine MacCormack begins with Gibbon's familiar concern, the impact of Christianity on the Roman Empire, to uncover not just the changes Christianity brought but the process by which they took effect (compare Tuveson, 5:4; Jayawardena, 8:2; Peel, 10:2; Clendinnen, 22:3). She finds it, through a close interrogation of Augustine, at the intersection of law (especially provisions for Scripture, and community). Her argument, in which subtlety is veiled with clarity, discovers the dynamic of transformation in the need to control sin. Here is the subversive power of the Christian concern for motive; and Webb Keane, in asking about human agency, encounters it again. Agency, the "promise of liberation linked to self-consciousness" is, he notes, a quality that historians and anthropologists are eager to attribute to the groups they study. But if the idea of agency requires intention, does that (evoking a classic postmodernist dilemma) mean the imposition of Western attitudes? Keane illustrates the problem with Dutch Calvinist missionaries (who knew their Augustine well; on other missionaries, see Rigby, 23:1; Schieffelin, 23:1; Rafael, 29:2; Thomas 34:2). While they dismissed native practices as fetishism, they asserted the power of prayers that combined proper language and intention, a view of agency many natives rejected.

Shaping the Social Being. High culture, law, and even Augustine and Calvinists reappear in David Graeber's unusually wide-ranging essay, which constructs an outline of the last four centuries of European history by connecting deference (see Newby, 17:2) and the reform of manners to the concept of private property, the rise of capitalism and much else (see Ashcraft, 14:2; Gallant, 36:4). He does that not through the doctrines Weber famously an-

alyzed but rather by means of a kind of comparative ethnography that builds from the opposed economies of the body expressed in two categories, joking relationships and relationships of avoidance, closely tied to speech practices (note Martin, 32:2) and social structure. Whereas modern history is hardly large enough to contain all of Graeber's suggestive ideas, Erin O'Connor addresses the body from a very specific focus—its parts and the gendered discourse of the late Victorian era that described the effects of their removal and substitution (compare Davies, 24:4; Creighton, 38:2). This wonderfully written deconstruction of amputation and prosthesis, being a work of the late twentieth century, is not a tale of humane progress but rather of war, industrial capitalism, mechanization, and the delusions of science (see (Sklair, 13:2; Tapper, 37:1); yet it concludes in a stunning post-postmodern somersault.

This editorial foreword, the first I have signed, is the last I will write. Thomas R. Trautmann, now the editor of *CSSH*, brings intellectual distinction and fine judgment that assure this quarterly a bright future. Both anthropologist and historian, he will, like his predecessor, benefit from the perceptive intelligence of Diane Owen Hughes as Associate Editor and from a remarkable group of colleagues who serve as Book Review Editors and members of the Editorial Committee. They consistently demonstrate that erudition and demanding standards are compatible with intellectual generosity. I have found that inspiring. I have learned a lot from the manuscripts I have read (those not published as well as those that made it into print) and benefited from being positioned to see shifting trends in methods and interests move through different disciplines. I have experienced something of what intellectual life should always be through editorial ties to stimulating authors, scholars generously willing to read and evaluate manuscripts, and Consulting Editors whose suggestions have helped to preserve freshness in an established institution. Beyond the insight and energy for which they were selected, the advanced graduate students employed at *CSSH* have generated operational esprit and rewarding friendships. For all but brief periods, I have worked with only two manuscript editors: Juliet Pierson, who can almost always locate a potential lilt in academic prose and find precise language to substitute for approximation, and James Schaefer, whose indefatigable devotion to this journal and whose understanding of authors as well as their manuscripts stand among our greatest assets. The sense sustained by these colleagues, near and far, of intellectual sharing has been for me a welcome counterweight to the inescapable selfishness of research. Eager to have more time for that, I can now anticipate another pleasure: picking up *CSSH* with a sense of discovery as it evolves in new directions.

—Raymond Grew