

## Editorial Foreword

DIASPORA ANXIETIES Homeland and diaspora communities are built on frictions as well as connections. Perhaps we could even say that their connect- edness is based on their frictions; in knowing what to disagree about. Anxieties over questions of authenticity pervade diasporic social relations, as religious, national, and ethnic codes are shaped to fit new territories and needs, creating distance between homeland and diaspora visions of the “good society.” In “Outside Caste? The Enclosure of Caste and Claims to Castelessness in India and the United Kingdom,” **David Mosse** looks at the issue of caste and anti-caste activism as played out in India and in the UK. How is caste “enclosed” and encompassed within particular legal and social regimes, and to what end? Does the disavowal of “caste” merely disguise and hide its continued social force? Mosse compares the tactic of packaging caste within religion in order to exempt caste-based discrimination from the law, to claims in the UK that caste has no reality whatsoever and relegate it to an alleged- ly surpassed colonialism. All these strategies enlist anthropologists’ ideas of public space and “the social,” though to varying effect.

**Michal Kravel-Tovi** considers Jewish fears of numerical decline in “The Specter of Dwindling Numbers: Population Quantity and Jewish Biopolitics in the United States.” The voluntary quality of the American Jewry relies on “making Jews” either biologically or through conversion, as well as maintain- ing them via cultural reproduction. The question of reproduction generates anxiety, and not only for reasons of religious intermarriage. Conversion and cultural reproduction beg questions of “how Jewish is Jewish enough”— including the issue, for example, of how much non-religious Jews “count” in a biopolitical metric. What constitutes an adequate quantity, and quality, of identity and resemblance? What is the biopolitical resemblance supposed to be in relation *to*: models of the past, or to an orthodox exemplar, or to a place? Kravel-Tovi shows that “minority community biopolitics” produce policy decisions and institutional forms in the United States that are very dif- ferent from those in Israel, where issues of quantity and quality of Jewishness seem less at risk, or at least differently so.

POLITICS OF ATMOSPHERE AND AMBIANCE Heidegger insisted that events in the world always happen in and through an emotional prism, a certain mood. Hayden White famously wrote that histories are likewise inflected with color and atmosphere: the benign irony of Tocqueville, the per- versity of Gobineau, the optimism of Ranke, the tragic in Spengler. The authors juxtaposed here also attend to the matters of atmosphere and affect that gather

and motivate political effects. In “An Affective Atmosphere of Religiosity: Animated Places, Public Spaces, and the Politics of Attachment in Ukraine and Beyond,” **Catherine Wanner** looks at unmarked religiosity as it inflects public space in Ukraine, the kinds of affect it quickens even in thoroughly secular spaces and events, and the ways these are harnessed toward specific political projects. Specific sites, church and monastery architectures, objects, and even specific well-known phrases call up a religious atmosphere that marshals historical residues and notions of heritage. This public religiosity endows certain political acts and politicians with a sacrosanct quality. It renders any strict bounding of “the secular” fuzzy at best.

**Amy Chazkel** zooms in on the threshold that divides day from night, and the affective and disciplinary atmosphere enforced in light and in the dark. “Toward a History of Rights in the City at Night: Making and Breaking the Nightly Curfew in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro” examines the rules imposed on Rio at night, and the social hierarchies of class and race those laws and police coerced, which affected especially slaves and free persons of African descent. Nevertheless, those awake in the night expended great effort to, in large and small ways, circumvent the curfew. The cover of night offered both extraordinary risk and possibility. Chazkel shows how the boundaries of urban night varied widely over time, and how, by the end of the nineteenth century, the invention of “night” as a time of leisure helped to inaugurate the modern city. Then too, in terms of method, Chazkel helps us to see how power needs to be studied at the local level of municipal ordinances, where the rules of the night were set, instead of too quickly scaling up to a national or international view from which it can be hard to see what’s really going on. Especially in the dark.

Meanwhile, **Sami Everett** guides us through a modern tech company in a Parisian neighborhood. Everett explores how the shared ambiance of a Maghrebi style and sensorium shapes a convivial rapport between North African Jewish and Muslim employees. Memories of the Maghrebi past, endowed with a nostalgic diasporic patina, pervade the company called M-Switch, where Everett closely followed the daily life and work of five employees. At work they adhere to an informal code: Explicit talk of Jewish-Arab relations and Israel-Palestine politics is regarded as taboo. But shared styles of doing business, a Maghrebi “commercial cool,” the insertion of certain Arabic phrases into French, and ideals of hospitality, food, and taste all compose an affective ambiance, a genial mood that is rare across Jewish-Arab groups in France. Everett’s study documents and analyzes a moment in the life of a company, then, but is also suggestive of how ambiance can generate informal habits of engagement that supersede and soften political tensions.

ARCHIVAL MEDIATIONS AND MEDITATIONS When historical events are revisited through previously unexplored archives, new perspectives unsettle established accounts. The unsettling is twofold, first because of the

way a familiar story is caused to look strange, and second because the shape and tone of “the archive,” and with it the very basis of authorizing histories, shakes the ground on which established historical narratives were built. This, in turn, generates questions about the authority, limits, and reach of archives and how they come to hold, secure, and channel their influence on the present.

In “Church, State, and ‘Native Liberty’ in the Belgian Congo,” **Gale Kenny** and **Tisa Wenger** lead us to interwar Belgian Congo, equipped with new tools and evidence; namely, the archives of the Congo Protestant Council and its related institutions. They unpack a mostly untold story of missionary rivalry between Protestants and Catholics and their competing claims to ownership of the expression “religious freedom.” Protestants and Catholics alike appealed the colonial regime and opposed Indigenous churches, but they articulated distinct ideas about how church and state should be configured, and on what kinds of legal bases. While Protestants appealed to international law, Catholics tried to justify limiting “foreign” missions (Protestants) in the name of Belgian (and Belgian colonial) “national unity.” Kenny and Wenger show how the moniker of religious freedom was enlisted in diverse political projects that were defined in relation to each other, and enlarged in a hothouse of religious competition. Both were ultimately challenged and dethroned by independent African churches.

What kinds of mediation impact archival inquiry? Focusing on a 1971 insurgency by the People’s Liberation Front (JVP) in Sri Lanka, **Thushara Hewage** explores how archival work gets pushed onto certain tracks of interpretation. Skewed by the authority of previous work, contemporary political demands, and pedagogical exigencies, archives never simply “speak,” but always also mediate. Hewage uses the insurgency and its historiography to critique the making of normative narratives. In revisiting the original documents to craft a distinct postcolonial reading, Hewage offers a timely meditation on the ethics and practices of archival interpretation and representation.

We wish you happy reading as we begin another exciting year.