

Editorial Foreword

CAPITALIST TRANSFORMATIONS The first three essays are good examples of how particularized study illuminates global formations—ethnographies of capitalism, so to say. The present moment seems to be especially strategic for studies of this kind. (Another fine instance is Katherine Verdery's "Faith, Hope, and *Caritas* in the Land of the Pyramids: Romania, 1990 to 1994," 1995: 625–69.)

Keith Hart and Vishnu Padayachee map the trajectories of Indian enterprises across the "long twentieth century," from the indenture system which, beginning in the eighteen-sixties, brought Indians to South Africa, to the present. As they emerge from their segregated niches during "the long nightmare of apartheid," Indian firms have followed different strategies, looking for ways to develop in a world in which humanity has grown closer together while also more unequal, but whose "sharply segregated sectors of high- and low-paid work, sustained by vastly discrepant scales of investment and technology" nevertheless offer hope for progress.

Warwick Anderson elucidates the exchange relations by which medical workers obtained and circulated body tissues from the Fore of New Guinea, specifically from the brains of those who died from a disease called kuru, caused by a slow virus or prion and similar to scrapie in sheep, mad cow disease and spongiform encephalitis in humans. Exchange relations vary across the segments of the networks which bring this precious stuff to the laboratory, the scientific journal, and the patent office, and gift exchange tends to get merged with commodity transactions in ways that Mauss might have appreciated. Study of "the social life and moral weight of scientific things" urgently needs "more locally specific models of the scientific exchange of gifts and commodities" in an age of new biotechnologies and expanding forms of intellectual property. (Cf. Melbourne Tapper, "Interrogating Bodies: Medico-Racial Knowledges, Politics, and the Study of a Disease," 1995: 76–93.)

Michael L. Fleisher follows the transformation of cattle raiding among Kuria pastoralists into a profitable, if illegal, form of capitalist enterprise, bringing Tanzanian cattle across the border to the Kenyan meat-packing and tanning industries and thence to Scandinavia and the Persian Gulf. The commoditization of cattle, the higher prices for beef available in Kenya and the world market, and bureaucratic barriers to the recovery of stolen cattle are among factors converging to make cattle rustling a growing business.

ART WORK The political work to which art can be put is the topic of two essays on, respectively, printmaking and narrative song. (See also the recent

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article by Janet Hart, "Tales from the Walled City: Aesthetics of Political Prison Culture in Post-war Greece," 1999: 482–509.)

Chang-tai Hung follows the efforts of the Chinese government to appropriate and reshape an ancient and highly popular form of folk art, the New Year print. Rescuing it from the "archaic" or "feudal" ideas of the past, government reformers wished to direct this form to themes of the Chinese revolution and the progress of industry and agriculture. A culture war ensued, in which popular taste prevailed over government prints. Today's consumerism brings changes of a different kind to the New Year print.

Mary M. Steedly analyses the work of a memory artist, Sinek ("Silent") beru Karo, whose epic song commemorates the evacuation of the Karo of Sumatra from their homes in the highlands during the Indonesian war of national independence at the end of World War II. The work of art acts selectively, to celebrate a rupture that leads into modernity, while suppressing the panic and banditry that were also part of the evacuation. TV images of African refugees today trigger Karo memories of how it was then.

BORDER TALKS The discursive turn can bring new ways of thinking and talking about text extruded by governments, as the next essay shows.

József Böröcz brings the Bakhtinian notion of the dialogic to bear in the scrutiny of government-to-government prose, taking as his case the Hungarian government's application for admission into the European Union and the EU's report evaluating the application dossier. At stake is nothing less than idea of Europe and its boundaries. The ambiguous task of the Hungarian government in putting its case was to guess what was on the necessarily fragmented mind of the EU. Like La Fontaine's fox to the raven, Hungary must sing sweetly to get the EU to drop the cheese.

BODY CULTURES The concluding essay shows how regimes of body culture can be a valuable conduit to other aspects of society.

Andrew Morris explains why it is that complex systems of physical culture in China were swept away with the introduction of Western sport, except for the martial arts and other enclaves of tradition. Causes of this transformation include the ideas of Darwin and Spencer and the promotion of sport by missionaries, especially through the YMCA. The effects were many; for example, the new physical culture for women acted to promote women's agency and contributed to the end of footbinding.