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Editorial Foreword

WHO'S BACKWARD NOW? For most of the twentieth century, there were two great traditions of civilizational progress. One was oriented toward proletarian workers and their collective rights; the other focused on capitalist business interests and individual liberties. Each tradition portrayed the other as backward, even morally retrograde, and each had the statistics to prove its case. The capitalist democracies won this ideological struggle, but subsequent geopolitical upheavals and radical increases in socioeconomic inequality make it hard to depict the end of the Cold War as unequivocally liberatory, much less "progressive." The civilizational models favored by the Soviet bloc and the West were alike in their brazen, self-affirming appeals to modernization, and each system produced distinctive forms of under/development wherever it prevailed. If anything, the collapse of the bipolar world allows us to rethink the formative powers of backwardness, which evolve dynamically at the heart of all modernizing regimes.

Chris Hann and **Begüm Adalet** explore the un/making of backwardness in different settings, by different means. Hann, at work in Hungary, shows how a particular rural community has moved from backwardness, to socialist advance, to backwardness again over a span of centuries. The process has left rural Hungarians nostalgic not for socialist modernity, which brought substantial improvements, but for the imagined glories of an imperial past. The progress of socialism, Hann argues, was based on collectivist ideas that Hungarians today find alienating. Adalet, at work in Turkey, shows how American social scientists in the 1950s used survey methodologies to define Turks in and out of modernity. Public opinion research, as developed by Daniel Lerner and other American and Turkish scholars, was confidently progressive in orientation, but Adalet demonstrates the remarkable extent to which it lacked the very quality Lerner believed was essential to modernization: empathy.

INFRASTRUCTURES AND TECHO-STATES The modern nation-state is undergoing major renovations as a site of scholarship. Recently portrayed as a kind of conceptual effort (an imagined community), or a trick of perspective (the state effect), national governments are nowadays increasingly depicted as the product of technical powers, circulating materials, and engineering from the ground up. Infrastructure and expertise are the keys to state formation. Dams, roadworks, NGO operatives, medical researchers, paper-pushing bureaucrats, and industry magnates are brought together to constitute analytically the local (and global) machinery of state. This renovation is producing a new

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grassroots for politics, one in which the nation-state is a concentration of materials and skills that must be managed; it must be built and run, not simply imagined, internalized, or seen. The theoretical insights that grow out of this new focus are disturbing well-established assumptions about how particular nation-states work and why they were established.

Michael Christopher Low and **Fredrik Meiton** test the explanatory power of infrastructural analysis in Middle Eastern settings where old narratives of state formation are firmly entrenched. Focusing on Saudi Arabia, a dynastic regime dependent on oil revenues, Low traces early state formation to water policy, especially the security of water supplies made available to Hajj pilgrims. The technopolitics of water linked the Saudi state to its Ottoman precursors and to the drilling ventures that would later produce oil, a resource that, Low argues, has enabled the Saudis to satisfy growing demands for potable water through massive investment in inefficient, energy guzzling desalination systems. Meiton, likewise, shows how Zionist development in Palestine was driven as much by capitalist investment schemes as it was by identity politics designed to produce an exclusively Jewish homeland. British mandatory officials believed Jewish money and expertise were essential to regional development and that Arabs would benefit from the strength of a Zionist economy. The engineering of a massive hydroelectric grid, Meiton argues, gave cartographic shape to Palestine even as it revealed the lopsidedness of Zionist development. Technocapital and ethnonationalism combined to insure that Jews would control wealth-generating resources, while Arabs would subsist in Jewish national space (if they remained at all) only as menial labor.

GREEK TRAGICOMEDY The financial crisis in Greece is proof that the recent fascination with technopolitics will not always take us as far into the complexities of nationalism as we need to go. Mixed in with the legal structures of credit and debt, and the expertise needed to manipulate them, is a diverse array of personal and collective responses to the economic meltdown, and these responses, for lack of better terms, are deeply cultural. Some aspects of the Greek crisis are very Greek—and, for that matter, very German—and it is often easier to feel and perform these realities than to explain or manage them. Anthropologists, by training, are well suited to explore this meeting ground of crisis and culture and to tread lightly as they go. The ethnographic results, which dwell on bankruptcy, proud intransigence, and broken-down lives, can be hilarious or sad. Making these moods intelligible to outsiders who observe from a distance (a category that includes diaspora Greeks and Greeks who now see themselves as Others see them) requires a fragile mix of empathy and abstraction.

Elizabeth Davis and **Konstantinos Kalantzis** invite us to sample the Greek crisis from what appear to be opposite emotional poles. Davis confronts

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the problem of suicide, which has increased in Greece since 2008, when the debt crisis began. The suicide epidemic, Davis argues, leads multiple lives. It is a media story, a trend that varies regionally, and a pattern that dissolves into the idiosyncrasies of clinical, familial, and intensely personal settings. The indeterminacy of suicide is, for Davis, its most telling quality. For Kalantzis, by contrast, the debt crisis is an occasion for defiant, sometimes exuberant resistance to tutelage and external control. It is an arena in which rural and urban middle-class Greeks can join ranks to engage in, or at least condone, aggressive, sexualized male humor, often directed at Germans and their female leader. Like the tragedy of suicide, the comedy of resistance is expressive. It surfaces in multiple media. It is regionalized. And it is a transgressive gesture made by actors whose first (or last) desire is to control the stage on which they perform.

***CSSH* DISCUSSION** Law and legality are boom topics at *CSSH*. Colonial law, legal pluralism, law in and as religion, and the fuzzy lines between jurisprudence, rule-making, and morality have been analyzed creatively in almost every issue of the journal in recent years. **Yanna Yannakakis** assembles these and other themes in her review of four books that tackle the problematic relationship between imperial law and native agency. Not only does Yannakakis give us a vivid sense of how broadly conceived and conceptually daring this new work can be, she also arrives at fascinating insights of her own, most of which point legal scholars toward spaces that lie beyond the courts and their archival remains. The next breakthroughs, Yannakakis suggests, will come when lawmaking is connected to adjacent processes of evangelization, translation, the spread of alphabetic writing, and the practicalities of commerce and kinship, all of which made colonial law meaningful, and contestable, to indigenous subjects and their imperial allies and overlords.

FAREWELL, JACK GOODY We are sad to learn that *CSSH* has lost an old friend. Jack Goody, one of the great anthropologists of the post-World War II era, died on 15 July 2015. He was ninety-five years old. Goody was a *CSSH* consulting editor, and for many years he was the only non-University of Michigan member of our editorial committee. Legend had it that we were contractually obligated to have a Cambridge don on our masthead—perhaps we were also due an annual pheasant and wine from one of the college cellars; no one knew for sure—but Goody's contributions to *CSSH* were much more than symbolic, and they predated the global fame and the knighthood he enjoyed as a senior scholar. In addition to numerous book reviews and behind-the-scenes commentary on manuscripts, Goody published six essays in *CSSH*. The first appeared in 1963, under our founding editor, Sylvia Thrupp; the last came in 2006, under Tom Trautmann. The concerns that dominated Goody's work (orality and literacy, kinship and inheritance, the culture

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of flowers, metallurgy, pottery, and haute cuisine) are brilliantly arrayed in these essays.

Raymond Grew, the *CSSH* editor who worked with Goody the longest, sent these recollections:

> A drink with Goody was the outstanding bonus of several conferences. I was struck whenever I met him by his interest in *CSSH.* He would ask about the kinds of topics being written about, recall something he had read for us (something he did quite regularly), and remember (not always accurately) some request that had come from me and remind me (not always accurately) of his speedy cooperation. His correspondence was a delight because, even when brief, it tended to reach beyond the business at hand with some suggestive datum, the hint of a big idea, or an eccentric perspective.

Upon hearing of Goody's death, Tom Trautmann revisited several of Goody's *CSSH* essays. He was especially impressed by Goody's inaugural article, coauthored with Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy" (5–3: 304–45), "a fascinating piece about the effects of literacy in deep history—well worth reading. I am appreciating, as I have not before, how congenial his deep-history perspective is." Trautmann is not alone in this assessment. Since 2009, when we started counting, "The Consequences of Literacy" has been viewed on our Cambridge website 6,410 times, and it is currently the fifth most widely-cited *CSSH* essay.

By the time I became editor in 2006, Sir Jack Goody was a giant in the earth, and I cherished every communication with him. His manuscript reviews were now very short, usually just three or four sentences, but they were based on a firm knowledge of what a good *CSSH* essay should accomplish, and we often used his pithy assessments as the deciding vote. His final appearance in *CSSH*, a review of Victor Lieberman's *Strange Parallels (Volumes 1 and 2)*, came in 2012, almost half a century after his foundational article with Ian Watt. We were fortunate to have Jack Goody's wise counsel, and his best intellectual efforts, for so long.

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