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Editorial Foreword

SCAPE SHIFTING When Arjun Appadurai turned the word landscape into the neologism, ethnoscape, he indulged in the art of scape shifting. The scape shifter alters the world we see by changing key elements of perspective: angle of vision, width of view, fineness of detail. More striking effects come when the shifter changes the object of attention, potentially taking us beyond the realm of sight—into the soundscape, for instance, or into scapes of taste or feeling. The goal of scape shifting is not to obscure in the manner of a palimpsest, or to deface what is already visible, as the graffiti artist does; rather, scape shifting compels us to look at familiar scenes in productively reconfigured ways. In this issue, we feature the work of three scape shifters who draw our attention to patterns of imperial mobility, religious affinities, and Cold War cultural policy that are now dimly perceived or forgotten, but which reemerge vividly with a subtle redirection of the analytical eye.

Andrew Kerim Arsan shifts our view of the imperial landscape by focusing on unusual patterns of human movement across French possessions in West Africa and the Levant. In the early decades of the twentieth century, when "rational" and increasingly remote techniques of immigration control were being devised by the European and American powers, immigrants from what is today Lebanon and Syria were able to thwart these new procedures and, with the help of administrative allies in France, move in and out of West Africa with a freedom (and in numbers) local authorities found unacceptable, but were unable to stop. Arsan considers the regional histories that made this mobility possible, allowing us to see the French Empire as an uneven patchwork of cultural intimacies, patronage, racial hierarchies, and inconsistent civilizational missions, all of which worked to the advantage of Levantine immigrants—not only in West Africa but in most other places they wanted to go.

Nile Green alters our view of Afghanistan by shifting temporally, to the early decades of the kingdom's postcolonial independence from Britain, and linguistically, from English, Persian, Turkish, and Pashto, to the rich archive of materials written in and about Afghanistan in Urdu. Green recaptures the intellectual excitement Afghanistan generated among utopian and activist Muslim intellectuals of South Asia, who saw it as an open Muslim space in which new forms of society and expression could be created without British interference. Before Urdu became a language associated with Pakistani national interests, it was a lingua franca of elite Muslim culture across the region. Green shows how the Urdusphere penetrated Afghan space, largely through the medium of print and the physical presence of Urdu-speaking communities. Although the vibrancy of this language scape withered after the 1930s, Green suggests that the Muslim modernity expressed in the Urdusphere soon resurfaced in the internationalism and cross-border exchanges that prompted the rise (and fall) of the Taliban.

Sabina Mihelj enables us to see new patterns in Cold War geopolitics by directing our attention to local shifts in Yugoslav cultural politics. Situating her study at the margins of Italian and Yugoslav political jurisdictions, Mihelj weaves and separates multiple threads of cultural policy, showing how Yugoslavia upsets commonly held assumptions about East and West, communist and capitalist. The Soviet-style cultural policies that held sway in Yugoslavia until 1948—emphasizing progress, politically correct substance, and education of the masses—were used to distinguish communist culture, but Mihelj points out the large areas of overlap between these themes and dominant trends in the West. As Yugoslavia steered away from Russian cultural policy, themes of ethnic heritage and national integration became important, as did attempts to separate art from politics and elite culture from popular forms. None of these trends, Mihelj argues, were consistent with Cold War binarisms, and attempts to deconstruct the "myths" of Cold War polarity (a standard refrain of postsocialist studies) can obscure the convergences across political blocs that shaped Yugoslav cultural policy and that of its regional partners and rivals during this period.

EDGES OF ISLAM One of the ironic features of "world religions," especially the most expansive and inclusive ones, is the energy they invest in fixing their borders. As Christianity and Islam acquire converts and spread across continents, they produce a steady supply of heretics, unbelievers, schismatics; they fill space and time with alien peoples and faiths. Insistence on the universal correctness and immutability of shared traditions seems only to generate variation in religious practice and belief. Among Muslims, and among scholars who study Islam, the lines between matters of culture (which are negotiable) and matters of faith (which are less so) overlap endlessly, producing new points of translation between Muslim and non-Muslim worlds. Three of our authors explore frontiers—of knowledge, voice, and dwelling —along which Muslims extend, and sometimes overstep, the limits of their faith.

Mustafa Tuna anchors his essay in a deceptively simple question: when is religious reform Muslim and when is it external to Islam? The answer is harder to determine than most scholars and reformers would suppose. In his close study of the pedagogical reforms enacted in Russian madrasas of the Volga-Ural region in the early twentieth century, Tuna analyzes a movement that was decidedly Islamic when it began, but which soon moved into secular terrain that was incompatible with Islamic tradition. This change reflects the influence of scientific modernism on Russian imperial reform, which was the immediate context of local Muslim reform movements. The Volga-Ural madrasas were administered by men versed in Islamic learning, but the secular public schools of Egypt and Ottoman Turkey were the models they emulated, adopting modern language, history, and science classes and pushing Quran interpretation and courses in Islamic law to the margins of the curriculum. Emboldened by these shifts, students at the reformed madrasas lobbied for increasingly modernist, Westernized subject matter and teaching styles. Eventually, the madrasas could no longer produce competent men of religion. This outcome, Tuna concludes, shows that Muslim reformers are not inevitably advocates of Islamic reform. As Muslims, they can be motivated by ideologies and assumptions that undermine the authority of Islamic traditions.

Naveeda Khan explores the limits of proper Islamic practice as measured in sound. In the Muslim soundscape, the human voice calls people to worship, holds the attention of the congregation, and guides them as a unified collective in prayer. In the 1950s, when loudspeakers began to appear on Pakistani mosques, religious authorities worried that the human voice was being replaced by a mechanical noise (a counterfeit human voice) that distracted worshippers and encouraged doctrinal conflict by loudly broadcasting different version of the *azan*, the "call to prayer." Khan explores the delicate reasoning behind these misgivings, linking them to Islamic notions of sound, voice, and sanctity as well as to British colonial law, in which religious rituals were treated as dangerous noise when they triggered conflict among Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs. Loudspeakers are now an ordinary part of Muslim life in Pakistan, but their acceptance came after careful debate in which Muslims had to decide whether mechanically enhanced voices were human voices, whether amplification would confuse worshippers, and whether variation in calls to prayer, now audible across great distances, would be offensive to fellow Muslims. These issues, Khan argues, suggest the fragility and ever-renewed possibility of a shared Muslim life.

Mucahit Bilici traces the complex border politics of Muslim Americans, a growing population that, since the immigration reforms of 1965, has been struggling to make sense of its own presence in the United States. Most early Muslim immigrants believed they would not stay in America, which was viewed as a "land of unbelief." As it became apparent over the course of the 1980s that many Muslim immigrants would settle permanently in the United States and become citizens, they largely abandoned the idea that America was a "land of unbelief," arguing instead that it was a target of missionary effort, or a "land of contract," or even a "land of Islam" in its own right. Working through a compelling array of ideal types and temporal stages, Bilici argues that Muslims become American by dwelling in American space, in effect Islamizing it. The result is a secular nation-state that, in the eyes of most American Muslims today, is a place where Muslim identities and explicitly Muslim forms of citizenship can flourish. Though much of this process mirrors ethnic incorporation models, Bilici shows how Muslims use explicitly religious language to make sense of their own Americanization and speed it along.

THE SOVEREIGN DEAD The most influential humans tend to be dead. Sometimes they have been dead for thousands of years—the Buddha, Jesus, Aristotle—and sometimes they are recently departed, like the assassinated politicians and celebrity suicides who dominate popular culture, or the parents whose wisdom seems more impressive (and whose failings seem more obvious) after they die. We are reluctant to let the dead go; we mourn and fear them, and they exercise strange powers over us. It is hardly coincidence that state sovereignty is expressed in the treatment of dead leaders, their bodies and relics; the state's greatest allies and rivals, it follows, will be found among the dead. As two of our authors demonstrate, the dead bring sovereignty to life, infusing places and objects, and even entire nations, with powers the modern state cannot recognize or fully control.

Anya Bernstein examines the burgeoning influence of dead Buryat lamas in the post-Soviet Republic of Buryatia. Here, the incorruptible body of Dashi-Dorzho Itigelov, a prominent Buddhist lama from the pre-Soviet era who died in 1927, was disinterred in 2002 and placed under glass. His shrine is now a popular site of pilgrimage. At roughly the same time, relics began to appear at ruined monasteries. Buryats believe monks and lamas buried these objects long ago, knowing they would be found today. According to Bernstein, the discovery of these treasures bolsters the cultural sovereignty of Buryat Buddhism. The vitality of the dead is proof that living Buryat lamas are legitimate. It enhances their power in Buryatia, where local forms of Buddhism must now compete against more prestigious Tibetan traditions. These peculiar forms of necropolitics, Bernstein argues, are part of the recentering of global Buddhism made possible by the end of socialism.

Bruce Grant takes us to another post/socialist archipelago of shrines and sacred sites. Working in Azerbaijan, he constructs an alternative history of interaction between Soviet authorities and local saintly lineages, their tombs, and related concentrations of sacred power. Although it is widely believed that the communists effectively suppressed Islam, Grant gathers accounts that complicate this claim. The Soviet approach to Muslim burial rites was lenient, a loophole that allowed people to gather at saint's shrines to worship and to seek the help of the saint and his relatives. The sacredness that accumulated in these sites was clearly a kind of sovereignty, and government attempts to subvert it tended to fail. Attempts to move saints, their families, or their tombs are said nowadays to have ended in paralysis: police horses would not move, government cars would not start, the machinery of demolition crews was destroyed by flood and malfunction. Meanwhile, the mutual obligations that bound local Muslims to their saints called the authority of the state into question, denying it the coveted status of sole judge, patron, and provider. This situation, Grant argues, reflects the incomplete, overlapping forms of sovereignty so typical of the Caucasus throughout history. The exchanges that bound the living and dead were easily adapted to relations with the state, whose living officials could be honored with gifts and swayed by praise, just as the saints could be.

CSSH DISCUSSIONS That states should respect the human rights of their citizens is a belief held today with the moral seriousness once reserved for religious confessions of faith. As a universalizing idea, human rights is the kind of concept anthropologists tend to be skeptical of, yet in a political climate that encourages activist scholarship and civic engagement, human rights is a concept anthropologists are increasingly likely to take up or encounter in the field. **Ronald Niezen** reviews three new books that offer creative approaches to the analytical and ethical problems generated by the study of human rights. Ranging from the philosophically abstract to the ethnographically particular, each study is critical of how the Eurocentric politics of human rights bulldozes local moralities, yet none of the authors thinks anthropologists can (or should even attempt to) ignore human rights as an aspiration that, across human difference, is evolving into a shared context of moral judgment.

As part of our plan to wring ever more comparative insight out of *CSSH* authors, all the while promoting their newest work, we conclude this issue with a conversation between **Craig Jeffrey**, **Christine Philliou**, **Douglas Rogers**, and the editor. Our topic is “fixers,” that widespread class of political operators and go-betweens who proliferate in state bureaucracies and at the margins of state control, where they solve problems, channel resources, and specialize in activity that looks like naked corruption to some, savvy facilitation to others. Fixers play a key role in recent books by our conversationalists, and our discussion is enlivened not only by reference to this fresh work, but by the many links we draw between Ottoman, Russian, and Indian settings and new scenarios created by the Arab Uprisings, a chain reaction of political revolts that erupted during our exchange. Animated by a strong, anti-corruption ethos, the Arab Uprisings turned our discussion of fixers into a heady mix of history, anthropology, and *very* current events.