

Editorial Foreword

MUSLIMS AND HINDUS IN INDIA The fraught relations of Muslims and Hindus in contemporary India are the precipitating concern for the first two essays, examining different aspects of the question through a tangled history.

Gyanendra Pandey argues that nation-states and their nationalisms form fuzzy boundaries around a national core population, established “invisibly, non-politically, naturally”; and that between hard core and fuzzy boundary lie minorities and marginal elements. Muslims were put in this marginal space in the Republic of India right at the outset, even though the India that was created by the Partition of British India into India and Pakistan was officially secular. In effect, Muslim Indianness was problematized and needed constant demonstration, while the Indianness of Hindus was naturalized and never needed demonstration.

David Lorenzen contests the frequently-made claim that Hinduism is an invention of British colonialism, undertaking a wide-ranging examination of evidence, from the formation of a “standard model” of Hinduism in the colonial period to its precursors in the deep past. In the end he finds beliefs and practices that are “recognizably of Hindu shape” from the texts of the early Puranas, around 300–600 A.D. Hinduism was constructed, but it was not a colonial construction, Lorenzen finds; it was the work of Hindus, inventing themselves.

MAKING DEMOCRACY The growth of pathology of democracies in modern times has been frequently discussed in *CSSH*, as in the next three essays. (See also, for example, Rafe Blaufarb, “The French Revolution: The Birth of European Popular Democracy?” in 37:608–18 [1955], and Diane E. Davis and Viviane Brachet-Márquez, “Rethinking Democracy: Mexico in Historical Perspective,” 39:86–119 [1997].

John Markoff, seeking the when and where of modern democracy’s invention (from about the 1780s), finds that its history is “profoundly polycentric.” The many practices which make up what we now accept as the substance of democracy (e.g., absence of slavery) were not in all particulars present at the start of that history. What is needed to follow its growth is a comparative history that studies “complexly interactive transnational systems,” not one that focuses on the giant states as centers of innovation and diffusion. Markoff hypothesizes that the true centers of change are, rather, the middle range of countries, for reasons which he discusses.

Teresa P. R. Caldeira and **James Holston** undertake an ethnography, in Brazil, of a growing disjunction between political democracy, which is intact, and a declining civil component of democratic citizenship. The result is the delegitimation of institutions of law and the growth of extra-legal violence—

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police violence, and the privatization of justice. In a disjunctive democracy the actual content of citizenship is uneven, fragile, and arrhythmic in its relation to an otherwise healthy political democracy.

Michelle Penner observes that authoritarianism continues strong in Muslim countries of the Middle East, with the notable exception of Turkey. Comparison of Turkey with Tunisia, using institutional analysis to make good the shortcomings of class analysis, is intended to show why, starting from a one-party state, a viable opposition party came into existence in the former, while in the latter legal opposition parties were ineffective, and real opposition was only possible within the one-party state, or in contradiction to it, in the Islamic movement.

GENDER AND CHRISTIAN CONVERSION Conversion to Christianity, a staple of history, is becoming a growth industry for anthropologists. (See the three essays on “Colonial conversions” in 34:301–89 [1922] by Walter D. Mignolo, David Scott, and Nicolas Thomas, and J. D. Y. Peel’s splendid essay, “‘For Who Had Despised the Day of Small Things?’ Missionary Narratives and Historical Anthropology,” in 37:581–607 [1995].)

Dorothy Hodgson explores the paradox of a Catholic mission to the Maasai—aiming to convert men, the missionaries mostly succeeded in converting women. The conversion process “provided fresh sites for ongoing contestation and production of Maasai gender relations.” The struggles were not just political and economic; they were, above all, struggles over meaning.

ALTERNATIVES TO MODERNITY Prasenajit Duara (*Rescuing History from the Nation*) has called for histories that resist the narrative of national progress toward modernity. The next essay answers the call.

Gi-Wook Shin argues that two dominant national narratives emerged from Korea’s liberation, in 1945, from Japanese colonial rule—a Marxist one in the North and a “bourgeois” one in the South, competing, but similar in being narratives of progressive movement toward modernity. In the interest of restoring marginalized voices and subjects, the author explores the national narrative of the agrarian movement in the earlier period, as a critique of (colonial) modernity. Agrarianism offered “an alternative view of national community,” neither capitalist nor communist, rejecting the modernist vision of history and focusing on the countryside instead of the city. Recovering the diversity of early Korean nationalisms makes it clear that national histories that became hegemonic after Japanese rule and were hardened by the Cold War were not the only models of the nation available in the formative period.

COLONIALISM AND DIFFERENCE We continue in this issue a discussion begun in the last (Lauren Benton, “Colonial Law and Cultural Difference: Jurisdictional Politics and the Formation of the Colonial State”) on the management of difference under colonialism.

Eric Hirsch, examining the colonial project in the highlands of Papua, suggests that the colonial propensities to classify and enumerate stem from a conception of value that foregrounds the discreteness of things and persons as independent units. By contrast, the Fuyuge perform their world order by massing for rituals, in the course of which the units of their worldview emerge and are rendered concrete. The author traces the imposition, through performance, of colonial units on the Fuguye.