

Editorial Foreword

RE-PLACING JEWS The relationship between Jews and mobility would seem to be perpetually vexed. Whether they are cast as ethnic Others, a diaspora, settler colonists, a religious minority, or Zionist nation-builders, Jews are defined as belonging, now and in the past, to an essential elsewhere. Jews move and are moved around, re-placing themselves and being re-placed by others, a process that ranges historically from the opportunistic and mundane to the violent and genocidal. As a result, Jews end up where few people expect them to be, and places that once had many Jews suddenly have none. In fact, Jews can be vitally active in a place even when they are not literally present there, or when their presence is literal but seems improbable or inappropriate, or when the symbolic associations of Jewishness are put to use by non-Jews who need Jews (real or imagined) to re-create local political worlds.

Oren Kosansky examines the case of Moroccan Jews, a population that French colonial scholars considered linguistically out of place. Though Jews spoke a distinct dialect of Arabic, and wrote it in Hebrew characters, their association with a “Muslim” language was portrayed as alienating, even by dialectologists whose knowledge of “Judeo-Arabic” was intimate and precise. Attempts to move Moroccan Jews into a larger community of French speakers were steady and, as Kosansky shows, they were largely successful. **Esra Özyürek** and **Geneviève Zubrzycki** take us to contemporary Germany and Poland, where Jewish communities destroyed in the Holocaust are remembered, invoked, invited back, indirectly represented, and put to use in anti-racist politics. Özyürek explains how German campaigns against anti-Semitism, promulgated in a country that has very few Jews, are producing new forms of racism. The presumed (and real) anti-Semitism of Arabs, Turks, and other Muslims in Germany, Özyürek argues, makes them targets of moral exclusion and intolerance; in ways unforeseen and ironic, Muslims are filling a place in Germany once occupied by Jews. In neighboring Poland, Zubrzycki analyzes a growing re-engagement with Jews and things Jewish, a movement that is heavy with nostalgia and redemptive multicultural themes. The Jews involved in this scene are variously real, virtual, imagined, and elsewhere, but the ultimate goal of the new Polish-Jewish encounters, Zubrzycki contends, is the reassertion of pluralism and ethnic diversity in a national culture that is homogeneously and hegemonically Polish, Catholic, and politically conservative.

CORROSIVE POLITICS High-minded politics can be excruciatingly dull. Running a government bureaucracy cleanly, fairly, and efficiently will

produce no great operas, or novels, or even much in the way of lasting praise and commemoration. The big statues are built mostly for warriors, and it would seem that politics at its best—and, for some notable theorists, politics at its most political—is ultimately about conflict. Nothing is better for defining enemies and friends than negative accounts of opponents, which one's friends will spread. Gossip, backbiting, rumor, and lying are all powerful tools in the hands of politicians, and they translate into even more powerful, institutionalized forms of negative politics: corruption, cheating, rigging, double dealing, and so on. The career of the high-minded politician is viable only if we agree that negative politics is corrosive, that it degrades the institutions and people who specialize in it. This agreement is not always easy to come by.

Tolga U. Esmer and **Sarah Muir** introduce us to elaborate regimes of scandal and corruption. In the Ottoman Balkans of the late eighteenth century, governance was carried out in a swirl of gossip, mistrust, and deception that included all levels of society, from local peasants to the closest advisors of the Sultan. Esmer shows how gossip was used to build and dissolve alliances, and how criminal and governmental forces colluded in fashioning an Ottoman political culture that was utterly reliant on access to, and mastery over, corrosive talk. In Muir's account of contemporary Argentina, images of negative politics have metastasized, so much so that identity at the individual and national level is wrapped up in "total corruption," a quality that has produced moral exhaustion among the Argentinian middle classes. The negative forces that attach to total corruption, Muir argues, inspire fears of crisis and national collapse, and they are best understood by comparing them to concepts and practices that, in other societies, are described as "witchcraft."

THE BLACK TRANSOCEANIC In our race-saturated world, Blackness is a global identity. It now evolves everywhere, and like global Whiteness, which has a special relationship to Europe, global Blackness is linked to Africa in countless ways. Africa is a source of authenticity and cultural integrity. It is also associated with primitivism, superstition, and underdevelopment. Africa cuts and heals those who make it essential to Blackness, and this process, both in its therapeutic and polemical effects, brings people into tactical relationships with cultural values, with beliefs and practices, that are protective, prized, noble, spiritually powerful, and able to withstand the critical assault of global Whiteness. These tactical relationships can be personal, involving acts of re-invention, re-naming, and re-discovery. They can involve entire regions and peoples. In many cases, the Black identities that emerge (and the ones that are obscured) have a special relationship to religious communities and claims. This is a fascinating link, and it has played a vital role in global race-making.

Wyatt MacGaffey and **Alexander Rocklin** explore the immense creative effort invested in making particular forms of Africanness and in crossing from

Blackness into other identities of color. MacGaffey traces the history of Kongo, both as a place and a cultural style. Beset by questionable scholarship and political conditions that prevented the emergence of a unified regional identity, the advocates of things Kongo have relied heavily, MacGaffey argues, on fantastical interpretations of indigenous cosmologies and religious ritual, none of which has produced an identity comparable to that of the Yoruba, who flourish on both sides of the Atlantic. Rocklin, in his study of the strange career of Ismet Ali, offers another example of the formative relationship between race and religion. Ismet Ali toured North America as a Hindu sage in the 1920s, healing and teaching, but he was in fact a Black man from Trinidad. This artful shift from Black to Brown, Rocklin argues, enabled Ali to affect a provisional Whiteness. He used “Hindoo” and “Oriental” stereotypes to move closer to European civilizational status, a venture in crossing that reveals a sophisticated knowledge of how racial hierarchies are constructed globally, and how religious symbolism reinforces them.

BODIES AND SOULS Christian missionaries want to make new Christians. On that point they agree. But what is the best method? Should missionaries win souls, trusting that bodies, and entire societies, will follow? Or should they tend first to the bodies of non-Christians, feeding and healing them, trusting that souls will be saved as a result? Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians tend to concentrate on souls. The mainline Protestants and many Catholic orders provide healthcare and education while avoiding blatant attempts to proselytize. Each approach is rooted in theological principles, but less attention is given to the odd ability to distinguish body and soul, to target one or the other, as if they were separate aspects of the person. Christians have not always thought this way, nor do they agree today on what a soul is, where it resides, or how bodies exist in relation to souls. Moreover, conventional biomedicine is often central to missions’ work; the church and the church-sponsored hospital are both sites of healing. How do missionaries situate bodies and souls at this intersection of restorative forces, and why should they struggle for clarity at all?

Kevin E. Ho gives intriguing answers to these questions in his analysis of Dutch Calvinist encounters with Javanese conceptions of the body, illness, the soul, and Christianity itself. In the person of indigenous Christian preachers like Sadrach, who was declared heretical by the Reformed Church in 1892, the Dutch were forced to make sense of their own conceptions of body and soul, since Sadrach possessed a mystical body with healing powers unlike those espoused by Calvinists. The Dutch missionaries believed in God, but they also believed in modern medicine, and it was important to them that their Javanese converts not confuse the work clergy did on souls with the work doctors did on flesh, blood, and bone. The mission clinic, Ho argues, was a site at which Christians normalized the distinction between body and soul, giving each its proper

jurisdiction, and equating the mystical body, whose substances can heal or harm, with confused and superstitious beliefs.

CSSH DISCUSSION The Calvinist rejection of Sadrach's charismatic healing practices consigned them to the realm of magic, a move that simultaneously demoted Sadrach to the status of shaman and false prophet. This negative valuation, so deeply rooted in the Abrahamic traditions, has plagued the anthropological study of witchcraft and magic as well. As if to escape the contamination of their key terms, ethnographers have tried for generations to explain how and why "witchcraft and magic" work, and they often end up showing how magic solves problems (of modernity, social change, human suffering, bodily limitations) and how witchcraft explains unexpected events (accidents, battlefield victories, deaths). The idea that magic might not work is ever present, and it is always somewhat beside the point.

Peter Geschiere, in a wide-ranging review of new work on witchcraft and shamanism, charts creative attempts to engage differently with this canonical subject matter. Studies located in Mongolia, Indonesia, and the Central African Republic occupy center stage. What makes them innovative, Geschiere claims, is their emphasis on nostalgia and uncertainty—nostalgia for a time when witchcraft worked and shamans knew what they were doing (clearly, they don't anymore), and uncertainty about the effectiveness and continued need for witchcraft and its powers. Themes of doubt and dissatisfaction surface repeatedly in these studies, as does the uncanny persistence of a belief system that is supposedly losing its appeal. In a telling sign of the times, the concerns of the shamans and those who frequent or avoid them would seem to align (magically?) with the analytical concerns of the ethnographers who represent them. For Geschiere, this is reassuring evidence that, for all their theoretical ambitions, the authors of these works are still ethnographers. They can still listen.
