

Editorial Foreword

SPIRIT MATTER The first two essays show that the great unanswerable questions—in this case the relation of spirit to matter—can be rich terrains for investigation of the beliefs of those who struggle to answer them.

Tomoko Masuzawa wonders why the concept of fetishism is so durable and keeps coming back in spite of the best efforts of the history of religion scholars to deconstruct it. She pursues the question via a journey through the materialism debate, anthropology of religion, the spiritualism craze, and Marx's idea of commodity fetishism. In Victorian conceptions, spirit is the antithesis of "dead" matter, such that a material object can serve only as a symbol of spirit, not its host (idolatry) or its substance (fetishism). Fetishism is the ghost haunting nineteenth-century European ideas of "dead matter" as its negation, and as the origin of the series: fetish, idol, symbol. (See also Webb Keane's analysis of the missionary's fetishist in Sumba: "From Fetishism to Sincerity: On Agency, the Speaking Subject, and their Historicity in the Context of Religious Conversion," *CSSH* 39:4, 674–93 [1997].)

Nancy Caciola finds, in the lives of medieval women saints, that authorities disagreed about whether "inspired women" were inspired by Christ or the Devil. Medical notions of the time had it that only God can enter the heart, the Devil only the intestines; but they offered no reliable method for "the discrimination of spirits," which remained *the* unresolved problem of detecting female sainthood. This changed in the sixteenth century, when a calm demeanor became the sign of divine inspiration. "As the discernment of spirits became a discernment of bodies, the female body increasingly was defined as a habitation for demons, rather than a locus of indwelling divinity." Performative eccentricity and loss of control not only ceased to be routes to sainthood for women, they came to be identified with its opposite and were treated by exorcism.

CONSEQUENCES OF EMPIRE The work of empire has lasting effects, as the next two essays remind us.

Peter Hansen takes us on a lightning tour of Nepal, India, Britain, and New Zealand with Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary following the "conquest" of Everest, for a synoptic view of "state honors, national masculinities, and imperial legacies" vividly displayed. Nations eager to appropriate the conquest as a national achievement came up against more inclusive claims of empire remembered, and the sometimes recalcitrant subjectivity of the climbers. Who conquered Everest became a vexing question, in many ways, at ground level.

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Julian Go compares Puerto Rico and the Philippines, which became colonies of the United States at about the same time, and which came under the same policy of promoting the political education of the colonized through limited self-rule. The two experiments went in opposite directions, the author argues, because U.S. capital was admitted into Puerto Rico through free-trade integration, but was held at bay by tariff barriers in the Philippines, owing to domestic political pressures upon the U.S. Congress. For complex reasons the result in Puerto Rico was an overcentralized colonial rule in the interest of preventing corruption, and the reverse in the Philippines: a lax colonial oversight that relied on local elites, not too closely scrutinized, to keep the peace and raise the revenue. (On a similar conjuncture of empire and economy see Manu Goswami, "From *Swadeshi* to *Swaraj*: Nation, Economy, Territory in Colonial South Asia." *CSSH* 40:4, 609–36 [1998].)

MOBILIZING THE PEOPLE Two essays track the geography of political mobilization, using quite different ways of illuminating the topic: the first undertaking the close inspection of a single cityscape and foregrounding society and class, the second through comparison of cases in two distant states, highlighting the role of state action.

Salwa Ismail examines the urban geography of movements of "militant Islamism" in Cairo, and finds that it grows by appropriating new spaces as Cairo expands. The new spatio-religious landscape is a variation on existing urban social traditions and popular modes of life, not a radical departure from them. Its members are neither uprooted nor alienated; they are part of the social fabric. The mobilizational potential of militant Islamist movements is shaped by this geography. (Of related interest: Nikki R. Keddie, "The New Religious Politics: Where, When, and Why Do 'Fundamentalisms' Appear?" *CSSH* 40:4, 696–723 [1998], and Asef Bayat, "Revolutions without Movement, Movement without Revolution: Comparing Islamic Activism in Iran and Egypt," *CSSH* 40:1, 136–169 [1998].)

Peter B. Houtzager and **Marcus Kurtz** study two contrasting cases of rural worker and peasant groups: in Brazil, where they have flourished, and Chile, where they have languished. They seek an explanation in deeper structural linkages between state and society, arguing that the state's institutional presence in the Brazilian countryside has expanded, while that of Chile has retreated before the free market. Differing developmental approaches lead to state action that strengthens civil society or weakens it, setting limits to popular participation.

BUILDING CIVIL SOCIETY The concept of civil society was devised to assert and explain the exceptionalism of Europe, but once the genie was let out of the bottle it could not be controlled by this program and became a means by which to analyze state-society relations in many places around the world.

Victor M. Uribe disputes the view that a public sphere did not come into being in Latin America before about 1820, showing in considerable detail that, to the contrary, a substantial public sphere grew and expanded through the Age of Revolution, 1760–1850. The new means of literate expression, limited though they were, prepared the way for revolutionary mobilization in the following period.

CSSH DISCUSSION

Erik Olin Wright, **Barbara Laslett**, and **Aldon Morris** critique Charles Tilly's important new book about "durable inequality," especially inequality of race and gender; **Charles Tilly** gives a spirited reply.