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A COMPANION TO GLOBAL HISTORICAL THOUGHT

EDITED BY
Prasenjit Duara, Viren Murthy, and Andrew Sartori

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A Companion to Global Historical Thought

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Prathama Banerjee is a historian and a fellow at the Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi. She currently works on histories of the political in modern and contemporary India. She is interested in intellectual and conceptual histories as well as in political theory and literature. She is the author of *The Politics of Time: 'Primitives' and History-Writing in Colonial Bengal* (2002). Two of her recent essays are "Thinking equality: Debates in Bengal, 1870–1940," in Gyan Pandey, ed., *Subalternity and Difference* (2011), and "Chanaky/Kautilya: History, theatre, politics in 20th century Bengal," *Journal of the History of the Present*, 2 (1) (2012).

Prasenjit Duara is the Raffles Professor of Humanities and Director, Asia Research Institute as well as Director of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences at National University of Singapore. He was previously Professor and Chair of the Dept of History and of the Committee on Chinese Studies at the University of Chicago. In 1988, he published *Culture, Power and the State: Rural North China, 1900–1942*, which won the Fairbank Prize of the AHA and the Levenson Prize of the AAS, USA.

Andreas Eckert is Professor of African history at Humboldt University. Since October 2009, he also directs the International Research Institute on "Work and Human Life Course in Global History," funded by the German Federal Ministry of Science and Research. He has been visiting professor at Indiana University (Bloomington), Harvard University, the University of Michigan, the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (Paris) and Fellow at the Freiburg Institute of Advanced Study (FRIAS). He has published widely on the history of Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, on the history of colonialism, and on the history of global labor.

Curtis Anderson Gayle is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Integrated Arts and Social Sciences at Japan Women's University, Tokyo. He has published *Marxist History and Postwar Japanese Nationalism* (2002) and *Women's History and Local Community in Postwar Japan* (2011). He is currently working on a manuscript entitled "Re-imagining Globalization: Alternative Japanese views of the World from 1945 to Today."

Gottfried Hagen took his doctorate from Freie Universität Berlin, and has been teaching Turkish Studies at the University of Michigan since 2000. He has published widely

on Ottoman intellectual history, asking how Ottomans perceived and interpreted the world, and their place in it in time and space.

Ian Harris is Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies, King's College London and President of the UK Association of Buddhist Studies. He has also held positions at the Universities of Oxford, Toronto, and British Columbia, the National University of Singapore, and Dongguk University, Seoul. His most recent books are *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice* (2005), *Buddhism in a Dark Age: Cambodian Monks under the Khmer Rouge* (2012), and an edited volume entitled *Buddhism, Power and Politics in Southeast Asia* (2007).

Freyja Cox Jensen currently holds the position of Lecturer in Early Modern British History at the University of Exeter, and was previously a Junior Research Fellow at Christ Church, Oxford. She specializes in the reception of the classics in early modern Britain and Europe; her first monograph, *Reading the Roman Republic in Early Modern England*, was published in 2012.

Thomas Keirstead teaches Japanese history and historiography in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. Trained as a medievalist, he has also written on early modern and modern conceptions of the past as it appears in a variety of genres, including film, anime, and historical fiction.

Tarif Khalidi was educated at University College, Oxford, and the University of Chicago. He is currently Shaykh Zayid Professor of Arabic & Islamic Studies, American University of Beirut, and was formerly Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic and Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. His recent publications include: *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (1994), *The Muslim Jesus* (2001), *The Qur'an, A New Translation* (2008), and *Images of Muhammad* (2009).

Karen Ordahl Kupperman, PhD Cantab, is Silver Professor of History Emerita at New York University. She is the author of *The Jamestown Project* (2007) and *The Atlantic in World History* (2012). Among her awards are the AHA Prize in Atlantic History and the AHA's Beveridge Prize.

Michael Lang is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Maine, where he teaches intellectual history, historiography, and international affairs. His research focuses on modern European conceptions of global order.

Ethan L. Menchinger is a PhD candidate in Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan. His research and publications focus on the early modern Ottoman Empire, with special interest in historical writing, knowledge transmission, and intellectual life. He also translates.

Viren Murthy teaches transnational Asian History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and researches Chinese and Japanese intellectual history. He is the author of *The Political Philosophy of Zhang Taiyan: The Resistance of Consciousness* (2011) and is currently working on a project tentatively entitled: *Imagining Asia: Takeuchi Yoshimi and the Conundrums of Asian Modernity.*

Klaus Neumann is a trained historian and Professor of History at the Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia. He is currently working on two projects: one concerned with forced migration, and the

other with historical justice. Relevant publications include, among others, *Shifting Memories: The Nazi Past in the New Germany* (2000).

Rosalind O'Hanlon, MA, PhD, is Professor of Indian History and Culture in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford. Her research interests lie in the social and intellectual history of early modern and colonial India. Her recent publications include *Religious Cultures in Early Modern India: New Perspectives* (2011, edited with David Washbrook) and numerous articles.

Ravi Arvind Palat is Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at Binghamton and has previously taught Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Sociology at the University of Auckland. He works in the broadly defined fields of historical sociology and political economy. He is the author of *Capitalist Restructuring and the Pacific Rim* and is currently completing a book titled *Princes, Paddyfields, and Bazaars: Wet-Rice Cultivation and the Emergence of the Indian Ocean World-System, 1250–1650.*

Michael Pearson is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Among his recent books are *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era* (1998, paperback edition, 2003); *The Indian Ocean* (2003, paperback 2008); *The World of the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800: Studies in Economic, Social and Cultural History* (2005); he is also co-editor, with Pamila Gupta and Isabel Hofmeyr, of *Eyes Across the Water: Navigating the Indian Ocean* (2010).

Jennifer Pitts is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago and author of *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (2005). Her current research explores European debates over legal relations with non-European societies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Kenneth Pomeranz is University Professor of History at the University of Chicago, and President of the American Historical Association. His publications include *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* and *The Making of a Hinterland: State, Society and Economy in Inland North China, 1853–1937.*

Michael Puett is the Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese History in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and the Chair of the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard University. He is the author of *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* and *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China*, as well as the co-author, with Adam Seligman, Robert Weller, and Bennett Simon, of *Ritual and its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity.*

Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin is a Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Among his publications are *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text: Catholic Censorship and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (2007) and *Exil et souveraineté: judaïsme, sionisme et pensée binationale*. Preface de Carlo Ginzburg (2007).

Andrew Sartori is Associate Professor of History at NYU. He is the author of *Bengal in Global Concept History*, and the co-editor of *Global Intellectual History* and *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial.* He is also an editor of the journal *Critical Historical Studies.*

Jean-Frédéric Schaub teaches at the EHESS (Paris) and CHAM (Lisbon). His books include: Edited with O. Remaud and I. Thireau, *Faire des sciences sociales. Comparer* (2012); *L'Europe a-t-elle une histoire?* (2008); *Oroonoko, prince et esclave* (2008); Ed. with J.C. Garavaglia, *Lois, justice, coutumes. Amériques et Europe latines* (2005); *La France espagnole* (2003); *Portugal na Monarquia Hispânica* (2001); *Le Portugal au temps d'Olivares* (2001); *Les juifs du roi d'Espagne* (1999).

Professor Hanna Schissler is retired and lives in Berlin, Germany. She was head of the research area "Globalization" at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, Germany. She taught at the Universities of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Vienna, Hannover (Germany), at New York University and Central European University in Budapest.

Bonnie G. Smith is Board of Governors Professor of History at Rutgers University. She is the author and co-author of books in women's and world history and historiography, including *Crossroads and Cultures: A History of the World's Peoples*, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, and *The Gender of History*.

George Steinmetz is the Charles Tilly Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan. He published *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (2007), and edited *Sociology and Empire* (2013). Currently he is completing a study of sociologists' involvement in the British and French empires.

Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo is Professor of History, The University of Chicago; *profesor afiliado* División de Historia, CIDE, Mexico City. His recent books include: *Culturas y memòria* (2012) and *"I Speak of the City": Mexico City, 1880–1930* (2013).

Romila Thapar has researched and written on early Indian history, specializing in social and cultural history and historiography. Her latest book is *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India* (2013). She is Professor Emerita of History at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Lorenzo Veracini is Associate Professor and Australian Research Council Queen Elizabeth II Fellow at the Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Melbourne, Australia. His research focuses on the comparative history of colonial systems and settler colonialism. He has authored *Israel and Settler Society* (2006) and *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (2010). Lorenzo is managing editor of *Settler Colonial Studies*.

Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (PhD 1982, Ruhr University Bochum) is a Professor of Chinese Studies and Vice Rector for Research and Career Development at the University of Vienna. She has published on twentieth-century Chinese history and historiography and is currently completing a book on East Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has also published articles on memory issues related to the Great Famine and the Cultural Revolution.

Alexis Wick is Assistant Professor of History at the American University of Beirut. He obtained his PhD from Columbia University. His research deals with the history of the sea and the history of the Ottoman and Arab world.

Thongchai Winichakul is Professor of Southeast Asian History at University of Wisconsin-Madison and author of *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (1994).

Introduction

Over the past 20 years, the idea of the global has become widely and even feverishly acceptable in the humanities and social sciences. As a result of the many different angles and approaches, the concept may have produced more confusion than light. Among our most important tasks in this introduction is to outline how thinking on a global scale might be significant for our understanding of history, and to clarify how the concept of the global is used in relation to historical thought.

The global is a concept that brings together space and time, such that global spatiality implies global history and vice versa. We might first conclude that global is a spatial concept. From a simplistic historical perspective, the world was made up of different areas, which gradually became interconnected to produce the globe as we know it. However, much of the Eurasian world has been interconnected since the emergence of agriculture and cities, with no transition from areas being distinct to areas becoming connected. We are dealing with space as it is already mediated by wider historical processes. Different spaces, of course, continued to produce distinctive historical processes and traditions; indeed, it would not be possible to identify different spaces independently of these processes. The importance of the spatial perspective lies in grasping the *changing nature of connections and distinctive processes* – including assertions of distinctiveness by representatives of the traditions – over time. This kind of global–spatial–temporal perspective poses challenges and opportunities for our understanding of history.

Specifically, we should also note that the global can change what we mean by history, because it constantly forces us to rethink the scope of history beyond traditional boundaries such as the nation-state. To grasp this problematic, we need to distinguish between two interrelated meanings of history. R.G. Collingwood told us a long time ago that the notion of history embodies two senses of the term. On the one hand, it refers to change in the world through events and processes – or what we might call the "eventing of the world." On the other, history refers to the recording of, or historical inscriptions of, those events and processes. The content and structure of this volume express both of

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these ideas of history. As we have seen above, to the extent that space is temporal, it already implies a notion of change and process.

The second type of history is, of course, essential because it is our primary means of access to process and time. Much of the content of this volume deals with the second aspect of history, namely how people gave shape to time through narrative around the world. Different parts of the globe at various times possessed different conceptions of the past and of the goals and course of worldly life. Indeed, outside the history profession today, many groups also view the purpose and goals of history quite differently from the profession. But the globe is more than the sum of its parts. The structure of this volume, with its distinctions between premodern and modern, suggests that large historical processes, including the global expansion of capitalism and the establishment of nation-states, change the way in which history was and is narrated. Some of the chapters deal with this theme explicitly. The chapters on world-systems theory, Hegel and Marx, critics of modernity, and empire, for example, look at ways to understand this processual dimension of global history and outline, as it were, the conditions for various specific historical narratives based on historical inscriptions. Part III perhaps deals most reflectively with this dialectic between historical processes and historical narrative, but the same dialectic is at work in Part II on modern historiography and in Part I, where we discuss how the contributors to this volume view premodern historical thought and representations of the past.

Discussion of Part I: Past Histories

We begin the volume with a discussion of premodern historical thought written by one of the most distinguished historians of the ancient world, Romila Thapar, whose specialty is the ancient history of India or the Indic world. Thapar's essay confronts many of the problems highlighted in the modern expectation of history as a kind of evidentiary database for secular, empirical, evidential, and human-centered histories. It is becoming increasingly accepted that few historical sources, primary or secondary, in the premodern period were written with such objectivism in mind.

Even though there are those who would consider great figures such as Thucydides in ancient Greece or Sima Qian of the Chinese Han dynasty as fundamentally evidential historians, others are persuaded that they understood the past in profoundly different ways than modern historians. According to Zachary Schiffman (2011), the very idea of the past as something different, indeed "dead," and subject, as it were (according to Michel de Certeau 1988), to laboratory analysis does not really appear until the late eighteenth century in Europe. In premodern histories, the past is episodic, and even when causal relationships are seen, they are often deemed to be illustrative of a universal principle that is eternally present. It is the reason why the past can be seen to serve as the moral guide to the present and future. Modern historians, in contrast, evaluate past events in their contemporary spatial and relational context and regard their archival remains in another time as "anachronisms" or sources to interpret the past.

In this context, ancient India has typically been thought of as having been among the most notoriously ahistorical or anti-historical, along with Jewish thought, discussed in this volume by Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin. Thapar seeks to re-evaluate this condition by delving into both general and contextually specific ways in which the past was represented. These ways were obviously not tailor-made to match modern historians' need for

objective knowledge. Nor were there professional historians in the modern sense. Rather, the need to record the past was concerned with such varied goals as the practical problems of recording property claims, genealogical claims to legitimate power by kings and lords, and cosmological goals, often dealing with astronomical events and movements, as well as the need for scribal professions and religious elites to affirm or deny the role of mundane events according to their own self-interests.

Thapar explains that people could believe that India did not possess historical consciousness, despite having a vast textual and inscriptional base, for two reasons. First, it was in the interests of the modern British colonizers to show that India was a stagnant Oriental society which remained frozen in time. Second, those in quest of Indian history looked for it in the dominant classical texts, which were concerned with cosmological issues, and not in the places where they might have found it: in the lesser Puranic traditions, temple endowments, guild agreements, land grants and other royal inscriptions, and, most of all, in the writings of Buddhist and Jain communities whose representatives had either disappeared or become localized by the eighteenth century. Rosalind O'Hanlon's essay in this volume, about a later period in South Asian history, points to ways in which contemporary historians have learned how to sift out historical details embedded in, or intertwined with, other genres of writing.

In ancient China, the powerful centralizing imperial tradition that appeared from the early third century BCE displayed a different type of relationship between the universalist cosmological vision of time and the role of human agency in steering the course of mundane time. Chinese universalism, principally expressed in moral terms, was represented as the return to the Golden Age of the sage-kings of ancient China who ruled the world according to the principles of Heaven. According to much modern historiography, this view was responsible for the conservatism of the Confucian order from which Chinese radicals had to make a fundamental break in modern times. Yet, as Michael Puett demonstrates in his essay, the advent of the imperial state in the third century BCE marked a fundamental and defiant break with this vision of the ideal moral order. The Qin emperor defied the Mandate of Heaven and proposed to set up his own dynasty and moral order for all eternity, and sparked an institutional revolution that forever changed the face of Chinese political institutions. Nonetheless, he and his advisors could not fully suppress the prevalent cosmological ideas or the ideology and interests connected with them. The dominant trend of imperial Chinese historiography returned to the cosmological ideal of Heaven's mandate and moral guidance of the Golden Age. Puett's essay also has the virtue of showing us how there was a plurality of ways of thinking of the past and history, especially in popular society in early China.

As is well known, Japan was deeply influenced by imperial Chinese ideas of the polity until the eighteenth century. Thomas Keirstead, whose exploration of historical ideas in premodern Japan follows Puett's essay, adopts a creative approach by surveying the ways in which historians from the early modern or Tokugawa Japan both followed the older Confucian-influenced models of historical writing and also broke from this model in subtle but profound ways in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Official historians of this era documented the achievements of the government and served up moral exemplars from history as the mirror for princes to govern according to the will of Heaven and with benevolence toward their people. Others such as Ueda Akinari represent a new trend in Tokugawa times to represent the past as indeed bygone and very different from the present. In this context, the moral examples of the past may well have been quite irrelevant since the present was so radically different. One of the ways in which Ueda and

these more popular historical writers indexed the pastness of the past was by evoking the earlier times as a spectral presence, populated by ghosts and spaces haunted by the dead.

Ian Harris examines Buddhist views of the past. Albeit through the different schools of Theravada and Mahayana, Buddhism dominated much of East, Southeast, and South Asia, even though it had disappeared from its Indian homeland as early as the eleventh century CE. Buddhism is unusual among premodern religious views because in theory it does not fundamentally depend on any belief in God or even in universals. It is a philosophy based on the impermanence of things in time and thus resembles in some ways the modern view of time. At the same time, it did possess a notion of liberation (*moksha*) from the world and in time came to accept the role of Boddhisattvas and gods as divine aides to such liberation. Moreover, Buddhism also inherited the Indic idea of great ages or cycles of time – of thousands of years – each of which has its own special characteristic, although the cycle tends toward overall deterioration of the condition of the world and the decline of the Dharma or the moral path or law.

Harris reveals that the idea of the temporal stages of the decline of the Dharma has the interesting effect of producing innovative strategies of liberation for the individual and collective. In premodern Japan and Myanmar, for example, these strategies and ideas often led to the assertion of the unique significance of Buddhism in these societies, which had developed ways to overcome some of the effects of the final stage of the Dharmic world (*mappo* in Japanese). Harris's essay may be fruitfully read together with Thapar's delineation of the different genres of representing the past in genealogies and in the context of sectarian competition.

Two of our contributions in Part I refer to historical thought and historiography in the Islamic worlds of the Arabs and Ottomans in Western Asia and North Africa. As in the other premodern societies, writing about the past in Islamic empires and polities was shaped by the universal and moral ideals representing the providence of God and his guidance of the world. As Tarif Khalidi and Gottfried Hagen and Ethan L. Menchinger show us, history as the fulfillment of divine purpose did not prevent the emergence of writings about the dynasty and the nations and peoples of the world in Islamic historiography. In the Arab world, there were histories of cities and tribes as well as attention to geography, genealogy, and chronicles, much of which reflected great concern with dating and accuracy. This fertile historiographical milieu culminated in the writings of the Tunisian Arab, Ibn Khaldun, who was among the most creative and influential historians of the premodern world. Ibn Khaldun sought to understand historical vicissitudes by linking them to an early sociology of organisms and solidarity in order to grasp the effects of human activity upon history. In all of these writings there is, of course, considerable attention to the divine ideals of justice and moral governance. The two were not ultimately separated; historical writing was also an attempt to uncover God's design for humanity.

The extent to which there was a tension between universal ideals and practical history is perhaps best revealed in Ottoman historiography. The Ottoman Empire was one of the most powerful and long-lasting in Eurasia during the second millennium. Its historians often encountered the dilemma between prioritizing the moral goals of Islam and seeking to bolster the dynastic exceptionalism that would see the Ottoman dynasty as one made up of pious and virtuous monarchs which could last forever. Certainly the historical argument of the rise and fall of dynasties and communities developed by Ibn Khaldun was well known in the Ottoman Empire and it seemed to be as good an explanation as any of the crises it faced in the seventeenth century. But the gap between a moral and

divine ideal and the all-too-human ambitions of the rulers also gave historians like Kātib Çelebi (1609–1657) the opportunity to plead for necessary reforms in the empire.

Rosalind O'Hanlon's essay on South Asia's "premodern" past furnishes us with an excellent link between earlier Indic traditions of representing the past and the Islamic historiographical tradition. She places their relationship in the context of the wider Eurasian upheavals associated with the irruption of central Asian steppe warriors into the Islamic heartlands. These events expanded the Muslim presence within the subcontinent, bringing Arabic, Ottoman, and Persian traditions into closer engagement with its already heterogeneous and multilayered literary landscape. The subcontinent's new Muslim rulers and their advisors strove to define a role for Islam in their new lands and, for Muslim historians, history became the terrain of this contest. History was likewise the terrain on which scribal people from many other cultural traditions strove to comprehend and adapt to the new bureaucratic states emerging during the early modern centuries. O'Hanlon explores the new modes of historical writing associated with these people, and reviews recent efforts to explore the "texture" of these histories and to explain why they interwove historical facticity with cosmological and other goals and with concepts of time.

We have mentioned how historical Jewish culture is regarded as relatively inattentive to the history of the Jews in comparison to its sacred writings. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin attributes this situation to the consciousness of exile, which dominated Jewish communities after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE as they dispersed beyond their erstwhile kingdom. For these communities, true history ends with the end of the Temple. The revelations in the Torah – or what came to be called by Christians the "Old Testament' – became the source of truth of the world and their condition. Raz-Krakotzkin suggests that to the extent that there was a Christian notion of progress in linear historical terms, it was premised upon the superiority of revelation in the New Testament over the Old. This attitude also reinforced the Jewish stance of meaningful history having ended with the first revelation. Even when modern Jewish historiography became dominant among Jewish intellectuals and people from the nineteenth century onward, radical Jewish intellectuals like Walter Benjamin continued the critique of linear, progressive history by adapting the Jewish prophetic and messianic tradition to enable a counter-history of the oppressed multitudes in world history.

Thus Part I illuminates several dimensions of the different understandings and role of history in the premodern world – different, that is, both from modern historiography and from each other. But the premodern world appears to be relatively unified by the idea that the history of the mundane world was in an important way subordinate to, or a reflection of, a universal principle of God, Heaven, or Dharma. The very idea of the past as representing moral ideals and guides for the present was dependent on the universal principle. Of course, there were important exceptions, as for instance when the Qin emperor declared that he was superior to the previous sages (and did not mention Heaven), or if we regard Buddhism as an entirely atheistic religion. Even so, the views of the Qin emperor and the historian Sima Qian were subsequently reversed and deities and sacred principles (of Dharma) became common in Buddhism and Buddhist societies.

It was nonetheless the case that evidentiary histories were also developed in premodern societies for various practical purposes. These purposes were frequently associated with the requirement for the veracity of records to enable the agrarian state to control

the land, people, and other resources such as water. They were also necessary for competitive claims to the truth, whether for sectarian groups to claim evidence of their doctrinal authenticity or to demonstrate past relationships between clerics and royal power for their legitimacy. Local elites – like dynasties – sought to shore up their authority with genealogies and records of their achievements. Reliable records of astronomical movements and events – often connected to explanations of worldly events in the court – were important for court astronomers, mathematicians, astrologists, and so on. The concern for accuracy and objectivity was often driven by these practical requirements – requirements that we cannot assume will be immediately recognizable or familiar to us as modern readers.

Depending on the nature of the polity and culture, different regions of the world generated a different mix and intertwining of cosmological and practical representations of the past. We have seen a strong statist tradition in China pushing against the limits of the principle of Heaven; the necessity of reconciling salvation history to practical concerns in the Abrahamic traditions; and the importance of sectarian and local versions of history in India, among others. Yet these histories and even, in part at least, the universal ideals and principles of the premodern era did not develop in isolation from each other, as subsequent national histories often liked to assert. The work of anthropologists and world historians has shown us that in Eurasia and parts of Africa, goods, biological species (including diseases), ideas, and people have circulated since at least the Bronze Age and the emergence of agriculture and cities.

Discussion of Part II: Modern Histories

What is increasingly coming to be called a global early modern era from circa 1500 to 1800 CE, although still ill-defined, represents in some ways the intensification of this traffic as the technology of transportation and communication accelerated. Several scholars of the world-systems school (see Chapter 24), in particular, have also associated this accelerated circulation of traffic with the rise of capitalism as a global phenomenon. We will return to this topic. For the moment, let us reflect a little on this inchoate early modern era. Several of the authors in Part I have hinted at common or circulatory developments across Eurasia by the middle of the second millennium. O'Hanlon's essay points to how ideas of history from the Arab, Ottoman, and Persian world are taken up in the South Asian or Indic milieu. Ibn Khaldun's "sociological" history of the rise and fall of peoples and polities was influential across the Middle East and also in Europe where his work was also well known. In Tokugawa Japan, Confucian ideas of history reappeared and neo-Confucian ideas penetrated the samurai elite, while Buddhist ideas continued to circulate with the travels of Buddhist monks and scholars in Southeast Asia and in East Asia.

The question we may put forth at this juncture – although the answers would be too conjectural to be taken up in this volume – is to what extent an early modern approach to historical questions might have appeared. This era seems to have been overtaken by modern national histories before we have had a chance to grasp what other approaches to history – particularly in the relations between universal ideals and practical histories – could have developed. This question may have some value in considering the rise of the non-Western world in our time. Although we cannot cross the same stream a second time, or, in other words, we do not inhabit a timeless universe,

this has not prevented collectives and groups of people from articulating a historical identity in relation to a suppressed past.

Attention to the temporal and spatial dimensions of the global permits us to see the specificity of the modern conception of history. The past has been important for most communities and political systems since time immemorial, but the idea of history as we have understood it in the past two hundred years or so is regarded by many historians as different from the ways in which the past was depicted earlier. The tradition of modern historical writing associated with Gibbon, Ranke, Michelet, and Macaulay identified the historian's task as that of writing secular, empirical, evidential, and human-centered histories. The subject of these histories might be universal, imperial, communal, and, especially, national, but that they existed and occurred had to be evidentially corroborated.

Professional historians in our times are bound by these professional ethics and methodology. They have yielded an enormous output over the past century and expanded our understanding both of specific places, events, and people and of connected, circulatory, and relatively impersonal processes. As a result, we need to make another distinction in our coverage of historical thought, between historical representations by historical subjects, whether these are individual or collective entities, and historical understandings of processes undertaken by contemporary history professions. Part II: Historiographies deals principally with historical representations by historical actors whereas Part III: Global Histories and New Directions deals more with debates and interpretations among professional historians regarding relatively objective processes or methodologies in topics such as comparative histories. Of course, several of these process histories – such as empires and imperialism – have also generated representations of their pasts in distinctive ways, and these essays deal with both dimensions: the views of historical actors and of professional historians.

We begin Part II with historical writing in Western Europe before the Enlightenment. Freyja Cox Jensen probes the ways in which historical writing in the Classical era of Greece and Rome influenced Renaissance and early modern historians. She finds that while many of the genres and approaches to history were shaped by the classical texts, there were also significant differences. As we might expect from the theme developed above, the principal differences have to do with how the assumption that the past is not radically separate from the present, derived in part from the universalism of Christianity, increasingly gave way as Western Christendom fractured into multiple and competing sovereignties.

Jensen seeks to show how the concern with veracity, authenticity, and sources is part of an inheritance from Renaissance historiography. At the same time, she sees modern history as the latest evolution of the classical arts of oratory and rhetoric in the construction of stories. The ways of telling a story, the narrative form, the different perspectives and genres (including myth) are aspects of continuity in historical storytelling which continue today. Last but not least, histories began to be written during the Renaissance in order to build local identities, often around the goals of newly competitive states. These trends came gradually to feed into the writings of national histories that became so dominant in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In the essays that follow Jensen's, the focus is on epistemological ruptures within the framework of universal history. That is, Kupperman, Schaub, Pitts, and Sartori all discuss attempts to rethink received narratives that had claimed to be comprehensive in their embrace of human earthly existence, and that typically interpreted that story in terms of a fore-ordained *telos*. They emphasize how the ambition to interpret

human history as a whole had to be reformulated and reconceptualized in order to move from the enclosed imagination of, say, Christian eschatology to a conceptualization of the global as a space that challenged the assumptions, both factual and epistemological, of such earlier accounts.

Karen Ordahl Kupperman focuses on the impact of the discovery of the Americas on early modern European historical thought. She describes a tale of misrecognition and epistemological expansion as Columbus set out in search of far-off lands. Her essay describes the creation of geographical space and highlights changes in the cartographical imagination of the world. Columbus landed on what we call North America, but Kupperman explains that there was no reason to think that this was anything other than another large island, given that Europeans had conquered islands such as the Azores in the recent past. Martin Waldseemüller's map of 1507 was the first to show that the new-found lands were continents separated from Asia by an ocean. Kupperman shows how the discovery of the Americas was essential to the construction of a world of continents that we now take for granted. Her contribution also describes the way in which various settlers try to make sense of the American Indians using European categories and attempting to classify their language in terms of ancient Greek and Hebrew.

Schaub continues to focus on the complex interaction between Europe and the Americas, with special attention to the Iberian empires that represented the leading edge of European expansion in the early modern period. Arguing that the period of the Great Discoveries did not coincide with any particular transformation in the political organization of European states, Schaub emphasizes the continuing significance of forms of legal culture that mediated the exercise of monarchical political authority. Schaub highlights the entanglement of the discovery of the Americas with the histories of Christian/Muslim rivalry in the Iberian peninsula and the Mediterranean, and the internal schism between Catholic and Protestant Christianities. He argues that the Great Discoveries were nonetheless the occasion of major transformations in the historical and geographical imaginations of early modern Iberian thinkers in two ways: first, in terms of generating new spatial imaginations and territorial practices that turned on an abstract conception of the global; and second, in terms of processes of racialization that resonated and interacted with concurrent concerns about Jews and conversion in Spain itself.

Pitts in some sense continues where Kupperman and Schaub left off. She maps for us the shift in historical consciousness that took place around the eighteenth century with Enlightenment thinkers such as Diderot, and how this historical consciousness implied certain notions of globality and transnational consciousness. She begins her essay by noting that it was precisely the earlier explorations and the revolutions in cartography that formed the conditions for the possibility of a new mode of history-writing. She notes how certain maps turned space into time by describing barbaric peoples who were contemporaries of Europe but "behind" or backward, a spatial metaphor that implies a temporal lag between the Enlightened and the unenlightened. Based on this description, she discusses two modes of writing global history, one philosophical and the other commercial. The philosophical approach, influenced by Montesquieu, compared types or stages of society in order to grasp general laws of human development. The commercial mode narrated the emergence of connections among societies throughout the globe, sometimes celebrating the rise of global markets, sometimes warning about the violence and injustice unleashed by commercial and imperial expansion. This was a harbinger for other histories of commerce, which at the same time were embedded in a moral narrative and thus represented a synthesis of the two modes. Pitts shows us an important

transformation in historical consciousness and how a global historical consciousness was intimately connected to teleological narratives of the human being.

These kinds of "universal" histories did not end with the Enlightenment. Sartori's contribution takes us into the nineteenth century and tackles two thinkers who are often regarded as expressing the global-teleological view par excellence. Sartori problematizes our usual understanding of Hegel and Marx, however, by drawing on the work of Robert Pippin and Moishe Postone. Sartori questions conventional characterizations of Hegel's "teleological" understanding of history. Hegel rather used the concept of Spirit to show how communities and cultures attempt to make sense of their world and in the process encounter various contradictions and problems, which form the basis for self-critical reflection. Sartori notes that although Hegel's own narrative privileged Europe, his larger model of historical development has been critically received and developed around the world, especially in non-Western regions, such as Africa, India, and China. Of course, in these places the Marxist narrative also became prominent and Sartori attempts to grasp Marx's engagement with the Hegelian paradigm. In Sartori's view, Marx's project is not a theory of human history in general, as in Hegel, but a historically specific critique of capitalism. Moreover, modern historical consciousness, on this reading of Marx, emerges precisely with a new consciousness of time in capitalist society. From this perspective, we can understand why it was precisely as places like India and China began to be incorporated into a global capitalist system that Indian and Chinese intellectuals began to write history in the modern, global mode.

In Curtis Gayle's chapter on modern Japan, we see a case study in which Marxist historiography would become hegemonic even though the government was far from supportive of the left. Gayle shows how Leopold von Ranke paved the way to modern historiography in Japan and how his student, Ludwig Riess, helped propagate his view by teaching Ranke's method to students at Tokyo University. As Marxist historiography entered the scene in Japan, an opposition developed between a Rankean emphasis on the primacy of facts and a Marxist emphasis on class theory. Gayle shows how Marxism became a major force in the 1930s and again in the postwar period. After introducing some of the debates about the nature of Japanese capitalism in the 1930s, Gayle turns to the immediate postwar period and discusses the attempt of some postwar Japanese intellectuals to turn history-writing into a popular political force. Ishimoda Shō began a popular history movement that attempted to de-professionalize history and promote different narratives of history than people who did not necessarily learn the scientific mode of history-writing. Gayle then recounts how Marxists went against this movement once they found that women and other minorities constructed historical narratives that went against the tenets of Marxism.

Finally, Viren Murthy's essay focuses on critics of modernity, a quintessentially "global" concept. Murthy's essay examines a number of authors who question the narrative of modernity, and who utilize elements that modernity was supposed to have left behind in order to construct narratives of resistance. In particular, he focuses on the way that certain German-Jewish and Japanese scholars drew on religion to propose alternatives to modernity. Most of the scholars discussed in this essay saw religion or the past as embodying community, which was lost in modernity, but could be brought back and fused with modern forms. From this perspective, one could argue that the project that Murthy explores is one of re-enchantment through history. One thinker in this chapter poses a somewhat different perspective, namely Georgy Lukács. Although Lukács was

influenced by Jewish mysticism in his early life, he went on to outline a theory of history that would ground both what we call modernity and its critique in social transformations associated with capitalism. This could open a path to historicizing globalization, history, and the myriad forms of global historical thought.

While the values and methods of modern historians represent considerable advancement in our knowledge of the past from those of premodern historians, these methods and goals do not exhaust our understanding of modern historical writing. It is still – ultimately – subject to political contestation in terms of its assumptions about how society and the future should be seen. Hayden White introduced the role of narratives in structuring how we select, organize, and lend significance to accounts of the past. As such, these narratives are contestable and become fodder for different interests and political orientations – as Hannah Schissler's chapter on textbook controversies and others show – especially as they spill out of the academic world.

Even where the narratives have an exceedingly strong political purpose – such as among ultra-nationalists or heretofore marginalized groups, such as outcaste communities – they pursue one of the important purposes of modern historical narratives: the formation of categories of identity. In this way, they differ from most premodern narratives where, to the extent that a special purpose or identity of a group or the state is built through narratives of the past, this identity is ultimately dissolved or merged in some universal or eternal truth, whether this is God or the Way (*dao*) of Heaven in Chinese thought. Identity-activating histories in the contemporary world continue to follow the logic of national histories which dominated modern historiography in much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The coalescence of a number of factors in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe led to the emergence of nationalism and a new historical consciousness that accompanied it. The emergence of a secular realm of human activity together with competitive capitalism often worked with the state to produce a social body consistent with the ideals of secularism as a state ideology while transforming the populace into a sleek, efficient, and loyal body capable of competing for economic and strategic superiority: the nation. With the French Revolution, the sacred basis of the polity was transformed into popular sovereignty and the stage was set for modern nationalism and national history, which became pervasive all over the world by the mid-twentieth century.

National histories were largely cast in a common mold of an emerging national subject that joined an ancient past to a modern future, often by overcoming a dark middle age of disunity and foreign contamination. This is often achieved by using the trope of "renaissance." It allows one to disavow the present or immediate past and use a classical or ancient ideal as a motor to propel one into the future. We may note also how a strong ownership claim on the land and the people is made through the textual and archaeological remains from the past in the contemporary territory of a state. This ignores the ways in which people and cultures from earlier periods may have been part of different linguistic or ethno-racial groups and worldviews. This is an important means of binding the national subject as historically exclusive.

The new historical consciousness synthesized ideas of progress and popular sovereignty with claims to territorial sovereignty, three basic assumptions of nationalist thought. This relationship became the means of creating a historical agent or (often juridical) subject capable of making claims to sovereign statehood. A "people" with a supposed unified self-consciousness developed a sovereign right to the territory they allegedly originally and/or continuously occupied.

At the same time, the unity of territory, popular sovereignty, and progress is not secured simply by a one-way, linear temporality. Crucial to academic histories located in the nation as much as to nationalist historiographies is the unit in which this history is framed, the national subject of history. How is it that different groups, conquerors, exterminators, people with a different sense of space, with no recognizable geographical knowledge or unity over millennia, come to be thought of as a single people with atavistic and primordial claims to the territory? In 1882, Ernest Renan tried to solve this vexed problem of all national historiography with the idea that the nation is the daily "plebiscite of the will." He affirms the Spartan song, "We are what you were, we will be what you are," as the hymn of every patrie. We may think of the nation as the machinery that produces the will to mythologize the historical unity of the nation.

The subject of history – the unchanging nation, what the philosopher Jacques Derrida calls "the intemporal kernel of time, the non-modifiable nucleus of modification" – has perhaps been the most important mythological figure even in scientific histories. Of course, a myth is not simply a lie, but a necessary fiction able to give meaning to a community. Even so, as we have seen, the myth is subject to interpretation and contestation. Is the founder of the nation to be seen as someone who unified the country (often posed as a reunified ancient unity) or someone who liberated the slaves? Or are the founders the indigenous people who have learned to make claims on the land in legal and other terms? Is there a famous, lost Hindu temple buried under a mosque?

A global perspective on the emergence of modern historiography shows how within larger structural changes, there is a huge amount of diversity in historical narratives, including struggles against the modern mode of history-writing and struggles over how to resolve its methods and emphases with older traditions, especially in the formerly colonized or semi-colonized regions.

Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik shows how history-writing in China – a very long tradition as Michael Puett's chapter shows – was transformed in the twentieth century. She explains that, since the late Qing, Chinese historians have constantly been struggling with the national form. Once Chinese intellectuals felt the necessity to rewrite their history based on a national model, they had to grapple with the problem of the extent to which Chinese history would conform to Western models of periodization. In particular, after 1949, Chinese historians attempted to reconcile Chinese history with Marxist categories by discussing history in terms of facts and theories. The question was how to put facts into Marxist theory. The debate about which is more important, facts (*shi*) or theory (*lun*), appears to be a novel conceptual opposition, but scholars in the 1950s often compared those who focused on facts and sources to the Qing dynasty evidentiary scholars, which shows how the image of the Chinese past continues to haunt modern Chinese historiography, even in its Marxist guise.

Thongchai Winichakul shows in his case study of Thai national history how the modern practices of historical writing were localized and vernacularized in Southeast Asia. The premodern tradition of royal chronicles was reconceptualized through a new insistence on temporal distance from the past and the application of new evidentiary, explanatory, and stylistic norms. While the modern genre of historiography was adapted from European sources, it was set to work as a means of responding to local historical problems, not least the delineation of a national territory and the assertion of sovereignty. Both these claims were pinned to a narrative of antiquity and a narrative of recurrent struggles for independence – neither of which were to be found in the premodern

chronicles themselves, but both of which turned on the re-appropriation of premodern texts and artifacts.

Mauricio Tenorio's essay captures the moment of emergence of the very idea of modern history in the New World. Writing with the flair of many of the historians he discusses, Tenorio evokes a continent of contentions and negotiations across circulating histories before and even after the professionalization of historical writing takes hold. The national histories that emerge in the continent incorporate, essentialize, and blend the traces of indigenous peoples and civilizations –"the vice of origins"– while modeling themselves on Enlightenment ideals. At the same time, as nations that are often older than many in Europe, they influence the latter even as they busily demarcate themselves and their own paths from all the others, especially from their contentious neighbors. Tenorio concludes that if the Americas tell a tale of history in relation to the dominant narratives from the West, it is not quite the same as the rest of the postcolonial world. As such, the value added from such a perspective amounts to the global – the sum of which is more than its parts.

Prathama Banerjee's chapter on modern South Asia argues that the emergence of modern historical thought in South Asia was inextricably bound to the history of colonialism. When South Asians began trying to write national histories, they confronted the internal fractures that separated the advanced, the backward, and the primitive within the national space itself. In doing so, they affirmed a multiplicity of times existing alongside the unitary time of linear progression. Writing the history of history in South Asia thus in turn leads to two further crucial claims: first, that it was the peculiar duty of the advanced to represent the primitive and backward in the language of historiography; and second, that that very marginalization of the backward and primitive marked the violence at work in the constitution of history as a dominant way of making sense of the past in the colonial world.

In his chapter on historical writing in the modern Arab world, Alexis Wick begins by stressing that history is a modern concept, depending on both particular forms of rhetoricity and institutionalization. Arab intellectuals began to write modern kinds of histories in the early nineteenth century under the influence of Darwinism and positivism in the Arab world. This new epistemological framework served as the condition for debates about politics and the nature of the ideal state. As people began writing histories in this modern form, they constructed a "subject" for this history. This subject was Arab civilization – a subject that had not existed in any comparable sense before. How this subject was defined, in what direction it should develop, and who had the authority to debate these questions would be issues generative of heated debate, issues that continue into the present day.

Perhaps the most challenging limit case of all is that of Africa. Andreas Eckert begins by noting that universal conceptions of history (notably Hegel) have consistently marginalized Africa as standing outside of historical time. African historians, especially in response to African anticolonial liberation movements and decolonization, have struggled to develop a historiography that exceeds the limits of the documentary archive and positions African history in relation to wider historical processes. Indeed, central to this historiography was the urge to usher in independent postcolonial nation-states to modern history. Oral history would emerge as a central practice of an endeavor to recover the lost histories of the colonized, bringing modern practices of historical writing into relation with other conceptions of time and past. At the same time, the development of historical thought in Africa demonstrates the need to undo conventional oppositions between African and

colonial thought. In the process, it becomes possible to ask, not how global histories have impacted Africa, but how Africa has impacted the rest of the world.

Discussion of Part III: Histories beyond the Nation and Profession

The identity-making functions of modern history have spread beyond the ambit of the nation-state or historians closely associated with nationalist goals and projects. Today, as several of the chapters in Part III show, they are picked up by all kinds of newly emerged identity groups such as multicultural, ethnic, gender and sexual, animal rights, and historically wronged or marginalized groups. A significant trope among them is that of "awakening" from denied but unselfconscious entities to awakened ones resolved to right the wrongs. Their history is the record of their suppression, their awakening, and the stages of their struggle to achieve their goals. In most cases, the politics of these groups stay within the sovereign sphere of the state, but they often seek to utilize the resources and solidarity of similar movements worldwide to further their domestic agenda. The identity-making role of history within nations has thus not only become a global phenomenon, but these identities are also cutting across national and other institutionalized boundaries – such as the Catholic Church – to produce communities who see themselves as sharing global histories.

In addition to the identity-making functions of historical writing and representation by new or previously silent historical actors, we also focus on how contemporary historiography has addressed the concept of the global – whether as a category of narrativization and representation or as a category that refers to actual forms of interconnectedness and interdependence in the world. What is at stake for contemporary historians in perceiving and writing of global interconnections and different types of connections, such as through trade or the environment? How does it differ from the views of premodern writers? What constituencies require and rely on those perspectives? How do national historians view these often transnational connections and what challenges did and does it pose for them?

We begin with Michael Pearson's discussion of the recent turn to maritime histories. Pearson helps us to de-anthropocentrize the volume by showing the importance of the ocean in writing global history. Oceans were in many ways the medium of a certain type of globalization or transnational trade and Pearson provides us an outline of how to write a history of this medium. This contribution reveals the complexity of writing about the ocean from different perspectives. For example, from the perspective of a history of ideas, one of the issues that oceanic history raises concerns the history of people's conception of the ocean. When did people actually begin conceiving of oceans as such? Similarly, Pearson notes how, because of their different geographical conditions, Britain and the United States have significantly different ideas of oceans. At the same time, Pearson introduces to us a topic that has recently gained popularity, namely the role of the Indian Ocean in connecting various regions of Africa, Asia, and Europe. This contribution poses the following question: Given that continents, nations, and areas are considered problematic as analytic categories, could focusing on oceans provide an alternative to thinking about space in the context of global history?

Kenneth Pomeranz's contribution on environmental history continues the focus on non-human nature and its generative mechanisms as a new lens for conceptualizing history in global terms. Pomeranz draws on the philosophical tradition of critical realism

to emphasize the agency of environmental processes. For example, while many of the concepts we use are mediated by society, the effects of the environment act regardless of discourse – the agency of rivers, mountains, and climate change does not depend on human conceptions of them. This is not to say that environmental history discounts social mediation. Although one could say that the object of environmental history is ultimately prior to the social, the goals of such histories from the beginning have been mediated by social and political concerns. Indeed, environmental history became popular in North America in the context of the 1960s environmentalist movements, while Indian environmental histories, such as Ramachandra Guha's *Unquiet Woods* (1989), were closely connected to the agenda of the Subaltern Studies movement. Pomeranz's essay helpfully traces the many influences between South Asia, the Americas, and Europe to show how environmental history is not only transnational by virtue of its object, but also in terms of the formation and circulation of its narratives.

Ravi Palat's chapter on the world-systems perspective returns us to the realm of human agency in the constitution of global history. Palat focuses on what many believe to be a blind spot in Marxism, namely the relationship between the development of capitalism and the emergence of the international system of nation-states. Marx's *Das Kapital* says extremely little about how to think about a world in which states have unequal relations to one another. Palat shows how a world-systems approach can both illuminate the origins of capitalism and make us rethink Eurocentric assumptions about capitalism emerging in a particular nation-state, such as England. At the same time, a world-systems approach can recontextualize contemporary politics by recognizing the role of a hierarchical interstate system. One of the key points from the perspective of global history-writing is that a world-systems' perspective allows us a vantage point beyond the nation-state, enabling us to grasp larger transnational historical trajectories and, on that basis, the conditions for the development of a system of national states in the first place. Moreover, Immanuel Wallerstein's division of global space into the core, periphery, and semi-periphery of the capitalist world-system enables him to inscribe difference into the universalizing dynamic of capitalism. In other words, although the regions in the core and the periphery are part of the same system, their location in the world-system accounts for distinct developmental pathways.

Duara also attempts to step out of the constraints of national history by focusing on the political form that preceded nation-states and out of which modern nation-states historically emerged. Duara examines a broad span of history in his discussion of empires and imperialism. He notes that empire is an expansive and ambiguous term but it is precisely this ambiguity that makes the concept productive with respect to thinking about history, time-consciousness, and the problem of modernity. Duara's essay highlights the ruptures and continuities between empires before and after capitalism and the nation-state. In short, he seeks a "macro-historical" perspective from which to examine empire both in the early senses of the Achaemenid, Roman, and Chinese Empires and empire in the epoch of capitalism and the nation-state. With respect to historical consciousness, Duara attempts to complicate the conventional narrative which claims that modern historical consciousness and the idea of linear time emerge only with the advent of capitalism. But the nature of imperialism was significantly transformed by the emergence of nationalism as a global historical force. Duara points out that in the 1930s, after the predominance of the idea of self-determination, informal empire replaced direct colonization. Although this has been the dominant form of American empires, Japan's attempt

to construct Manchukuo as an independent nation-state is perhaps among the first attempts to systematize an ideology of national autonomy with an imperialist agenda.

Michael Lang continues the discussion of transnational framings of historical processes by turning our attention to "globalization." Scholars from various fields of the humanities use globalization in two interrelated ways, as a methodology and as a historical condition. As a methodology, globalization cautions scholars not to focus solely on the nation-state, and this methodology became salient especially after the 1970s, with the turn toward a neoliberal global order that subordinated the agency of nation-states to transnational economic processes. One could argue that capitalism was always a global order, but by the 1970s its projected universality was matched by a historic weakening of Western designs. The initial study of globalization, in this sense, was at once a description of economic change and the conceptual management of this turbulence. After outlining debates about the origins of globalization, Lang notes that it was precisely after the 1970s that scholars began to be interested in global histories and that this in turn sparked renewed interest in premodern historians such as Herodotus and Sima Qian. Today, global histories combine Western and non-Western knowledge to produce transnational narrations of the past. Lang closes by asking about the status of Western thought within this new global historical perspective.

George Steinmetz deals with an issue that any attempt to write a global history must inevitably confront, namely the epistemological status of comparison. He begins by looking at the problem of comparison historically, underscoring that the idea of comparison is almost as old as the writing of narratives. Indeed, the ancient Greeks, whose historical writings served to distinguish them from barbarians, were among the first comparative historians. Steinmetz attempts to ground comparative history in a social ontology based on critical realism. He responds to the charge that comparative history negates the particularity or uniqueness of a particular historical event in the process of comparison. He contends that critical realism can help resolve this problem through its focus on generative mechanisms, which are often transnational and could give rise to similar events.

Bonnie Smith focuses on the difficult relationship between gender and the global. She argues that women have played a crucial, if marginalized, role in the constitution and mediation of global processes over the *longue durée*. She then turns to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to show the emergence of the global culture of women, both in terms of expectations, such as the ideal of the modern girl, and also in terms of political movements, such as global feminist movements. She underscores, however, that much more work needs to be done in inscribing women into global history because, as of now, most global histories have focused on men. Indeed, she suggests that global history has been embraced in a way that specifically opposes the locality of gender histories to its larger scale of inquiry. We will perhaps be able to uncover other facets of the global, especially global capitalism, if we look at women's role in its reproduction. She notes, for example, that although one could connect a new type of gender domination to global capitalism, this cannot explain why and how non-capitalist societies are based on gendered hierarchies. All of this suggests an urgent need to rethink the concept of gender in relation to the global capitalist world.

Lorenzo Veracini's chapter on the indigenous histories of settler colonies continues to pose some of Smith's questions about global histories. Veracini suggests that aboriginal peoples have a deeply troubled relationship with history, and with global history. Veracini argues that historical narrative was deeply complicit with the processes of settlement, and

that narratives of global history have tended to marginalize the histories of indigenous peoples in the name of larger processes like capitalism and empire – processes to which settlers were readily connected and in the context of which indigenous peoples seem anachronistic. He also notes, however, that the emergence of indigenous histories was itself a transnational process. The question of whether indigenous people have rights to lands on which they were living is now contingent upon whether they can produce a historical narrative about their loss. Veracini explores the controversies that have arisen over the narration of settler nation histories and over the status of history itself in what he calls the "settler colonial 'situation'."

For Smith and Veracini, gender and indigenous histories respectively present at once a challenge and an opportunity to global historical thought. Neumann presents similar concerns in his discussion of memory. History and memory both deal with the past, but whereas scholars have often conceived of history as an objective representation of the past, memory is supposed to be infused with subjectivity and therefore appears unreliable. Precisely because it is mediated by subjectivity and emotion, however, memory has become increasingly important for understanding past injustices, especially as a means to catch a glimpse of the wrongs done to "people without history." The memories of the victims of historical wrongs, whose experience has been silenced in archives typically produced by the agents of their victimization, become important not primarily as sources of relevant historical detail, but as a way of conveying an experience. In the process, the hope is that the impact of such testimonies might form the basis for acts of redress.

Continuing the problem of the conflicting claims of memory and history, Hanna Schissler provides us an overview of how these issues have played out in relation to textbook controversies. History textbooks, she points out, are based on a politics centered on nation-states, which tend to organize curricula. Schissler argues that textbooks combine both history and memory, since they are simultaneously containers of collective memory and tales of origin and identity. Nation-states by definition exist in a system that requires recognition by other nation-states, and frequently engage in conflict with other nation-states, and textbooks bear the marks of these kinds of accommodations and conflicts. At the same time, the national narratives that textbooks articulate have been open to challenge – on the one hand, from previously marginalized groups demanding recognition, and on the other, through the incorporation of global themes. Schissler analyzes controversies around issues such as the Holocaust, war memory, and issues of justice to show how the nation-centric concerns of textbooks have come under challenge in recent years.

Whither the Global?

The issue of why we need a "global" account of historical thought largely depends for its answer on *what* such an account should look like. Mostly broadly conceived, a "global" perspective on the history of historical thought would turn on an urge to expand the spatial parameters of the history of historical thought beyond a more conventional focus on (especially modern) European (and to a lesser extent North American) historiographical traditions, or on the academy as a privileged institutional site. But as we have seen, this extension can be understood in many different ways: more detailed and textured analysis of diverse traditions of understanding the past; comparative analysis; histories of common processes in different regions of the world generating convergences in particular historical periods; long histories of interaction and exchange versus an emphasis on