



Introduction

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*H*istorical Reflections/Réflexions historiques is dedicated to publishing work across all fields of intellectual-cultural history and the history of religion and mentalities. The five articles brought together in this issue are by historians who specialize in the modern era; their contributions featured here extend in chronological range from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first century. These writings all demonstrate the journal's longstanding interest in the historical processes by which new ideas are generated, transmitted and received in societies.

In the first part of the issue, a pair of articles by Jeffrey Burson and Danna Agmon examine evolutions in the intellectual paradigms that framed early modern debates within the fields of science, religion, and law. Both articles are conceived as case studies exploring the inputs and influence of Jesuit thinkers who lived in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These two articles complement one another by providing differing perspectives on and examples of the legacies of Jesuit research and knowledge production.

Burson traces the origins of the skeptical crisis about the nature of the soul back to the sixteenth century, when a number of Jesuits provided commentaries on the work of Aristotle. In bolder, more important statements made during the seventeenth century, René Descartes redefined the soul as a substance distinct from the body and defined by thought. Cartesian notions of the articulation of mind and body were then taken up by Robert Desgabets and his protégé Pierre-Sylvain Régis, as well as by Nicolas Malbranche and his followers in the early 1700s. René-Joseph Tournemine (1661–1739), the subject of Burson's case study, was an influential, theologically inspired writer whose responses to Cartesian empiricism intersected with lively debates among eighteenth-century medical practitioners. As Burson argues: "Tournemine did not deny that the soul senses itself to exist and to be separate from the body, and that this self-awareness implied the existence of God, and of the world around us. What Tournemine did, however, was to make explicit that the soul's self-awareness extends to its own intimate sense of the *particular* body to which it is united."



In a stimulating contribution to recent scholarship on “Catholic Orientalism,” Agmon analyzes the writings on law in India by the French Jesuit Jean-Venant Bouchet (1655–1732). Using letters written by Bouchet as her principal source, Agmon provides fascinating details about this man’s first-hand encounters with the Indian legal landscape. She argues convincingly that Bouchet’s claims about familiarity with local knowledge stemmed directly from experience, and may only be fully understood by contemplating this Jesuit missionary’s “own immersion in legal contexts in India—not as a scholar or an observer, but as a participant.” Both Montesquieu and Voltaire cited Bouchet as an expert on Indian law. They appropriated content from Bouchet’s accounts to advance their own agendas, formulating arguments that ran in counterdirection to the conclusions found in Bouchet’s own writings.

In the second part of this issue are three articles that concern the development and impacts of ideas with a particular focus on the period from the 1880s to the 1920s. Alexander Jordan opens this set with an article on the influence of Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) upon a subsequent generation of men who were employed by or graduated from British universities around the turn of the twentieth century. Among academic and non-academic commentators, there were strong and positive reactions to Carlyle’s thinking. Economists who were inspired by books such as *Past and Present* (1843) undertook “a reassessment of the status of their discipline, largely agreeing with Carlyle that the science of wealth ought to be subordinate to political, moral, and ethical considerations.” Jordan shows that “Carlyle’s writings made a significant contribution not only to how these economists conceived of what they called the ‘old’ economics of the previous generation, but also to how they perceived their own originality as self-professed ‘new’ economists.”

Tao Zhang’s article examines notions of ethnicity that informed social and cultural interactions between Chinese and Native American communities as well as the perceptions of those communities by White observers. As Zhang writes: “The turn of the twentieth century was a critical moment for both American Indians and the Chinese in their efforts to carve out a niche in American society.” Using English-language journals and newspapers as evidence, Zhang explains the forging of a Pan-Indian identity. The analysis of these sources seeks to shed light “on a neglected aspect of the relationship between two similarly marginalized groups” as well as to “offer insight into how one marginal race carefully navigates its way through the narrow space between its own ideals and the constraints imposed by domineering Whites.” The history of immigration law in the United States, and specifically the legal constraints that determined so much about the lived experiences of migrants, are important to Zhang’s argument. Here we find the echo of a point made in the article by Danna Agmon, namely, that legal discourses are elaborated within distinctive social and political environments and cannot be abstracted from them.

Paul Miller-Melamed's article investigates "received wisdom" about the past in relation to the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. Miller-Melamed is interested in how historical narrative and constructed memory combine to create what he dubs the "Sarajevo myth." His article draws on a selection of novels and films from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to discuss the unexpected ways in which the Sarajevo assassination crops up in popular representation and "factual" narration.

Seen as a whole, this issue of *Historical Reflections/Réflexions historiques* has a broad geographical coverage. The five articles deal with people and events from the past located in Europe and the Balkan states, Britain, America, and southern Asia. The issue features research by academics at various stages of their careers and based at institutions on different continents. It is very much in the spirit of Linda E. Mitchell's example that the issue perpetuates an editorial aim of publishing work by postdoctoral and early career scholars as well as articles by senior academics who are established in university posts around the world. The authors and editorial team hope you will enjoy and be stimulated by this issue's contributions to the intellectual-cultural history of the modern period.