Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance

On the Content in the Form

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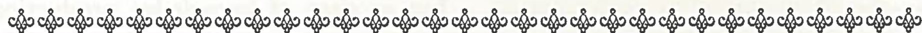

> Genealogy is gray, meticulous and patiently documentary.
> It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments,
> on documents that have been scratched over and recopied
> many times.
>
> —Foucault, *The Archaelogy of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*

This essay is about the colonial order of things as seen through its archival productions. It asks what insights about the colonial might be gained from attending not only to colonialism's archival content but to its particular and sometimes peculiar form. Its focus is on archiving as a process rather than archives as things. It looks to archives as epistemological experiments rather than as sources—to colonial archives as cross-sections of contested knowledge. Most important, I want to suggest that colonial archives were both transparencies on which power relations were inscribed and intricate technologies of rule in themselves. The essay's concerns are two: to situate new approaches to colonial archives within the broader "historic turn" of the last two decades and to suggest what critical histories of the colonial have to gain by turning further toward a politics of knowledge that reckons with archival genres, cultures of documentation, fictions of access, and archival conventions.

Archives, Epistemological Skepticism, and the Historic Turn

Some four decades after the British social anthropologist Evans-Pritchard's unheeded warning that anthropology would have to choose between being history or being nothing and Lévi-Strauss's counterclaim that accorded history neither "special value" nor privileged analytic space, students of culture have taken up a transformative venture, celebrating with unprecedented relish what has come to be called "the historic turn."[1] Some might argue that anthropology's engagement with history over the last two decades, unlike that recent turn in other disciplines, has not been a turn at all but rather a return to its founding principles, inquiry into cumulative processes of cultural production but without the typological aspirations and evolutionary assumptions once embraced. Others might counter that the feverish turn to history represents a significant departure from an earlier venture, a more explicit rupture with anthropology's long-standing complicity in colonial politics.[2] As such, one could argue that the historic turn signals not a turn to history per se but a different reflection on the politics of knowledge—a further rejection of the categories and cultural distinctions on which imperial rule was once invested and on which postcolonial state practices have continued to be based.

Engagement with the uses and abuses of the past pervades the disciplines but nowhere more than in this burgeoning area of colonial ethnography. Over the last

decade students of the colonial have challenged the categories, conceptual frame, and practices of colonial authorities and their taxonomic states.[3] Questioning the making of colonial knowledge and the privileged social categories it produced has revamped what students of the colonial take to be sources of knowledge and what to expect of them. Attention to the intimate domains in which colonial states intervened has prompted reconsideration of what we hold to be the foundations of European authority and its key technologies.[4] In treating colonialism as a history of the present rather than as a metaphor of it, a new generation of scholars are taking up Michel De Certeau's invitation to "prowl" new terrain as they reimagine what sorts of situated knowledge have produced both colonial sources *and* their own respective locations in the "historiographic operation."[5] Some students of colonialism are rereading those archives against popular memory;[6] others are attending to how colonial documents have been requisitioned and recycled to confirm old entitlements or to make new political demands. As part of a wider impulse, we are no longer studying things but rather the making of them. Students of colonialisms inside and outside of anthropology are spending as much time rethinking what constitutes the colonial archive as they are reconsidering how written documents collide and converge with colonial memories in the postcolonial field.

But if Evans-Pritchard's warning some thirty-five years ago that "anthropologists have tended to be uncritical in their use of documentary sources" had little resonance at the time, it has more today. For however deep and full the archival turn has been in postcolonial scholarship of the 1990s, what is more surprising is how thin and tentative it can still remain.[7] Anthropologists may no longer look at archives as the stuff of another discipline. Nor are these archives treated as inert sites of storage and conservation.[8] But archival labor tends to remain more an extractive enterprise than an ethnographic one. Documents are still invoked piecemeal and selectively to confirm the colonial invention of traditional practices or to underscore cultural claims.

Anthropology has never committed itself to "exhaust" the sources, as Bernard Cohn once chided the historical profession for doing with such moral fervor. But the extractive metaphor remains relevant to both.[9] Students of the colonial "mine" the *content* of government commissions and reports but rarely attend to their peculiar form. We look at exemplary documents rather than at the genealogies of their redundance. We warily quote examples of colonial excesses—if uneasy with the pathos and voyeurism that such citations entail. We may readily mock fetishisms of the historian's craft, but there remains the shared conviction that access to what is classified and confidential are the coveted findings of our sound and shrewd intellectual labors.[10] The ability to procure them measures scholarly worth. Not least is the shared conviction that such guarded treasures are the sites where the secrets of the colonial state are really stored.

There are a number of ways to frame the sort of challenge I have in mind, but at least one seems obvious: steeped as students of culture have been in treating ethnographies as texts, we are just now critically reflecting on the making of documents and how we choose to use them, on archives not as sites of knowledge retrieval but as sites of knowledge production, on archives as monuments of states as well as sites of state ethnography. This is not a rejection of colonial archives as sources of the past. Rather, it signals a more sustained engagement with those archives as cultural artifacts of fact production, of taxonomies in the making, and of disparate notions of what made up colonial authority.

As both Ranajit Guha and Greg Dening long have warned, "sources" are not "springs of real meaning," "fonts" of colonial truths in themselves.[11] Whether documents are trustworthy, authentic, and reliable remain pressing questions, but a turn to the social and political conditions that produced those documents, what Carlo Ginzburg has called their "evidentiary paradigms," has altered the sense of what trust and reliability might signal and politically entail. The task is less to distinguish fiction from fact than to track the production and consumption of those facticities themselves. With this move, colonial studies is steering in a different direction, toward inquiry into the grids of intelligibility that produced those "evidential paradigms" at a particular time, for a particular contingent, and in a particular way.[12]

Students of the colonial have come to see appropriations of colonial history as infused with political agendas, making some stories eligible for historical rehearsal and others not.[13] Troubling questions about how personal memories are shaped and effaced by states too have placed analytic emphasis on how past practices are winnowed for future uses and future projects.[14] Such queries invite a turn back to documentation itself, to the "teaching" task that the Latin root *docere* implies, to what and who was being educated in the bureaucratic shuffle of rote formulas, generic plots, and prescriptive asides that make up the bulk of a colonial archive. The issue of official bias gives way to a different challenge: to

identify the conditions of possibility that shaped what could be written, what warranted repetition, what competencies were rewarded in archival writing, what stories could not be told, and what could not be said. Andrew Ashforth may have overstated the case in his study of South Africa's Native Affairs Commission, when he noted that "the real seat of power" in modern states is "the bureau, the locus of writing," but he may not have been far off the mark.[15] That every document comes layered with the received account of earlier events and the cultural semantics of a political moment makes one point clear. What constitutes the archive, what form it takes, and what systems of classification signal at specific times are the very substance of colonial politics.

From Extraction to Ethnography in the Colonial Archives

> The transformation of archival activity is the point of departure and the condition of a new history.
> —De Certeau, "The Historiographic Operation"

If one could say that archives were once treated as a means to an end by students of history, this is no longer the case today. The pleasures of "a well-stocked manuscript room with its ease of access and aura of quiet detachment" are a thing of the past.[16] Over the last decade, epistemological skepticism has taken cultural and historical studies by storm. A focus on history as narrative and on history writing as a charged political act has made the thinking about archives no longer the pedestrian preoccupation of "spade-work" historians, of flat-footed archivists, or the entry requirements of fledgling initiates compelled to show mastery of the tools of their trade. The "archive" has been elevated to new theoretical status, with enough cachet to warrant distinct billing, worthy of scrutiny on its own. Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* compellingly captured that impulse by giving it a name and by providing an explicit and evocative vocabulary for its legitimation in critical theory.[17] But Natalie Davis's *Fiction in the Archives,* Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria's *Myth and Archive,* Richard Thomas's *Imperial Archive,* and Sonia Coombe's *Archives Interdites*, to name but a few, suggest that Derrida's splash came only after the archival turn had already been made.[18]

This move from archive as source to archive as subject gains its contemporary currency from a range of different analytic shifts, practical concerns, and political projects. For some, as in the nuanced archival forays of Greg Dening, it represents a turn back to the meticulous "poetics of detail."[19] To others—such as Michel-Rolph Trouillot in his treatment of the archival silences of the Haitian Revolution and David William Cohen in his "combings of history"—it signals a new grappling with the production of history: what accounts get authorized, what procedures were required, and what about the past is possible to know.[20] For Bonnie Smith, archival research along with "the seminar" were the nineteenth-century sites where science was marked with gendered credentials.[21] Archivists obviously have been thinking about the nature and history of archives for some time.[22] What marks this moment is the profusion of fora in which historians are joining archivists in new conversations about documentary evidence, record keeping, and archival theory.[23] Both are worrying about the politics of storage, about what information matters, and about what should be retained of an archive as paper collections give way to digital forms.[24]

In cultural theory, "the archive" is endowed with a capital A, is figurative, and leads elsewhere. It may represent neither material site nor a set of documents. Rather, it may serve as a strong *metaphor* for any corpus of selective forgettings and collections—and, as important, for the seductions and longings that such quests for, and accumulations of, the primary, originary, and untouched entail.[25] For those inspired more directly by Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge,* the archive is not an institution but "the law of what can be said," not a library of events but "that system that establishes statements as events and things, that "system of their enunciabilities."[26]

From whichever vantage point (and there are more than these), the archival turn registers a rethinking of the materiality and imaginary of collections and of what kinds of truth claims lie in documentation.[27] Such a turn converges with a profusion of new work in the history of science that is neither figuratively or literally about archives at all. I think here of Ian Hacking's studies of the political history of probability theory and state investments in the "taming of chance"; Steven Shapin's analysis of the social history of scientific truths, where he traces the power to predict as one enjoyed by, and reserved for, cultured and reliable men; Mary Poovey's work on how the notion of the "modern fact" was historically produced; Alain Desrosieres's study (among many others) on statistics as a science of the state and Silvana Patriarca's study on statistics as a modern mode of representation; and Lorraine Daston's analysis of the development of classical probability theory as a means of measuring the incertitudes of a modernizing world.[28] One could also

add Anthony Grafton's essays on footnotes as the lines that lead into moral communities and their claims to truth.[29]

What these all have in common is a concern with the legitimating social coordinates of epistemologies: how people imagine they know what they know and what institutions validate that knowledge. None treat the conventions and categories of analysis (statistics, facts, truths, probability, and footnotes) as innocuous or benign. All converge on questions about rules of reliability and trust, criteria of credence, and what moral projects and political predictabilites are served. All ask a similar set of historical questions about accredited knowledge and power—what political forces, social cues, and moral virtues produce qualified knowledges that in turn disqualify others. To my mind, there is no area of scholarship more relevant to how we view archival conventions and their archiving states.

But the archival turn can be traced through other venues as well, suggesting that something resembling ethnography in an archival mode has been around for some time. Carlo Ginzburg's microhistory of a sixteenth-century miller, like Natalie Davis's use of pardon tales in *Fiction in the Archives,* drew on "hostile" documents to reveal "the gap between the image underlying the interrogations of judges and the actual testimony of the accused."[30] Neither was intended as an ethnography *of* the archive, but both gesture in that direction. In Davis's explicit attention to "how people told stories, what they thought a good story was, how they accounted for motive," these sixteenth-century letters of remission are shown to recount more than their peasant authors' sober tales. Pardon tales registered the "constraints of the law," the monopoly on public justice of royal power, and the mercy that the monarchy increasingly claimed.[31] Davis's "fiction in the archives" demonstrated fashioned stories that spoke to moral truths, drew on shared metaphors and high literary culture, and depended on the power of the state and the archived inscriptions of its authority.

While recent participants in the archival turn have been taken with Derrida's contention that "there is no political power without control of the archive," this insistence on the link between what counts as knowledge and who has power has long been a founding principle of colonial ethnography.[32] Trouillot's insistence in his study of the Haitian Revolution that "historical narratives are premised on previous understandings, which are themselves premised on the distribution of archival power," allowed him to track the effacement of archival traces and the imposed silences that people have moved around and beyond.[33] Nicholas Dirks's observation that early colonial historiographies in British India were dependent on native informants who were later written out of those histories drew attention to the relationship between archiving, experts, and knowledge production.[34] Christopher Bayly's more recent focus on the ways in which the British intelligence service in colonial India worked through native channels places the state's access to "information" as a nodal point in the art of governance and as a highly contested terrain.[35] My own examination of those "hierarchies of credibility" that shaped colonial narratives in the Netherlands Indies attended to the "storyed" distributions of the state's paper production. Not least, I sought to trace how rumors spread by a beleaguered native population disrupted the criteria of what made up a reasonable, reliable, and readable plot.[36]

As Foucault provocatively warned, the archive is neither the sum of all texts that a culture preserves nor those institutions that allow for that record and preservation. The archive is, rather, that "system of statements," those "rules of practice" that shape the specific regularities of what can and cannot be said.[37] Students of colonialism have wrestled with this formulation to capture what renders colonial archives both as documents of exclusions and as monuments to particular configurations of power.

Both Gonzalez Echevarria and Thomas follow Foucault in treating the imperial archive as "the fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern."[38] For Thomas that archive is material and figurative, a metaphor of an unfulfilled but shared British imperial imagination. The imperial archive was both the supreme technology of the late nineteenth-century imperial state *and* the telling prototype of a postmodern one, predicated on global domination of information and the circuits through which facticities move. Gonzalez Echevarria locates the archive as both relic and ruin, a repository of codified beliefs, genres for bearing witness, clustered connections between secrecy, power, and the law.[39] It was the legitimating discourses of the Spanish colonial archives, he argues, that provided the Latin American novel with its specific content and thematic form. For both Thomas and Gonzalez Echevarria, the archive is a template that decodes something else. Both push us to think differently about archival fictions but reserve their fine-grained analysis for literature, not the colonial archives themselves.[40]

Whether the "archive" should be treated as a set of discursive rules, a utopian project, a depot of documents, a corpus of statements, or all of the above is not really the question. Colonial archives were both sites of the

imaginary and institutions that fashioned histories as they concealed, revealed, and reproduced the power of the state.[41] Power and control, as many scholars have pointed out, are fundamental to the etymology of the term *archive*.[42] From the Latin *archivuum*, "residence of the magistrate," and from the Greek *arkhe*, "to command," colonial archives ordered (in both the imperative and taxonomic sense) the criteria of evidence, proof, testimony, and witnessing to construct their moral narrations. "Factual storytelling," moralizing stories, and multiple versions—features that Hayden White ascribes to what counts as history—make sense of which specific plots "worked" in the colonial archives as well.[43] It was in factual stories that the colonial state affirmed its fictions to itself, in moralizing stories that it mapped the scope of its philanthropic missions, and in multiple and contested versions that cultural accounts were discredited or restored.

Viewed in this perspective, it is clear that the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century archives of the Dutch administration in the Indies were not to be read in any which way. Issues were rendered important by how they were classed and discursively framed. Official exchanges between the governor-general and his subordinates, between the governor-general and the minister of colonies, and between the minister and the king were reference guides to administrative thinking, abbreviated cheat sheets of what counted as precedent, what was deemed relevant, and what were to be considered "concerns of state." Appended with expert testimonies and commissioned reports, dossiers traced who cribbed from whom in the chain of command. Attention to moments of distrust and dispersion, reversals of power, and ruptures in contract have been the trademarks of critical political and social history for some time. What has changed is how effectively these moments identify, how what Richard Thomas has called these "paper empires" filed and classified as a part of their technologies of rule.[44]

If it is obvious that colonial archives are products of state machines, it is less obvious that they are, in their own right, technologies that reproduced those states themselves.[45] Systems of written accountability were the products of institutions, but paper trails (such as weekly reports to superiors, summaries of reports of reports, and recommendations based on reports) called for an elaborate coding system by which they could be tracked. Colonial statecraft was built on the foundations of statistics and surveys that demanded an administrative apparatus to produce and process that information. Multiple circuits of communication—shipping lines, courier services, and telegraphs—were funded by state coffers, and systems of taxation were amplified to keep them flush. Colonial publishing houses made sure that documents were selectively disseminated, duplicated, or destroyed. Colonial office buildings were constructed to make sure they were properly cataloged and stored. And not unlike the broader racialized regime in which archives were produced, the "mixed-blood," "Indo" youths, barred from rising in the civil service ranks, were the scribes that made the system run. Employed as clerks and copyists in the colonial bureaucracy, they were commonly referred to as "copy machines" and then disdained for their lack of initiative, their poor command of Dutch, their skill at imitation, and their easy adaptation to such degraded roles.

Attention to the epistemic and textual scaffolding of the colonial state renders an ethnographic reading of the archives very different from what studies of colonialism looked like several decades ago, as what constitutes "ethnography" has radically changed in the same time. An ethnography "of" and "in" the colonial archives invites more attention to the social relations and material conditions in which archives were produced, to their editing or dissenting voices, to how commonsense was crafted, and to which categories were privileged and resilient and which were demoted or ignored.

Along the Archival Grain

If one were to characterize what has informed a critical approach to the colonial archives over the last fifteen years, it would be a commitment to the notion of reading colonial archives "against their grain." Students of colonialism inspired by political economy were schooled to write popular histories "from the bottom up," histories of resistance that might locate human agency in small gestures of refusal and silence among the colonized.[46] As such, engagement with the colonial archives was devoted to a reading of "upper class sources upside down" that would reveal the language of rule and the biases inherent in statist perceptions.[47]

The political project was to write "un-State-d" histories that might demonstrate the warped reality of official knowledge and the enduring consequences of such political distortions. In Ranajit Guha's formulation, colonial documents were rhetorical slights of hand that erased the facts of subjugation, reclassified petty crime as political subversion, or simply effaced the colonized. The political stakes were put on the analytic tactics of inversion and recuperation: an effort to resituate those who appeared

as objects of colonial discipline as subaltern subjects and agents of practice who made—albeit constrained—choices of their own. Within this frame, archival documents were counterweights to ethnography, not the site of it.[48]

But colonial authority and the practices that sustained it permeated more diverse sites than those pursuing this "romance of resistance" once imagined. If Marx's insistence that "people make their own history, but not exactly as they please," informed these early efforts to write histories of popular agency, they also underscored that colonial rule rested on more than the calculated inequities of specific relations of production and exchange. In looking more to the carefully honed cultural representations of power, students of the colonial have turned their attention to the practices that privileged certain social categories and made them "easy to think." Not least, we have become more cognizant of how colonial vocabularies can slip surreptitiously from their historical moorings and reappear as explanatory concepts of historical practice rather than as folk categories that need to be explained.[49]

A focus in colonial studies on those tensions of empire that were at once intimate and broad has placed sex and sentiment not as metaphors of empire but as its constitutive elements.[50] Appreciating how much the personal was political has revamped the scope of our archival frames: housekeeping manuals, child-rearing handbooks, and medical guides share space with classified state papers, court proceedings, and commissions as defining texts in colonialism's cultures of documentation. Raymond Williams's treatment of culture as a site of contested not shared meaning has prompted students of the colonial to do the same. In turning from race as a thing to race as a porous and protean set of relations, colonial histories increasingly dwell on the seams of archived and nonarchived ascriptions to redefine colonial subsumptions on a broader terrain.[51] However we frame it, the issue turns on readings of the archives based on what we take to be evidence and what we expect to find. How can students of colonialisms so quickly and confidently turn to readings "against the grain" without moving along their grain first? How can we brush against them without a prior sense of archival texture and its granularity? How can we compare colonialisms without knowing the circuits of knowledge production in which they operated and the racial commensurabilities on which they relied? If a notion of colonial ethnography starts from the premise that archival production is itself both a process and a powerful technology of rule, then we need not only to brush *against* the archive's received categories. We need to read for its regularities, for its logic of recall, for its densities and distributions, for its consistencies of misinformation, omission, and mistake—*along* the archival grain.

Assuming we know those scripts, I would argue, diminishes our analytic possibilities. It rests too comfortably on predictable stories with familiar plots. It diverts attention from how much colonial history writing has been shaped by nationalist historiographies and nation-bound projects. It leaves unquestioned the notion that colonial states were first and foremost information-hungry machines in which power accrued from the accumulation of more knowledge rather than the quality and redistribution of it. Moreover, it takes as a given that colonial statecraft was motivated and fueled by a reductive equation of knowledge to power and that colonial states sought more of both. Not least, it makes irrelevant failed proposals, utopian visions, and improbable projects because they never "happened" and thus were "nonevents."[52] Reading only against the grain of the colonial archive bypasses the power in the production of the archive itself.

Civilities and Credibilities in Archival Production

If colonial documents reflected the supremacy of reason, they also recorded an emotional economy manifest in disparate understandings of what was imagined, what was feared, what was witnessed, and what was overheard. Such a reading turns us to the structures of sentiment to which colonial bureaucrats subscribed, to the formulaic by which they abided, to the mix of dispassionate reason, impassioned plea, cultural script, and personal experience that made up what they chose to write to their superiors and in the folds of official view. Dutch colonial documents register this emotional economy in several ways: in the measured affect of official texts, in the biting critique reserved for marginalia, and in footnotes to official reports where assessments of cultural practice were often relegated and local knowledge was stored. Steven Shapin's set of compelling questions in his social history of truth could be that of colonial historians as well. What, he asks, counted as credible, what was granted epistemological virtue and by what social criteria? What sentiments and civilities made for "expert" colonial knowledge that endowed some persons with the credentials to generate trustworthy truth claims that were not conferred on others?

Colonial archives were, as Echevarria notes, legal

repositories of knowledge and official repositories of policy. But they were also repositories of good taste and bad faith. Scribes were charged with making fine-penned copies. But reports on the colonial order of things to the governor-general in Batavia and to the minister of colonies in the Hague often were composed by men of letters whose status in the colonial hierarchy was founded as much on their display of European learning as on their studied ignorance of local knowledge, on their skill at configuring events into familiar plots, on their cultivation of the fine arts of deference, dissemblance, and persuasion. All rested on subtle use of their cultural know-how and cultural wares. As Fanny Colonna once noted for French Algeria, the colonial politics of knowledge penalized those with too much local knowledge and those with not enough.[53] In the Indies, civil servants with too much knowledge of things Javanese were condemned for not appreciating the virtues of limited and selective familiarity.

Christopher Bayly, in a thoughtful study of the development of an intelligence system by the British in India, argues that the mastery of "affective knowledge" was an early concern of the British colonial state, which diminished throughout the nineteenth century as that state became more hierarchical and as governing became a matter of routine.[54] But I would argue the opposite: that affective knowledge was at the core of political rationality in its late colonial form. Colonial modernity hinged on a disciplining of one's agents, on a policing of the family, on Orwellian visions of intervention in the cultivation of compassion, contempt, and disdain.

The accumulation of affective knowledge was not then a *stage* out of which colonial states were eventually to pass. Key terms of the debates on poor whites and child-rearing practices from as late as the 1930s, just before the overthrow of Dutch rule, make that point again and again. When classified colonial documents argued against the support of abandoned mixed-blood children—and that "mothercare" (*moederzorg*) should *not* be replaced by "care of the state" (*staatszorg*)—they were putting affective responsibility at the heart of their political projects. When these same high officials wrote back and forth about how best to secure "strong attachments" to the Netherlands among a disaffected, estranged, and growing European population, *feeling* is the word that pervades their correspondence. Dutch authorities may never have agreed on how to cultivate European sensibilities in their young and on just how early in a child's development they imagined they needed to do so. But at stake in these deliberations over "upbringing" and "rearing" were disquieted reflections on what it took to make someone "moved" by one set of sensory regimes and estranged from others. Colonial states and their authorities, not unlike metropolitan ones, had strong motivation for their abiding interest in the distribution of affect and a strong sense of why it mattered to colonial politics.

Cultural Logics and Archival Conventions

> The archive does not have the weight of tradition; and it does not constitute the library of libraries, outside time and place—it reveals the rules of practice. . . . its threshold of existence is established by the discontinuity that separates us from what we can no longer say.
>
> —Foucault, *The Archaelogy of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*

One way to refigure our uses of the colonial archive is to pause at, rather than bypass, its conventions, those practices that make up its unspoken order of rubric and reference. Archival conventions might designate who were reliable "sources," what constituted "enough" evidence, and what could be inserted in the absence of information. Conventions suggest consensus, but it is not clear what colonial practitioners actually shared. Archival conventions were built upon a changing collection of colonial truths about what were secrets and what mattered to state security, what sorts of actions could be dismissed as prompted by personal revenge or crimes of passion or could be accredited as political subversions against the state.[55] Such conventions exposed the social taxonomies of race and rule but also how skillfully, awkwardly, and unevenly seasoned bureaucrats and fledgling practitioners knew the rules of the game.

Attention to these conventions may lead in two directions: to the consensual logics they inscribed but much more directly to their arbitrary rules and multiple points of dissension. Political conflicts show up in the changing viability of categories and disagreements about their use. But as Paul Starr suggests, "information out of place"—the failure of some kinds of practices, perceptions, and populations to fit into a state's ready system of classification—may tell more.[56] Detailed commentaries on European nurseries in the colonies might be expected to turn up in reports on education, but the very fact that they consistently showed up elsewhere—in reports on European pauperism and white poor relief and in recommendations to quell Creole discontent—suggests that what was "out of place" was often sensitive and that it

was children cued to the wrong cultural sensibilities that were dangerously out of place.

Colonial Commissions as Stories That States Tell Themselves

As Ian Hacking says of social categories, archives produced as much as they recorded the realities they ostensibly only described. They told moral stories, they created precedent in the pursuit of evidence, and not least they create carefully tended histories. Nowhere is this history-making work more evident than in the form of the commission of inquiry or state commission. By definition, commissions organized knowledge, rearranged its categories, and prescribed what state officials were charged to know. As the anthropologist Frans Husken notes of Dutch commissions in colonial Java, "'when nothing else works and no decision can be reached, appoint a commission' was a favorite response of colonial authorities."[57] But commissions were not just hesitant pauses in policy and tactics of delay. Like statistics, they helped "determine . . . the character of social facts" and produced new truths as they produced new social realities.[58] They were responses to crisis that generated increased anxiety, substantiating the reality of that crisis itself.[59] By the time most commissions had run their course (or spawned their follow-up generation), they could be credited with having defined "turning points," justifications for intervention, and, not least, expert knowledge.

The various commissions produced on the problem of poor whites in the Indies between the 1870s and early 1900s and those carried out in South Africa between the early 1900s and the late 1920s are exemplary of what I have in mind. There are certain general features that they share.[60] Both produced published and publicized volumes: *Pauperism among the Europeans* (published between 1901 and 1902) and *The Problem of Poor Whites in South Africa* (published between 1929 and 1932).[61] Both commissions were about indigent Europeans and their inappropriate dispositions toward work, racial distance, sexual propriety, and colonial morality. Each requisitioned administrative energy and expertise and entailed several years of labor, thousands of pages of text, scores of interviewers, and hundreds of interviewees. Prominent civil and government figures graced their mastheads with authority. Both were redemptive texts offering plausible stories of state exoneration and targeted blame.

In the case of the Indies, the commission's starting point—that concubinage was the source of the poor white problem—prompted probing questionnaires on who bedded with whom, on bastard children, and on intimacies of the home that incurred the wrath of hundreds of irate colonial Europeans who refused to answer and condemned the Indies government as an "inquisitionary state." Both commissions were repositories of colonial anxieties, unsettling testimonies to the insecurity of white privilege, to the ambiguities of membership in the privileged category of "European," and to the making of a public welfare policy solidly based on race. Both worried less about the increasing numbers of impoverished whites because they worried over something else more. As stated in the Carnegie Commission, the "propinquity of . . . [poor white] dwellings" to "non-Europeans" tended to bring native and white into contact, to "counteract miscegenation," to weaken the color line, and to promote "social equality."[62] The worry was over an ease of meeting and conversation.

These commissions could and should be read for their extraordinary ethnographic content but also for the content in their form. First, like other colonial commissions, they marked off clusters of people who warranted state interest and state expense. Second, they were redemptive texts, structured to offer predictions based on causal accounts of exoneration and blame. Third, both commissions were documents to state historiography in the making and monuments to why history writing mattered to consolidating states. To prescribe the future, they rewrote the past in dramatic and compassionate narrative. In defining poverty in the present, they also dictated who later would count as white—and therefore whose children of what hue would be eligible for state aid.

In doing all of these things, they wrote, revised, and overwrote genealogies of race. Neither of these commissions were the first of their kind. On the contrary, they were made credible by how they mapped the past onto prescriptions for the present and predictions of the future. They also showed something more—how practices were historically congealed into events and made into things: how an increase of unemployment and impoverishment among European colonials became a "problem" called "poor whiteism," with attributes of its own. "Poor whiteism" defined physiologically and psychologically distinct sorts of persons, with aggregated ways of "being in the world," with specific dispositions and states of mind. Like other colonial commissions, these commissions were consummate producers of social kinds.

Commissions and statistics were features of statecraft in similar ways. Both were eighteenth-century inventions

consolidated by the nineteenth-century liberal state.[63] Both instantiated the state's public accountability and its right to judge what was in society's collective and moral good. But commissions commanded more moral authority as they purported to scrutinize state practice, to reveal bureaucratic mistakes, and to produce new truths about the workings of the state itself. Moreover, these poor white commissions were quintessential products of "biopolitical" technologies. Not only did they link the relationship between parent and child, nursemaid and infant, to the security of the state. They sought ethnographic, eyewitness testimonies from participant-observers that what individuals did in their homes—whether they went barefoot, spoke only halting Dutch, lounged on their porches, or did not make their children say morning prayers—were practices linked directly to the state's audit of its own viability.

Both commissions and statistics were part of the "moral science" of the nineteenth century that coded and counted society's pathologies. While statistics used deviations from the mean to identify deviations from the norm, commissions joined those numbers with stories culled from individual "cases" to measures gradations of morality.[64] Commissions in turn affirmed the state's authority to make judgments about what was in society's collective and moral good. Both were prescriptive and probabilistic tools whose power was partially in their capacities to predict and divert politically dangerous possibilities.

Like statistics, the commission demonstrated the state's right to power through its will to truth. In the Indies, the Pauperism Commission conferred on the state moral authority by demonstrating its moral conscience and disinterested restraint, its willingness and commitment to critically reflect on its own mishaps, to seek the truth "at whatever cost." But its power rested in more than its calculation of the moral pulse of the present and its implications for the future. The Indies Commission justified its license to expend funds, time, and personnel in part by rehearsing the past and remembering and reminding its readership of its enduring weight. Historical narratives shape these texts with stories that deflected the causes of deprivations and inequities away from the present as they rehearsed the enduring burden of earlier policies of former administrations.

Finally, these commissions were quintessential quasi-state technologies, both part of the state and not, at once a product of state agents but constituted invariably by members outside it. If modern states gain force in part by creating and maintaining an elusive boundary between themselves and civil society, as Tim Mitchell has argued, such commissions exemplified that process.[65] Their specific subjects were state generated but often researched and written by those not in their salary. Both the Indies and Carnegie Commissions delegated bodies of experts equipped to assess morality (religious experts), deviance (lawyers, educators), and disease (doctors) and on whom the state conferred short-term and subject-specific voice and public authority. They instantiated the ways in which the state exercised its will to power by calling on outside expert authorities to verify the state's ability to stand in for public interest and its commitment to the public good.

Archival Seductions and State Secrets

As archivists are the first to note, to understand an archive one needs to understand the institutions that it served. Such information as what subjects are cross-referenced, what parts are rewritten, and what quotes are cited not only tell us about how decisions are rendered but how colonial histories are written and remade. Information out of place underscores what categories matter, which ones become commonsense and then fall out of favor. Not least, they provide road maps to anxieties that evade more articulate form.

The commission is one sort of archival convention, while "state secrets" are another. States traffic in the production of secrets and the selective dissemination of them. In this regard, the Dutch colonial state was gifted at its task.[66] As Weber once noted, the "official secret" was a specific invention of bureaucracy that was "fanatically defended" by it. The designations "secret," "very secret," and "confidential" registered more than fictions of denied entry and public access. Nor did they mostly signal the pressing political concerns of the colonial state. More important, such codes of concealment were the fetishized features of the state itself. State secrets named and produced privileged knowledge, designated privileged readers, while reminding the latter what knowledge should be coveted and what was important to know. The secreted report, like the commission, created categories it purported to do no more than describe. In the Indies, the classified document commanded a political weight that called for secret police, paid informants, and experts.

Secrets imply limited access, but what is more striking in the Dutch colonial archives is how rarely those items classified as "confidential" (*vertrouwelijk, zeer vertrouwelijk, geheim,* and *zeer geheim*) were secrets at all. Some

surely dealt with clandestine police and military tactics (such as preparations for troop movements to protect planters against an attack), but far more of these documents were about prosaic, public parts of Indies life.[67] If one could argue that the disquieting presence of European beggars and homeless Dutchmen in the streets of Batavia were "secrets" to those in the Netherlands, they certainly were not to the majority of Europeans who lived in the colony's urban centers.

What was classified about these reports was not their subject matter—in this case, indigent "full-blooded" Europeans and their mixed-blood descendants—but rather the conflict among officials about how to act on the problem, their disparate assessments of what was the cause and how many there were. Some reports were classified because officials could not agree on whether there were twenty-nine mixed-bloods in straitened circumstances or tens of thousands.[68] In short, documents were classified as "sensitive" and "secret" sometimes because of the magnitude of a problem—other times because officials could not agree on what the problems were. But perhaps what is more surprising is the range of confidentialities that students of colonialism expect them to divulge. State secrets are not necessarily secreted truths about the state but rather promises of confidences shared. If state secrets are more attention-getting annotations than conventions of concealment, then how state secrets were produced, what was a secret at one time and later not, may index the changing terms of what was considered commonsense, as well as changes in political rationality. As Marc Ventresca argues in a study of why and when states count, statistical information in the eighteenth century was considered a source of state power and therefore not published. Public access to state statistics was a nineteenth-century phenomenon.[69] State secrets made up a basic feature of the colonial archive, a telling element in the production of fictions of access displayed by their content as well as form.

Colonial Archives as "Systems of Expectation"

To take up Jean and John Comaroff's invitation to "create new colonial archives of our own" may entail not only, as they rightly urge, attention to new kinds of sources but different ways of approaching those we already have, different ways of reading than we have done.[70] In turning from an extractive to a more ethnographic project, our readings need to move in new ways through archives both along their fault lines as much as against their grain. De Certeau once defined the science of history as a redistribution in space, the act of changing something into something else. He warned that historical labors in the archives must do more than "simply adopt former classifications"; they must break away from the constraints of "series H in the National Archives" and be replaced with new "codes of recognition" and "systems of expectation" of our own.[71] But such a strategy really depends on what we think we already know. For students of colonialisms, such codes of recognition and systems of expectation are at the very heart of what we still need to learn about colonial polities. The breadth of global reference and span of lateral vision that colonial regimes unevenly embraced suggest that ethnographies of the archives rather than extractions from them may be more appropriate for identifying how nations, empires, and racialized regimes were fashioned—not in ways that display confident knowledge and know-how but in paper trails and traces that bear the imprint of disquieted and expectant modes.

NOTES

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1. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Social Anthropology: Past and Present, The Marett Lecture, 1950," in his *Social Anthropology and Other Essays* (New York: Free Press, 1951), 152; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1966), 256.

2. For some sense of the range of different agendas of the current "historic turn," see Nicholas Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry Ortner, eds., *Culture, Power, History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Terrence J. MacDonald, ed., *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); specifically on history in the anthropological imagination, see Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith, eds., *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). Also see Richard Fox, "For a Nearly New Culture History," in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard G. Fox (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1991), 93–114, and James Faubion, "History in Anthropology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22 (1993): 35–54.

3. See, for example, the introductions and essays in Nicholas Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), and in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures*

in a Bourgeois World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

4. See my "Genealogies of the Intimate," in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

5. See Michel de Certeau, "The Historiographic Operation" (1974), in his *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

6. See, for example, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995); David William Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Ann Laura Stoler and Karen Strassler, "Castings for the Colonial: Memory Work in 'New Order' Java," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 1 (2000): 4–48 and the references therein.

7. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Anthropology and History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 5.

8. See Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

9. Bernard Cohn, "History and Anthropology: The State of Play," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 2 (1980): 198–221.

10. On the trips to archives as "feats of [male] prowess" in nineteenth-century middle-class culture, see Bonnie G. Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth-Century," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 4–5 (1995): 1150–76.

11. Ranajit Guha, "The Proses of Counter-insurgency" (1983), in *Culture, Power, History,* ed. Dirks, Eley, and Ortner, 336–71; Greg Dening, *The Death of William Gooch: A History's Anthropology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 54.

12. Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," in his *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method,* 96–125.

13. David William Cohen, *Burying SM: The Politics of Knowledge and the Sociology of Power in Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heineman, 1992).

14. Joanne Rappaport, *Cumbe Reborn: An Andean Ethnography of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Also see the contributions to Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee, eds., *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (Capetown: Oxford University Press, 1998).

15. See Andrew Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 5.

16. This phrase was used by Jane Sherron De Hart to underscore the "problematics of evidence" in contemporary historical reconstruction. See "Oral Sources and Contemporary History: Dispelling Old Assumptions," *Journal of American History* 80 (September 1993): 582.

17. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

18. Natalie Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993); Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria, *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Sonia Combe, *Archives Interdites: Les peur francaises face a l'Histoire contemporaine* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994). See Dominick LaCapra, "History, Language, and Reading," *American Historical Review* (June 1995): 807, where he also notes that the "problem of reading in the archives has increasingly become a concern of those doing archival research."

19. See, for example, Dening's *The Death of William Gooch: A History's Anthropology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995).

20. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*; Cohen, *Combing of History.*

21. Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History."

22. On the history of archives and how archivists have thought about it, see Ernst Posner's classic essay, "Some Aspects of Archival Development since the French Revolution" (1940), in *A Modern Archives Reader,* ed. Maygene Daniels and Timothy Walch (Washington, DC: National Archives and Record Service, 1984), 3–21; and Michel Duchein, "The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe," *American Archivist* 55 (winter 1992): 14–25.

23. See, for example, Richard Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: An Historical Analysis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983); Kenneth E. Foote, "To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture," *American Archivist* 53, no. 3 (1990): 378–93; Terry Cook, "Mind over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal," in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor,* ed. Barbara L. Craig (Ontario: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 38–69; and James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Uniqueness," *American Archivist* 57, no. 4 (1994): 632–59. For some sense of the changes in how archivists themselves have framed their work over the last fifteen years, see articles in *The American Archivist.*

24. Terry Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Post-Modernist Era," *Archives and Manuscripts* 22, no. 2 (1994): 300–329.

25. This metaphoric move is most evident in contributions to the two special issues of *History of the Human Sciences* devoted to "the archive" (1, no. 4 [November 1998] and 12, no. 2 [May 1999]). Derrida's valorization of "the archive" as imaginary and metaphor predominates both. On the archive as metaphor, see also Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (winter 1986): 3–64

26. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), esp. Part III, "The Statement and the Archive," 79–134.

27. See, for example, Patrick Geary's *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. "Archival Memory and the Destruction of the Past," 81–114.

28. Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problem of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Alain Desrosieres, *The Politics of Large Numbers:*

A History of Statistical Reasoning (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Silvana Patriarca, *Numbers and Nationhood: Writing Statistics in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). On the power of "suasive utterance" in the making of scientific truth claims, see Christopher Norris, "Truth, Science, and the Growth of Knowledge," *New Left Review* 210 (1995): 105–23; Lorraine Daston, *Classical Probability in the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

29. Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

30. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (London: Penguin, 1982), xvii, xviii.

31. Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 4.

32. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4.

33. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 55.

34. Nicholas Dirks, "Colonial Histories and Native Informants: Biography of an Archive," *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 279–213.

35. Christopher Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

36. Ann Laura Stoler, "In Cold Blood: Hierarchies of Credibility and the Politics of Colonial Narratives," *Representations* 37 (1992): 151–89.

37. See Foucault, *Archaelogy of Knowledge*, esp. Part III, "The Statement and the Archive," 79–134.

38. Richards, *Imperial Archive*, 11.

39. Echevarria, *Myth and Archive*, 30.

40. Thus for Richards, Hilton's *Lost Horizon* and Kipling's *Kim* are entries in a Victorian archive that was the "prototype for a global system of domination through circulation, an apparatus for controlling territory by producing, distributing and consuming information about it." Richards, *Imperial Archive*, 17.

41. This link between state power and what counts as history was long ago made by Hegel in *The Philosophy of History*, as Hayden White (*The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987]), points out:

> It is only the state which first presents subject-matter that is not only adapted to the prose of History, but involves the production of such history in the very progress of its own being. (12)

42. See Echevarria, *Myth and Archive*, 31, for a detailed etymology of the term.

43. See White, *Content of the Form*, esp. 26–57.

44. On this point, see Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*. On the relationship between state formation and archival production, see Duchein, "History of European Archives."

45. See my "Racial Histories and Their Regimes of Truth," *Political Power and Social Theory* 11 (1997): 183–255.

46. For a more detailed account of these changes in research agenda, see the new preface to my *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation, 1870–1979* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

47. I discuss some of these issues in "Perceptions of Protest: Defining the Dangerous in Colonial Sumatra," *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 4 (1985): 642–58.

48. For a recent and sophisticated version of this culling project, see Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory: 1922–1992* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

49. See my "Genealogies of the Intimate."

50. See my "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, no. 3 (1992): 514–51.

51. See J. Chandler, A. Davidson, and H. Harootunian, eds., *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

52. These points are further developed in my "Developing Historical Negatives: Race and the Disquieting Visions of a Colonial State," in *Historical Anthropology and Its Vicissitudes*, ed. Brian Axel (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

53. See Fanny Colonna, "Educating Conformity in French Colonial Algeria," in *Tensions of Empire*, ed. Cooper and Stoler, 346–70.

54. Bayly, *Empire and Information*.

55. On the administrative distinctions between the "political" versus the "private" and the "criminal" versus the "subversive," see my "Perceptions of Protest," and my "Labor in the Revolution," *Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 2 (1988): 227–47.

56. Paul Starr, "Social Categories and Claims in the Liberal State," in *How Classification Works: Nelson Goodman among the Social Sciences*, ed. Mary Douglas and David Hull (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 154–79.

57. Frans Husken, "Declining Welfare in Java: Government and Private Inquiries, 1903–1914," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV, 1994), 213.

58. Ian Hacking, "How Should We Do the History of Statistics?" in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 181.

59. This is a good example of what Ian Hacking calls "dynamic nominalism" or "the looping effect" in categorization.

60. I discuss the politics of colonial comparisons elsewhere and therefore will not do so here. I have used the 1902 Indies Pauperism Commission, commentaries around it, and inquiries that preceded it in much of my writing over the last fifteen years on the construction of colonial racial categories. The South African Carnegie Commission and the inquiries that preceded it are compared in a chapter in my forthcoming book *Along the Archival Grain*. A more general discussion of the politics of comparison can be found in my paper "Tense and Tender Ties: American History Meets Postcolonial Studies," delivered at the Organization of American Historians in April 2000, and in my paper "Beyond Comparison: Colonial Statecraft and the Racial Politics of Commensurability," delivered as a keynote address at the Australian Historical Association in Adelaide, July 2000.

61. Students of colonialism could come up with a host of others. For an unusual example of someone who deals with the commission as a particular form of official knowledge, in this case of the South African Native Affairs Commission, see Ashforth, *Politics of Official Discourse*. Also see Frans Husken's

discussion of the Declining Welfare Commission in Java, in "Declining Welfare in Java."

62. *The Poor White Problem in South Africa,* Report of the Carnegie Commission (Stellenbosch: Pro Ecclesia Drukkerij, 1932), xx.

63. Royal commissions have a longer history still. See, for example, David Loades, "The Royal Commissions," in his *Power in Tudor England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 70–82. On statistics and state building, see Alain Desrosieres, "Statistics and the State," in his *Politics of Large Numbers,* 178–209. For the twentieth century, see William J. Breen, "Foundations, Statistics, and State-Building," *Business History Review* 68 (1994): 451–82.

64. See Arjun Appardurai's discussion of numerical representation in colonial India as a "key to normalizing the pathology of difference," in "Number in the Colonial Imagination," in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 114–38.

65. See Gramsci's discussion of "state and civil society" in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), esp. 257–64; and Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State," *American Political Science Review* 85 (1991): 77–96.

66. George Simmel (*The Sociology of George Simmel,* ed. Kurt Wolff [London: Free Press, 1950]) once wrote:

> the historical development of society is in many respects characterized by the fact that what at an earlier time was manifest enters the protection of secrecy; and that, conversely, what once was a secret, no longer needs such protection but reveals itself. (331)

67. Algemeen Rijksarchief, Geheim No. 1144/2284. From the Department of Justice to the Governor-General, Batavia, 29 April 1873.

68. Algemeen Rijksarchief, Verbaal No. 47. From the Department of Justice to the Governor-General, 28 March 1874.

69. Marc Ventresca, "When States Count: Institutional and Political Dynamics in Modern Census Establishment, 1800–1993." Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1995, 50.

70. Jean and John Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).

71. De Certeau "Historiographical Operation," 74–75.