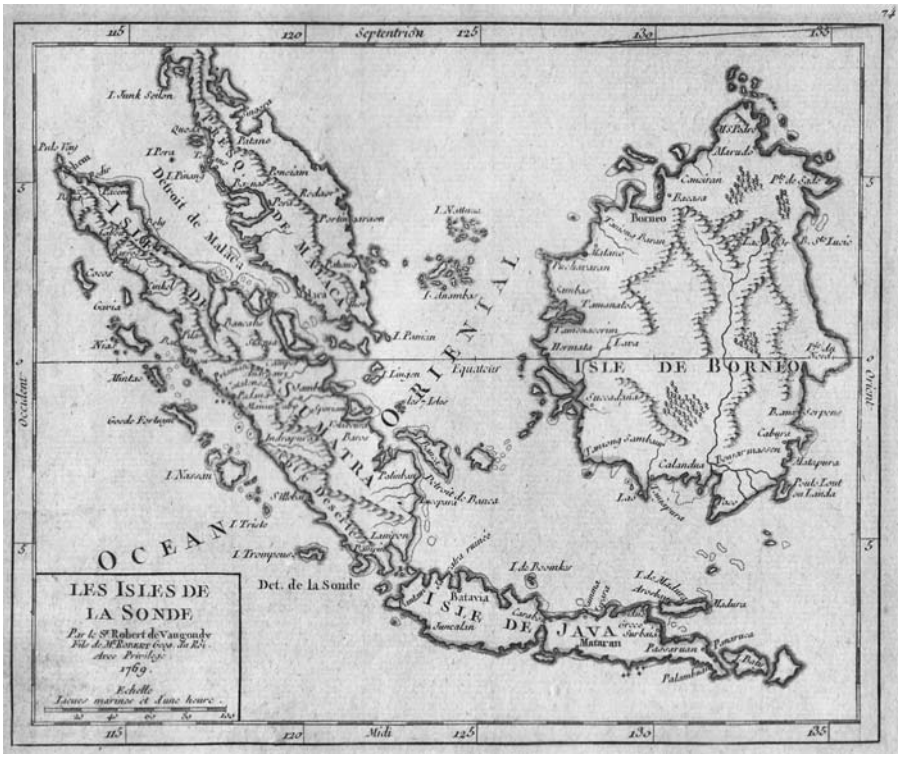

Figure 2. Map of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and Malacca "Isles de la Sonde." Robert de Vaugondy, 1769, before Deli was "opened" for the European plantation industry in the 1860s. *Source*: private collection of A. Stoler.

CHAPTER TWO

The Pulse of the Archive

> But it seems you do not realize, Meneer Pangemanann, that your report is not for the general public. Only a very few people in the Indies and in the world have read and studied it. . . . You will never know, and indeed do not need to know, who else has read it. Your work of scholarship, as you like to call it, will *never receive the honor of being kept in the State archives*. Once being read, it will become dust and smoke, in the safekeeping of the devils of darkness.
>
> —Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *House of Glass*

It is 1912. Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel, *House of Glass*, begins in the chill of the Dutch East Indies' state archives and in the heat of colonial Java's emergent Indonesian nationalist movement.[1] Dutch authorities call on Jacques Pangemanann, a Eurasian former police officer, newly appointed native commissioner to the elite Indies intelligence service, to defuse the movement's spread. His mission is to read the classified state archives, and spy, report on, and then destroy Minke, the movement's leader. But this complicity undoes Pangemanann and ravages his soul. He hears voices, develops a verbal tick and high blood pressure, becomes estranged from his family and falls into alcoholic despair. His descent from colonial officer to "bandit," and ultimately to archive-bound "terrorist," is rapid.[2] By the book's end he will have destroyed his own hero, Minke, and himself.

When the novel opens, Pangemanann has just completed his meticulous report, assessing the strength of the nascent anticolonial movement and the commitments of its alleged instigators, the mostly Muslim-educated elite on Java. Those few architects and agents of empire with privileged

[1] Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *House of Glass* (New York: William Morrow, 1992). In this edition Max Lane translates "*para iblis dalam kegelapan*" as "devils of the night." Henk Meier has encouraged me to translate it (in the epigraph) rather as "devils of darkness" to underscore the richer connotations that darkness affords. I have also altered Lane's translation of the first part of this sentence to accord more closely with the Indonesian text. See Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Rumah Kaca* (Kuala Lumpur: Wira Karya, 1988), 24.

[2] Toer (1992), 31.

access eagerly read it. Leaders of the sugar industry syndicate laud his work. But his words will never enter the "nearly ten miles of closely packed papers" that make up the sanctified space of the government archive.[3] He may enter the inner sanctum but leave no trace: as spy he can have no presence, as an "Indo" (a "mixed blood") of tainted native, if elevated, origin, he can only have a muffled voice. Too lowly to be acknowledged, his "findings" are too sensitive to be preserved. As his European superior bluntly informs him, "he need not know" who has read it: "[It] will never receive the honor of being kept in the State archives." Burned as soon as it is read, it is reduced to "dust and smoke"—an archive that is to remain in darkness.

House of Glass is the name Pangemanann gives to his report but "house of glass" references a more fundamentally disquieting space in the colonial imaginary—at once the fragile security of the Dutch police state and the false security of Europeans living nestled in it. The quest for affective knowledge—that which moves people to feel and act—was the coveted pursuit of state intelligence yet beyond its grasp. Framed by the deceptions of archival access, *House of Glass* begins with the state archive only to veer far from it, for Pangemanann hides his most precious document in the safety of his house. In Pramoedya Ananta Toer's vision, disappeared documents and distorted reports are the archive's paltry truths. The building that houses the state's records is a "mausoleum" with palatial columns and thick stone walls. It does more than chill and still the air. It keeps out both the tropical heat, and the resilient motion of a resistant social world that is Java.

House of Glass reads at once as a condemnation of colonial rule and a fierce parable of the contemporary seductions of power in what was Suharto-ruled, postcolonial Indonesia. For Pramoedya, whose banned stories were transmitted orally while he was in prison for fourteen years, it is not surprising how sharply his assault is aimed—at the erudite, educated ignorance that Java's Dutch officialdom cultivated and that the colonial archives produced and contained.[4] Pramoedya Ananta Toer mocks those officials (and scholars) who hold tight to their paper documents, who imagine they can know the Indies without setting foot outside the archive and their carefully tended inscriptions in it.

One of his targets is clear: those who study to become "colonial expert[s] by going in and out of these buildings," those who believe that

[3] Ibid., 63.

[4] See John David Morley, "Warped by Empire," *New York Times Book Review* (9 June 1996), and Christopher GoGwilt, "Pramoedya's Fiction and History: An Interview with Indonesian Novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 9 (l) 1996: 147–64.

"documents are more reliable . . . than the mouths of their authors."[5] If the "taste of the archive" is in the heady rush of discovery, in the sensations and desires the archives stir, for Pramoedya the colonial archives are the bitter aftertaste of empire, the morsels left for us, their voracious contemporary readers.[6] Regimes of official documentation in his account are inert remnants, iconic roadmaps to regimes of domination that warp the integrity of the best of men. Such closed-circuited regimes of impoverished testimony produce their experts who in turn produce them.

This site of safekeeping, a pyre of empire, is one plausible way to describe the deadening weight of colonial archives. But it is not the one I have in mind. Pramoedya's caricature is a pointillist still life that captures the rigidities and distortions of a colonial optic. In his novel the archive has barely a living pulse.[7] For Pramoedya official paper stands in relief from the vibrant political culture of a Java that high and low officials labored to grasp but could barely comprehend.

Yet colonial state archives are sites of perturbations of other kinds—less monuments to the absence or ubiquity of knowledge than its piecemeal partiality, less documents to the force of reasoned judgment than to both the spasmodic and sustained currents of anxious labor that paper trails could not contain. Nietzsche warns that "the legislation of language" establishes truth.[8] But here that legislated lexicon produces a surfeit that spills over and smudges the archive's policed edges. In these Dutch colonial archives, what could, should, and need not be done or said colludes and collides on the ragged ridges of racial categories, and in the constricted political space of a never-stable, Dutch-inflected "colonial situation."

For Pramoedya the tremors of colonial rule are outside the archives. In the present volume I pursue how deeply epistemic anxieties stir affective tremors within them. The pulse of the archive and the forms of governance that it belies are in the finished reports and in the process of their

[5] Toer (1992), 69.

[6] See Arlette Farge, *Le Gout de l'Archive* (Paris: Seuil, 1989) for a richly tender treatment of the relationship between the sensation of the historian's reading of archives and the material texture of such collections. See Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002) on the reader's longings to animate these silent relics. My search for the "pulse" cannot but also share in such sensations.

[7] What the archive does hold, for Pramoedya, are only bundled traces of colonialism's ghostly victims, born a century earlier, who leave behind "the filth in colonial life [on the archive's] clean white sheets." Toer (1992), 46. On this spectral quality "of contaminating marks on the colonial archive's pristine sheets," see Pheng Cheah, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Liberation* (New York: Columbia, 2003), esp. 309–47, 310.

[8] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" [1874], in *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities, 1979), 79–91.

making, in the fine crafts of cribbing and culling on which colonial bureaucracies so relied. In the interstices of sanctioned formulae these Netherlands Indies archives of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mark the distance between recognized and disqualified knowledge, between intelligible accounts and those deemed inappropriate for exchange. Not least, here is what Michel de Certeau might include as a space of "displaced histories," contrary and subjacent—but not necessarily subaltern—that hover in the archive's long shadows.[9] Sometimes these are emergent and awkward, sometimes suspended and unfulfilled narratives within the archive's dominant mode. And sometimes there are stammers, what I would call "disabled histories," a few brief words in Malay, seized from a "native informant," not given the due of a narrative at all.

This book is about such a colonial order of things as seen through the record of archival productions. I ask what insights into the social imaginaries of colonial rule might be gained from attending not only to colonialism's archival content, but to the principles and practices of governance lodged in particular archival forms. By "archival form" I allude to several things: prose style, repetitive refrain, the arts of persuasion, affective strains that shape "rational" response, categories of confidentiality and classification, and not least, genres of documentation. The book's focus is on archiving-as-process rather than archives-as-things. Most importantly, it looks to archives as condensed sites of epistemological and political anxiety rather than as skewed and biased sources. These colonial archives were both transparencies on which power relations were inscribed and intricate technologies of rule in themselves.

Those on which I draw here are of the official archives of the Dutch colonial state, missives and reports that passed up and down the bureaucratic ladder, or stayed secreted within its privileged echelons. But the archive's sweep is not confined to these domains alone. Filling that archive are those people loosely tied to the Indies' administrative apparatus but not salaried by it. These were doctors, clergymen, private school teachers and orphanage directors whose local knowledge and expertise on specific populations and practices were intermittently sought, those who took these

[9] De Certeau uses the term "displaced history" as a history "recounting both the proximity of the past and the foreignness of your private life, or the present as a metaphor for a somewhere else." I use "displaced history" to convey something closer to the relationship Foucault articulates between erudite and disqualified knowledge, where the latter is preserved if not emergent within the former. On "displaced history," see Michel de Certeau, "The Theater of the Quidproquo: Alexandre Dumas," in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 150–55, 151; on erudite and disqualified knowledge, see Foucault, "Two Lectures," in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. and trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 82–83.

occasions to rehearse common sense or share their views on what it meant to be Dutch, on what they thought of concubinage across racial lines, or on what they imagined were the attributes of "mixed blood" children and the nature of their moral character.

Along with the surefooted views on policies by which we have come to identify colonial enterprises are the remnants of writerly practices of a very different kind: those that chronicle failed projects, delusional imaginings, equivocal explanations of unanticipated outbursts of distrust directed toward a state apparatus on which European comforts would so precariously depend. Relegated to archival asides are lowly civil servants gone bankrupt in efforts to pay for their sons' requisite schooling in Holland. European women go mad in throwaway sentences. In abbreviated asides impoverished widows of lowly Dutch officials send their servants to beg from their neighbors for food and funds on their behalf. These are archives peopled with Dutch administrators, as well as German and French planters scrambling to figure out whether their plantation holdings might be attacked by a few workers bent on revenge against an abusive planter—or by phantasmic "hoards" of Islamic insurgents armed to storm their guarded gates. Within the constricted ontologies of rule, understandings of outrage often escaped the reasoned state.

Because imagining what *might be* was as important as knowing what was, these archives of the visionary and expectant should rivet our attention upon their erratic movement back and forth in verbal tense: the conditional could powerfully reshape an immediate response as it recursively rewrote the present and refigured events that had long passed.[10] The portent-laden future of revolt and betrayal is always on the imminent and dangerous horizon. When colonial social reformers conceived scrupulously planned utopias made of small-scale farmers drawn from the mixed blood orphanages, their minute descriptions of those children's inclinations mirrored visions of what they conceived adults to be and what they feared improperly schooled children might become. Such projections, in turn, made more real the visceral fear of the resentments such subjects in the making were thought to harbor. Plans to school the young for state loyalty and humble aspirations underscored their lack of both. Resplendent in the feared, the unrealized, and the ill-conceived, such visions invite, what I call in chapter 4, a strategy of "developing historical negatives" to track a microspace of the everyday through what might become and could never be. I take these to be "blueprints of distress" that trace

[10] For a related but different sense of the future orientation and possibilities written into archival production by "intentional communities," see Arjun Appadurai, "Archive and Aspiration," in *Information Is Alive*, ed. Joke Brouwer and Arjen Mulder (Rotterdam: V2/NAI, 2003), 14–25.

out agitations of a peculiar kind—not events but the "negative prints" of what stirred official anxiety to which colonial agents responded with infeasible policies for implausible arrangements that could neither be carried out nor sustained. If historians "tell of things that have been," and poets "of things as might be," as Paul Ricoeur's parsing of the Aristotelian distinction insists, this ethnographic history of these colonial imaginaries seeps across the futuristic and the actual to capture something of both.[11]

Here I treat these colonial archives both as a corpus of writing and as a force field that animates political energies and expertise, that pulls on some "social facts" and converts them into qualified knowledge, that attends to some ways of knowing while repelling and refusing others.[12] Such a field has centripetal and centrifugal force. In no small part it inscribes the authority of the colonial state and the analytic energies mobilized to make its assertions. But it also registers other reverberations, crosscurrent frictions, attractions, and aversions that worked within and against those assertions of imperial rights to property, persons, and profits that colonial regimes claimed as their own.

Roland Barthes might have called this a "storeyed" archival field in both senses of the term: *layered* and *crafted* from practical and unevenly sedimented deceptions and dispositions that accumulated as acceptable or discarded knowledge.[13] The Pangemananns, whose reports were destroyed as soon as they were read, leave only a faint trace. Rather, these chapters pause at the hands and habits of those charged with the writing, recording, sorting, and proliferation of documents, in the unremarkable forms in which writerly practices appeared; in the tone and tenor of a reprimand, a dismissal, or praise, in floridly clear or illegible signatures at the bottom of a neatly copied page. Sometimes persons become visible in the entitled scrawls of an angry query across a report, or remain invisible in the faceless, careful handwriting of "copy machines" (as Eurasian clerks were disparagingly called)—subjects whose racially marked positions conferred no place for, nor right to, a signature at all.

[11] See Paul Ricoeur's discussion of Aristotle's distinction between poets and historians in *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), esp. 40–41.

[12] On Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno's uses of the term (*Kraftfeld*), see Martin Jay, *Force fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 1–3. See also Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993), 9.

[13] See Roland Barthes's discussion of Tzvetan Todorov's distinction in narrative between the "unfolding of a story" and "its construction in storeys" of horizontal movement in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 87.

Archival Conventions

> When the archive . . . seems easily to give access to what one expects of it, the work is all the more demanding. One has to patiently give up one's natural "sympathy" for it and consider it an adversary to fight, a piece of knowledge that isn't to annex but disrupt. It is not simply a matter of undoing something whose meaning is too easy to find; to be able to know it, you have to unlearn and not think you know it from a first reading.
>
> —Arlette Farge, *Le Gout de l'Archive*

Farge's warning to proceed with caution, to allow oneself to falter in the face of the archive's repetitions, formulae, and obviousness is one I take to heart. The official documents of colonial archives like those of the Netherlands Indies are so weighted with fixed formats, empty phrases, and racial clichés that one is easily blinded by their flattened prose and numbing dullness. Our readings are blunted by what often has been parsed as the seemingly panoptic glare of a vacuous, stylized official gaze. But in these archives the panoptic is a frail conceit. Administrative overviews index conventional forms of assumed mastery less than comprehensive knowledge. Such overviews—of regions, problems, or target populations—were rendered from cribbed and cluttered, spare and hurried reports of the disorder of things, written in the studied ineloquence of bureaucratese. Sometimes they were impressionistic and distant, elsewhere animated by intimate fear less than intimate knowledge of what multiple colonial civil servants thought they saw, what was reported by an unnamed underling, or what they claimed others had said.

Wedged within those folds of truth-claims emerges something else: uncensored turns of phrase, loud asides in the imperative tense, hesitant asides in sotto voce. These register confused assessments, parenthetic doubts about what might count as evidence, the records of eyewitnesses with dubious credentials, dismissed rumors laced with pertinent truths, contradictory testimonies called upon and quickly discarded. These too were assessments that implicitly weighed the stature and sensibility of their authors, and the distance that separated their words from the received scenarios of colonial common sense. In chapter 6, I refer to these as elements that make up a "hierarchy of credibility," scales of trust that measured what forms of witness, words and deeds, could be taken as reliably relevant.

But these hierarchies too are sometimes inverted. In the brutal immediacy of a murder, in the panic of an impeding attack, in the anxious rush to fulfill a superior's demand for information (and for proof of one's

vigilance), in the concerted effort to ward off disaster, words could slip from their safe moorings to reappear unauthorized, inappropriate, and unrehearsed. These are not *outside* the archival field. Nor are they outside the grids of intelligibility in which those documents are lodged, but rather the subjacent coordinates of, and counterpoints within, them. Such confusions and "asides" work in and around prevailing narratives as they push on the archive's storied edges.

Derrida's evocative image of the archive as a site of "house arrest," one that "gathers together signs," suggests no entry for the wayward, no access to intruders.[14] But the paper trails left by European colonial projects could never be sealed that tight; not in the Indies, where magazines, pamphlets, journals, and dailies both pilfered from the official record and were made an evidentiary part of it. Here an image of *house-breaking* might better be joined with house arrest to more vividly capture what those in command feared (as much as native insurgence)—that their houses of glass might be shattered by "inside" jobs: by civil servants improperly schooled in what not to see or say, as was Assistent Resident of Deli, Frans Carl Valck, who is center stage in chapters 6 and 7; by recalcitrant Indo-Europeans who refused to answer a state commission on their domestic and sexual affairs, as shall be seen in chapter 5; and by the unseemly action of the colony's most respected city fathers, European high officials described in chapter 3 who, in protesting government policy, circulated documents and directives meant only for their rarified readings and well-trained ears.

This is the ethnographic space of the colonial archives, where truth-claims compete, impervious or fragile, crushed by the weight of convention or resilient in the immediate threat of the everyday; where trust is put to the test and credibility wavers. Here I linger over unspoken orders of rubric and reference that did more than define plausible evidence. Specific if not unique to the shape of these colonial archives is a racialized common sense about people and places—about Javanese coolies and Acehnese insurgents, about the sensibilities of the *Indische* population, Indies-born and -bred Dutch versus imported, transient, and *echte* Europeans. Such implicit common sense figured centrally when reporting *preceded* inquiry, when evidence was spare—or absent.

Conventions suggest consensus but it is not clear what colonial practitioners actually shared. District reports were built upon changing beliefs about what mattered to state security and what sorts of people were deemed a present or possible threat. Consensus was also shaped by how skillfully or poorly seasoned bureaucrats and fledgling practitioners could

[14] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 2.

apprehend the tacit changing rules of decorum and protocol, what rhetorical devices were deemed persuasive and currently active in the game.

Conventions also suggest familiarity and durability. I take them instead as moving targets and, sometimes, so did those in office themselves. Irony and humor are not lacking, mockery targets those who are too literal or not literal enough. Misinterpretations of directives were subject to ridicule when reports were sent that got things "wrong." Stock phrases took on different political import depending on where they were placed. Contexts of relevance rapidly changed. References to the need for European nurseries might seem unremarkable in lengthy reports on education but offer striking openings to political thinking when colonial administrators obsessed over them in classified documents elsewhere: in a commission on European pauperism, in recommendations to quell creole discontent, in debates over mixed bloods "too proud" to learn manual labor. As I have argued elsewhere, this was not "information out of place."[15] In these contexts, such conjoinings of the banal and political mark implicit anxieties about subject-formation, about the psychic space of empire, about what went without saying, about the common sense that made these reasoned pairings.

The Seductions of State Secrets

> Institutions create shadowed places in which nothing can be seen and no questions asked. They make other areas show in finely discriminated detail, which is closely scrutinized and ordered. History emerges in an unintended shape as a result of practices directed to immediate, practical ends. To watch these practices establish selective principles that highlight some kinds of events and obscure others is to inspect the social order operating on individual minds.
>
> —Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*

Archivists are the first to note that to understand an archive, one needs to understand the institutions that it served. "State secrets" are one of those key conventions of concealment that produce the "shadowed places" to

[15] See Ann Laura Stoler, "A Sentimental Education: Children on the Colonial Divide," in Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 112–39, and idem, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 137–64. See also 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.

which Douglas refers: such shadows are cast by persons with cryptic titles; bureaus with nondescript names; pieces of paper that become "lost," inaccessible, "miscatalogued," and thus are rendered unusable and irrelevant. Shadowed places are what states create, emblematic conventions of the archival form. States do more than traffic in the production of secrets and their selective dissemination. State sovereignty resides in the power to designate arbitrary social facts of the world as matters of security and concerns of state. Once so assigned, these social facts—Indo children breastfed by native servants (who were sometimes their mothers), poor whites who went by non-Christian names, Indos "disguised" in the dress of native traders, language-use at home—are dislodged from their contexts, flung into the orbit of a political world that is often not their own. These otherwise innocuous practices become iconic indices of a colonial world perceived as being at risk, signs of alert that accrue political deliberations, that sanction the rushing in of more evidence, that confirm causal connections that warrant more secreted documentation.

Max Weber claimed that the "official secret" was a "specific invention of bureaucracy," its "fanatically defended" prize possession.[16] In the Netherlands Indies documents marked with an *X* as "secret," "very secret," or "highly confidential" were elevated to sacred status, to be guarded and then later revealed. As in the European Pauperism Commission of 1901, the stature of its recommendations derived in part from an earlier secreted commission that it exposed. And as with Pangemanann, both honored and shamed by the secrets to which he was privy, to gather information was not necessarily to know who would read it, or the narratives that it would fortify before being set afire, shredded, or stored away.

State secrets excite expectations, not least among students of empire. For we often covet that which the state conceals, regarding its secrets as accurate measures of its most nefarious intents: unmasking its magic and deceptive opacities is our calling. But we also know that codes of concealment are the fetishes of the state itself.[17] Within colonial bureaucracies,

[16] Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," in *Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 233–34.

[17] Philip Abrams held that "the state is . . . a triumph of concealment. It conceals the real history and relations of subjection behind an a-historical mask of legitimating illusion; contrives to deny the existence of connections and conflicts which would if recognized be incompatible with claimed autonomy and integration of the state. The real official secret . . . is the secret of the non-existence of the state." Abrams, I think, gets it right and wrong. There is no "a-historical mask" but rather an elaborate apparatus geared to the task of historical reproduction. Nor was the colonial state nonexistent if we understand it rather as an *imperial* one that stretched across multiple locations—in the Indies and the Netherlands—and multiple sites and technologies of command. See Philip Abrams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State" [1977], *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1 (1) (March 1988): 58–89, 77.

such secrets sometimes have strange biographies. Secrets may earmark privileged knowledge, or, as with commissions of inquiry, create the categories they purport only to describe. In the Indies colonial archives, they do some of both. Classified documents served as a signal to direct attention and cued for one's repeated return to what knowledge should be valued and what their readers should know. They also called up and upon technologies of intelligence: secret police, fingerprinting, coded scripts, and men like Pangemanann, whose names were expunged from documents. Secret documents could have as their source native paid informants who were *vertrouwensmannen* (trustworthy men, who one took into one's confidence); Eurasians who were charged—as was Pangemannan—to interpret native signs of discontent and distress; and, not least, purveyors of culture and psychology, anthropologists and others deemed Java experts.

Secrets do more than limit access. They promise confidences and confidence in limited circulation about something others do not and should not know. Items about clandestine police maneuvers, military preparations, and deliberations about an impending revolt are what we expect to be marked as *geheim*, with an *X*. But sometimes promises of access to the unknown were bizarre fictions at best. Confidential documents both secret and secrete what becomes elevated to "vital" information. Throughout the official archives of the Dutch colonial state are documents earmarked for confidentiality that were not secrets at all.

If one could argue that the presence of European beggars and homeless Dutchmen in the streets of Batavia in the 1870s were "secrets" to those in the Netherlands, they certainly were not to European post office clerks, Javanese construction workers, or Chinese storekeepers who lived on the sprawling low-lying peripheries inhabited by the impoverished of Java's urban centers.[18] Similarly, was a letter written in 1848 by a Dutch lawyer to the Resident of Batavia a "highly secret" document because he signed it—"I remain like our King, a liberal Dutchman"—when to be "*vrijzinnig*" (liberal and modern) in the colonies bordered on a subversive act?[19] Or was it because it was "unseemly" for a high official to so brazenly declare his similarity to the modern King and refrain from deference? Or was it because he boldly declared his intent to participate in the colonies in a European demonstration?

Both instances suggest that what was secret in such documents was not their specific subject matters but their timing and the interpretive

[18] AR, Geheim No. 1144/2284. Department of Justice to the Governor-General, Batavia, 29 April 1873.

[19] AR, KV, no. 317, 1848, Zeer Geheim, Exh. E, 19 March 1848, C. Ardesche to Resident van Rees.

uncertainties about an appropriate government response that gathered around them. Similarly, classified missives on European beggars were less about what to do with the destitute than measures of disagreement and disquiet about how to racially classify those who fell into such straits. Reports on vagabond whites were "secret" in 1874 and not twenty-five years later when the public Pauper Commission appeared because officials could not agree on whether there were thirty-nine white paupers living among natives in the urban slums of Batavia, or thousands.[20]

Documents were sometimes marked *geheim* because of the magnitude of a problem, at other times because officials could not agree on a shared sense of what the problems were. Rather than secreted truths about the state, they point to sites of unease, anticipatory warnings of emergent movement among subject populations (what Raymond Williams might even include as "structures of feeling"), of resentments that may not yet have had a name.[21] As Frederick Barth once observed, secrets do more than sanctify—they invoke deeper secrets of their own.[22]

Not least they invite disclosure. Critique emerges in the interstices of what goes without saying and what should not be said: sometimes documents referred to those who parodied commonsense conventions. As we shall see, the "dirty secrets" of Sumatra's planters were in classified missives not because the planters' abuses of their laboring populations were not known, but precisely because they were not to be acknowledged and aired by an "inept" civil servant like Frans Carl Valck.

Colonial Commissions

If it is obvious that colonial archives are products of state machines, it is only now that we are seeing them, in their own right, as technologies that reproduced those states themselves.[23] Adam Ashforth has strongly stated

[20] AR, KV 28 March 1874, no. 47x, no. 1144/2284. Director of Justice D. de Pauly to the Governor-General.

[21] 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. See Marc Ventresca, "When States Count: Institutional and Political Dynamics in Modern Census Establishment, 1800–1993," Ph.D. Diss., Stanford University, 1996, 50.

[22] Fredrick Barth, *Ritual and Knowledge among the Baktaman of New Guinea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 217. I thank Maurice Bloch for this reference.

[23] On this point, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995). On the relationship between state-formation and archival production, see Michel Duchein, "The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe," *American Archivist* 55 (Winter 1992): 14–25.

the case in his study of South Africa's Native Affairs Commission, when he notes that "the real seat of power" in modern states is "the bureau, the locus of writing," but it is an insight that Weber shared and that many students of colonialisms would subscribe to, as well.[24] Systems of written accountability called for elaborate infrastructures. Paper trails of weekly reports to superiors, summaries of reports of reports, and recommendations based on reports all called for systematic coding systems by which they could be tracked. Colonial statecraft was an administrative apparatus to gather, draw together, and connect—and disconnect—events, to make them, as needed, legible, insignificant, or unintelligible as information. Striking in this accumulation process is how much of what was collected was made irrelevant to what state officials decided, both to what they acknowledged they could do in practice and what about the Indies they claimed to know.[25]

Nowhere was this process more evident than in the form of state-sponsored commissions of inquiry. Colonial commissions reorganized knowledge, devising new ways of knowing while setting aside others. One implicit task was to reconstruct historical narratives, decreeing what past events were pertinent to current issues and how they should be framed. Sometimes commissions were responses to catastrophic events and extended periods of crisis.[26] As responses they generated increased anxiety, substantiating the reality of "crisis," the wisdom of pre-emptive response, foreshadowing that new directives were demanded, as were the often coercive measures taken to ensure their effect. By the time most commissions had run their course, political signposts were set in place: "turning points" were identified, precedents established, causalities certified, arrows directed with vectors of blame—if not action—sharply aimed.

Just as often they attested to what a commission had set out to show in the first place—that is, if the commission knew what it was after.[27] As

[24] See Adam Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 5.

[25] For a richly subtle analysis of the production of such commissions as a critical feature of modern governing processes, see Oz Frankel, *States of Inquiry: Social Investigation and Print Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the United States* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

[26] On investigatory commissions as an "emergency apparatus of government," see Jonathan Simon, "Parrhesiastic Accountability: Investigatory Commissions and Executive Power in an Age of Terror," *Yale Law Journal* 114 (6) (April 2005): 1419–57, 1430.

[27] See Fred Block and Margaret Somers, "In the Shadow of Speenhamland: Social Policy and the Old Poor Law," *Politics and Society* 31 (2) (June 2003): 1–41, 5. Oz Frankel notes that social activists like Beatrice and Sydney Webb regarded royal commissions as political tools to "promote preconceived policies or to put thorny issues on the shelf, peddling official passivity as action" (Frankel, 139).

Dutch anthropologist Frans Husken notes of colonial commissions in Java, "when nothing else works and no decision can be reached, 'appoint a commission' was a favorite response of colonial authorities."[28] Commissions could reactivate knowledge but also stop it in its tracks. As technologies of delay, they could effectively mobilize interest and satisfy it, as well as arrest decision. They were primed to distract. Pathos and statistics may seem a strange pairing but both were at the political heart of state inquiries. Some commission reports were searingly detailed; some were impressionistic and abstract. Vignettes about the unnamed and anecdotes of the everyday established the truth-claims of local officials, their local knowledge and ethnographic authority.

Such commissions, as we shall see in chapter 5, were also consummate producers of social kinds. The European Pauperism Commission of 1901 reassigned clusters of people for state scrutiny and in so doing revised and overwrote what was to count in ascriptions of race. Ways of living were congealed into "problems," subject persons were condensed into ontological categories, innocuous practices were made into subjects of analysis and rendered political things. Statistics, historical narrative, and anecdote were made ready at hand, mutually corroborating evidence for commission-making projects. Proof of the difference between destitute whites and Indo-European paupers was construed by identifying distinct sorts of persons, with specific dispositions and states of mind. Details of the everyday were elevated to reliable proof of character. Neglect of children, indifference to work, succumbing to native standards were affective states not captured in numbers; condemnations of the sensory world in which poor whites lived afforded more palpable and convincing evidence of what colonial agents already thought they knew about the sorting of people and how race shaped distinct habits and inclinations.

Like statistics, commissions were common tools of statecraft forged by social reform–conscious nineteenth-century states. As instruments of moral science, statistics used deviations from the mean to identify deviations from the norm. Commissions joined those numbers with prototypic cases to measure gradations of morality and the gradations of unfreedom that went along with them.[29] That so many commissions were convened in the late nineteenth century was part of a technology of state practice

[28] 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.

[29] See Arjun Appadurai on numerical representation in colonial India as a "key to normalizing the pathology of difference" in "Numbers in the Colonial Imagination," in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 114–38.

that spanned the imperial globe.[30] In metropole and colony, these were high-profile promises of public accountability that in turn identified the commensurabilities on which international colonial conferences thrived. In the Indies they garnered moral authority both through the specific *comparisons* they sought to make between their "mixed blood problem" or their "poor white problem" and those in South Africa, Australia, and elsewhere in the imperial world.

This was a politics of comparison in which biopolitical assessments of differential racial capabilities and character were key features of social technology.[31] Those commissions, like the European Pauperism Commission or the South African Carnegie Commission on Poor Whites thirty years later, explicitly linked domestic relationships—between parent and child, nursemaid and infant—to the security of the state. Relations between people and objects—to clothing, furnishings, room arrangements, and window-openings—were invoked, as well. Eyewitness testimonies to intimacies of the home had become data of a particular kind, critical to the state's audit of its commitment to the public good, to racial differentiation, and to its own viability.

Not least, these commissions were quintessential "quasi-state" technologies that were in part authored and authorized by persons of stature outside it. If modern states gain force by creating and maintaining an elusive boundary to civil society, such commissions exemplified that process.[32] "Outside" experts verified both the state's right to assess the public interest and its commitment to objectivity. Commissions, in short, demonstrated the state's right to power through its will to the production of truth.

Ethnography in the Archives

> [Ethnographic work] is neither a matter of piling on theoretical antecedents nor a matter of going where no one has been before. I would put it rather that *we need to go precisely where we have*

[30] Royal commissions have a longer history still. See, for example, David Loades, "The Royal Commissions," in *Power in Tudor England* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997), 70–82. On statistics and state building, see Alain Desrosières, "Statistics and the State," in *The Politics of Large Numbers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 178–209. For the twentieth century, see William J. Breen, "Foundations, Statistics, and State-Building," *Business History Review* 68 (1994): 451–82.

[31] On the use of the comparison as an instrument of statecraft, see my "Tense and Tender Ties," in *Haunted by Empire*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), esp. 23–58.

[32] Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State," *American Political Science Review* 85 (1991): 77–96.

> *already been*, back to the immediate here and now out of which we have created our present knowledge of the world. That means constructing a mode of enquiry which will enable a return to fields of knowledge and activity in the hindsight of unpredicted outcomes, and which will thus enable recovering of material that investigators were not aware they were collecting. The ethnographic method . . . with its insistent demands of immersement, begins to look extremely promising.
>
> —Marilyn Strathern, "The Ethnographic Effect"

A convention in the study of colonial governance is to treat state bureaucracies as information-hungry machines, ambitiously taxonomic, bent on categorical claims about those social differences that mattered and those that did not. Scholars of the colonial have become deft at identifying the distance between those normative, imposed categories of social difference that so contrast with the more mobile social and intimate relations in which people lived. If one no longer needs to argue, as Sally Falk-Moore did twenty years ago, that fieldwork should be treated as "current history," the case might still need to be made that archival productions should be treated in more registers as ethnography.[33]

Students often ask what and where is ethnography in the colonial archives: is it in what, where, or how we approach these gatherings of documents? Is it in the issues addressed or their treatment? What would, and should, what Marilyn Strathern calls "immersement" look like for the ethnographer on historical-colonial ground? One could respond that the ethnographic space of the archive resides in the disjuncture between prescription and practice, between state mandates and the maneuvers people made in response to them, between normative rules and how people actually lived their lives.

But, as the last decade of historical ethnography suggests, no single answer will do. Ethnography in and of the colonial archives attends to processes of production, relations of power in which archives are created, sequestered, and rearranged.[34] If ethnographies could be treated as texts, students of the colonial have turned the tables to reflect on colonial documents as "rituals of possession," as relics and ruins, as sites of contested cultural knowledge. Here I treat archives not as repositories of state power but as unquiet movements in a field of force, as restless realignments and

[33] Sally Falk-Moore, "Explaining the Present: Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography," *American Ethnologist* 14 (4): 727–36.

[34] Trouillot's *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* is the most explicit and noteworthy example.

readjustments of people and the beliefs to which they were tethered, as spaces in which the senses and the affective course through the seeming abstractions of political rationalities.[35] I take sentiments expressed and ascribed as social interpretations, as indices of relations of power and tracers of them.

The case need no longer be made that "sources" are not "springs" of colonial truths.[36] Distinguishing fiction from fact has given way to efforts to track the production and consumption of facticities as the contingent coordinates of particular times and temperaments, places and purposes.[37] As some of the best of this work now recognizes, filing systems and disciplined writing produce assemblages of control and specific methods of domination.[38] More than ever, new studies of archival production tackle the politics of colonial knowledge and the "arrested histories"—those histories suspended from received historiography—that are its effects.[39] Ethnographic sensibilities have led us to ask how oral and vernacular

[35] See Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Roberto Gonzalez-Echevarria, *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[36] Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of Counter-insurgency," in *Culture, Power, History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, ed. Nicholas Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry Ortner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 336–71. Greg Dening, *The Death of William Gooch: A History's Anthropology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 54. See also Nicholas Dirks, "Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History," in *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures*, ed. Brian Axel (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002), 47–65.

[37] Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," in *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 96–125, and David William Cohen, *Burying SM: The Politics of Knowledge and the Sociology of Power in Africa* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heineman, 1992); Richard Price, *The Convict and the Colonel* (Boston: Beacon, 1998). See also Axel, esp. 1–44.

[38] On filing systems, see Ilana Feldman, *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule (1917–1967)* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008). On the nature of "documentary government," see Keith Breckenridge's insightful essays, "From Hubris to Chaos: The Making of the Bewsyuro and the End of Documentary Government" and "Flesh Made Words: Fingerprinting and the Archival Imperative in the Union of South Africa, 1900–1930," paper presented at the History and African Studies Seminar, History Department at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, 2 October 2001.

[39] See Carole McGranahan, "Arrested Histories: Between Empire and Exile in 20th Century Tibet," Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 2001, and idem, "Truth, Fear, and Lies: Exile Politics and Arrested Histories of the Tibetan Resistance," *Cultural Anthropology* 25 (4) (November 2005): 570–600. See also Javier Morillo-Alicea, " '*Aquel laberinto de oficinas*': Ways of Knowing Empire in Late Nineteenth-Century Spain," in *After Spanish Rule*, ed. Mark Thurner and Andres Guerrero (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), 111–40. Attention to how states shape and efface personal memories has placed emphasis on how those alternative accounts are retained as preserved possibilities for future claims and political projects. See Joanne Rappaport, *Cumbe Reborn: An Andean Ethnography of*

histories cut across the strictures of archival production and refigure what makes up the archival terrain.[40] They prime us to look for arrogant assertions of know-how couched in unacknowledged native expertise.[41] Such sensibilities have opened to a broadening array of genres of documentation, to representational practices that impinge on received canons of inscription, to collages of memory that at once deface official writing as they provide new forms of historical evidence.[42] Methodologically, they pose a challenge to conventional historical narrative, inviting students of the colonial to take critical license with "sources," with what counts as context, and creative license with form.[43]

If every document comes layered with the received account of earlier events and the cultural semantics of a political moment, the issue of official "bias" opens to a different challenge: to identify the conditions of possibility that shaped what warranted repetition, what competencies were rewarded in archival writing, what stories could not be told and what could not be said. Such queries have invited a turn back to docu-

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History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee, eds., *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (Capetown: Oxford University Press, 1998); Keith Breckenridge, "Confounding the Documentary State: Cape Workers' Letters on the Early Witwatersrand," paper presented at the History and African Studies Seminar, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, 30 May 2000; and Keith Breckenridge, "Verwoerd's Bureau of Proof: Total Information in the Making of Apartheid," *History Workshop Journal* 59 (Spring 2005): 83–108.

[40] See Shahid Amin's fine analysis of this mix in *Event, Metaphor, Memory, 1922–1992* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[41] See Nicholas Dirks's exemplary treatment of this issue in "Colonial Histories and Native Informants: Biography of an Archive," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993). On the critical labor performed by Africans in the study of local law and the making of colonial jurisdiction, see Benjamin Lawrance, Emily Osborn, Richard Roberts, eds., *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

[42] For a unique ethnographic history of personal archives, local historians, and the power of their historiographies (as well as an excellent review of recent work on archives), see Penelope Papailias, *Genres of Recollection: Archival Poetics and Modern Greece* (New York: Palgrave, 2005). On the relationship between amateur photography, technology, and archival practice as a site of political critique, see the subtle work of Karen Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography in Postcolonial Java* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, forthcoming). See also the excellent contributions to Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006).

[43] Among such innovative historiographic operations I think of Richard Price's *Convict and Colonel: A Story of Colonialism and Resistance in the Caribbean* (Boston: Beacon, 1998); Donna Merwick's *Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); and Martha Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions in the United States Census of 1890," in *Haunted by Empire*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), 240–70.

mentation itself, to the "teaching" task that the word's Latin root, *docere*, implies, to what and who was being educated in the bureaucratic shuffle of rote formulas, generic plots, and prescriptive asides.

Colonial Common Sense and Its Epistemic Frames

> 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 separate us from what we can no longer say.
>
> —Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*

In this book, ethnographic sites emerge in the space between prescription and practice, but more pointedly elsewhere. I look for the pulse of the archive in the quiescence and quickened pace of its own production, in the steady and feverish rhythms of repeated incantations, formulae, and frames. I pursue it through the uneven densities of Dutch archival preoccupations and predicaments: where energies were expended, what conditioned the designation of an event, what visions were generated in the pursuit of prediction, which social groups garnered concern and then did not.

One of those densities, not surprisingly, thickens around social categories themselves. Here I track them through, what I call their "social etymologies." Social etymologies trace the career of words and the political practices that new categories mark or that new membership in old categories signals. Most importantly, social etymologies attend to the social relationships of power buried and suspended in those terms.[44] Such etymologies index how social kinds were produced and what kinds of social relations were construed as plausible evidence of membership. Social etymologies, then, are not just about words. They trace practices gathered into intelligible forms. They seek those histories that have found quiet refuge in them.[45]

They might also register how new social categories gained relevance as they annulled designations no longer sufficient to make the distinctions relevant to current reformist projects. In the successive waves of

[44] On "social etymology" in the analysis of imperial formations, see Ann Laura Stoler and Carole McGranahan, "Refiguring Imperial Terrains," in *Imperial Formations*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter Perdue (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 2007), 4.

[45] I thank David Bond for developing this point with me.

commissions that addressed the problem of European pauperism, discussed in chapter 5, state visions sometimes were contested by those persons whose personal histories they rewrote and remade. Persons clustered into an administrative category that joined "pauper" and "white" rejected the stigma of the designation "pauper," the state's assessment of their living conditions, and the government aid designed for them

But the career of categories is also lodged in archival habits and how those change: in the telling titles of commissions, in the requisite subject headings of administrative reports, in what sorts of stories get relegated to the miscellaneous and "misplaced." Attending to "words in their sites" and the conceptual weight they bear, the authority with which they are endowed, I ask how people think and why they seem obliged to think, or *suddenly find themselves having difficulty thinking*, in certain ways.[46] It is, then, not just *any* words that matter, but rather those "that revolve around different focal points of power," that are "set in play by a particular problem" as they gather around them debate and the provisional terms of convention.[47]

If Foucault's conception of archaeology joins "the lesson of things, and the lesson of grammar," as Deleuze claims, it is also an "audiovisual archive" that combines two forms of stratification—a "practical assemblage" of the visual and the verbal in any historical formation. On the terrain of race that "audiovisual" archive is key. It attends to "the lesson of things" to measure the "multisensory complexes" of *unseen* racial attributes, as well.[48] Throughout these archives racialized categories are shuffled, reassigned, and remade. In chapter 4, "Developing Historical Negatives," I show that the category of "*Inlandsche kinderen*" (who were neither natives [*inlandsch*] nor children [*kinderen*] as a literal translation would suggest) could mark those of mixed background, those of illegitimate birth, or, just as easily, those Europeans whose attachments to, and familiarity with, things Javanese were considered dangerously unsuitable for a colonial situation.

Debates on the *Inlandsche kinderen* were driven by implicit notions of racial decorum, and anxious concern over the nonvisual criteria of racial membership. If easily distinguished from both well-heeled Europeans and the native and Chinese population, there was less consensus about who they were. Sometimes the term *Inlandsche kinderen* was used for those Europeans born in the Indies (as the term *los hijos del pais* was used in the

[46] Ian Hacking, "Two Kinds of 'New Historicism' for Philosophers," *New Literary History* 21 (2) (Winter 1990): 343–64, 359.

[47] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 17.

[48] Ibid., 50.

Philippines for Spaniards born in the colony);[49] elsewhere it served to designate the impoverished mixed blood population, but there is no consistency. Sometimes those of "mixed race" (*gemengd ras*) were not included, the term implicitly being reserved not for all Europeans born in the colony but for destitute whites whose circumstances and cultural affiliations marked them as not quite European.

But the term disappears almost as abruptly as it came into use. Whatever politics of identification and guardianship might have animated its currency in the late nineteenth century when unpublished commissions on white impoverishment were written, by the time of the published commission in 1902 the term was in decline, and by the 1920s, with racialized distinctions increasingly codified, largely abandoned.[50]

Such discrepancies are neither misrecognitions nor cultural "mistakes" to be set aside. They provide a diacritics of the patent and latent distinctions that marked the colonial epistemology of race.[51] Actively under scrutiny throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, by the 1920s the term *Inlandsche kinderen* had morphed into other designations. Newly fashioned taxonomies that more clearly identified the covert attributes of racial membership, eclipsing the earlier term. It is precisely those moments of difficulty, the "breach of the self-evident," by which Foucault designates an "event." It is such "uncertainty" in the order of things that enlists us to locate such sites for ethnography and problematization.[52]

Ethnographic sensibilities guide my forays into the nature of Dutch colonial rule and its archival formations in what I take to be another basic way; namely, in attention to what the philosopher C. S. Peirce calls the "habit-taking" processes by which people align themselves with forces that are already there. Habit-taking works off colonial conventions and their common sense and is part of their making. These were the "grids of intelligibility" that made certain conventions acceptable, obvious, and

[49] See Paul Willem Johan van der Veur, "The Eurasians of Indonesia: A Problem and Challenge in Colonial History," in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 9 (2) (1968): 191–207. Van der Veur holds that in the mid-nineteenth century the term was synonymous with the "colored" (*kleurlingen*), though such a broad definition was rarely used. He also underscores that *Inlandsche kinderen* "was used to designate Eurasians *and* Dutchmen born in the Indies during this period"[ibid.; emphasis in original]. See also idem, "Introduction to a Socio-Political Study of the Eurasians of Indonesia," Ph.D. Diss., Cornell University, 1955.

[50] Compare, for example, A. van Delden's "Nota's over de Inlandsche kinderen," AR, KV, 28 March 1874, no. 47, and the published reports of the European Pauperism Commission in 1901–1902.

[51] On the "patent and latent" attributes of racial assessments, see my "Racial Histories and their Regimes of Truth," *Political Power and Social Theory* 11 (1997): 183–206.

[52] Paul Rabinow, *Anthropos Today: Reflections on Modern Equipment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 41–42.

familiar—or discordant and strange. My concern is with the *conditions of epistemic choice and chance*, of inculcation and innovation. I ask how people charged with large-scale management and local situations imagined they might identify what they knew they could not see, what common sense they used to assess racial belonging or political desires that were not available to ocular senses, how they distinguished politically motivated passions from private ones.

Anthropology has no privileged claim on the study of common sense nor the epistemologies that underwrite it. But as Michael Herzfeld argues, anthropology may have special purchase on how to go about its *comparative* study.[53] I am less sure we can really make that claim. For such expertise in common sense we would need to become far more proficient at studying the *changing parameters* of common sense, how common sense is rendered *uncommon*, and how people know it. Michael Polanyi refers to a "tacit dimension," Mary Douglas to "implicit meaning," Pierre Bourdieu to "habitus," Charles Taylor to an "implicit understanding,"—the distilled dispositions and trained capacities that work through bodies and on them.[54] Each, with different emphasis, identifies those habits of heart, mind, and comportment that derive from unstated understandings of how things work in the world, the categories to which people belong, and the kind of knowledge one needs to hold unarticulated but well-rehearsed convictions and credulities.

But what constitutes common sense is at once historical and political; colonial contexts teach us clearly that dispositions are trained and disciplined and not without deliberation. Like habitus, they are neither uniform nor uncontested. Dispositions emerge out of a habitus that is rejected, accepted, or uneasily accommodated. Dispositions are not given, they are interpretations, discerned and made.[55] Nor were they always below the threshold of reflective surveillance.[56] To my mind, this shaping of common sense, and the reigning in of uncommon sense, together make up the substance of colonial governance and its working epistemologies. By Bourdieu's account "habitus is that presence of the past in the

[53] Michael Herzfeld, *Anthropology: Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2001), 1.

[54] See Michael Polyani, *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1967); Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975); Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); and Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), 26.

[55] Clifford Geertz, "Common Sense as a Cultural System," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic, 1983), 73–93.

[56] William Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 28.

present."[57] What I call "epistemic habits" are steeped in history and historical practices, ways of knowing that are available and "easy to think," called-upon, temporarily settled dispositions that can be challenged and that change. Epistemic habits share some of the properties that Hacking assigns to "rock-bottom givens"—they produce "permanent momentary items of [implicit] fact."[58]

Rather than treating epistemology as a domain of the foundational, architectural, and fixed (I think here against Richard Rorty's claim that "time will tell but epistemology won't"), I start from a premise shared by students of historical and social epistemology: that epistemic considerations are neither transcendent nor abstract.[59] They are of the colonial world and squarely in it. Colonial governance entailed a constant assessing and recapping of what colonial agents could know and how they could know it. Central to all the chapters in this book, then, is an engagement with this disquiet: with colonialism's unevenly shared epistemic formations, the varying uneasiness and differential discomforts about what could be assumed to be communicable and circulated—or unrepeatable and not subject to the economy of official exchange. Epistemic formations "provide us with the possible, with the thinkable, with the constellations of concepts that are in question, what people assume to know about their worlds and how they disagree over them."[60]

Affective Strains

But even these terms of "debatability" may be up for grabs.[61] Chapter 3, "Habits of a Colonial Heart," explores the messy space between reason and sentiment, the sort of elusive knowledge on which political assessments were dependent and often had to be made. One is reminded of Weber's contention that bureaucracies excise those domains they cannot measure, that

[57] Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Being, Time and the Sense of Existence," in Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 210.

[58] Hacking (2002), 13.

[59] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 4. It is not really "epistemology," as I use it here, to which Rorty's attack is aimed but at a philosophy that imagines itself endowed as the foundational and privileged "tribunal of pure reason," unfettered by history.

[60] Margaret Somers, "Where is Sociology after the Historic Turn?," in *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 71. Somers is not among those included in Ian Hacking's review of a growing corpus of literature on historical epistemology. For her perceptive work that has paralleled and sometimes preceded the authors he cites, see also Somers, "The Privatization of Citizenship: How to Unthink a Knowledge Culture," in *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, ed. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 121–61.

[61] Arjun Appadurai, "The Past as a Scarce Resource," *Man* 16: 201–19.

"bureaucracy develops . . . the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation."[62] By Weber's criteria, the Dutch colonial bureaucracy was at best an imperfect success. "Emotional elements," personal grudges, long-harbored resentments, assessments of whether assaults should be taken as acts of personal affront or political subversion, might have escaped calculation but they were deeply part of what Douglas Holmes and George Marcus have called the "para-ethnography" of the lay world—queries and details of the everyday that had to be sensed and could not be measured by enumeration.[63]

Managed hearts were critical to colonialism's political grammar. Imperial projects called upon specific sentiments, and assessed racial membership, in part by locating appropriate carriers and recipients of those feelings. To whom one expressed attachment as opposed to pity, contempt, indifference, or disdain provided both cultural and legal "proof" of who one was, where one ranked in the colonial order of things, and thus where one racially belonged.

Colonial statecraft required the calibration of sympathies and attachments, managing different degrees of subjugation both among its agents and those colonized. Being a taxonomic state meant more than setting out categories; it meant producing and harnessing those sentiments that would make sense of those distinctions and make them work. Reason may be the "public touchstone of truth," but it is anchored in sensibilities, as Kant insisted, and in affective states.[64]

Sentiments are not opposed to political reason but are at once modalities and tracers of it. Here I treat sentiments as judgments, assessments, and interpretations of the social and political world.[65] They are also incisive markers of rank and the unstated rules of exemption. How and to whom sentiments of remorse or rage, compassion or contempt were conveyed and displayed measured degrees of social license that colonial rela-

[62] Weber (1946), 975.

[63] Douglas R. Holmes and George E. Marcus, "Fast Capitalism: Paraethnography and the Rise of the Symbolic Analyst," in *Frontiers of Capital: Ethnographic Perspectives on the New Economy*, ed. Melissa Fisher and Greg Downey (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), 34–57.

[64] Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*. ed. Hans Reiss and trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 146.

[65] Similar points have been eloquently made by others. See, for example, Robert Solomon, "On Emotions as Judgments," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (1988): 183–91, and, more recently, Martha Nussbaum, "Emotions as Judgments of Value," in Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 19–88.

tions so inequitably conferred.[66] To underscore this crucial point: expressions of sentiment depended on situated knowledge and thus relational know-how about rank—where and to whom one displayed one's range of feeling within that prescriptive world. Archival documents participate in this emotional economy in some obvious ways: in the measured tone of official texts; in the biting critique reserved for marginalia; in footnotes to official reports where moral assessments of cultural practice were often relegated and local knowledge was stored.[67] Not unlike Steven Shapin's tracking of the social history of truth in the seventeenth century, I ask who and what was granted epistemological virtue, with what cultural competencies, and by what social criteria.[68]

If colonial archives were nurseries of legal knowledge and official repositories of policy, they were also repositories of good taste and bad faith. Scribes often wrote out the final, clean copy but not always. "Semi-official" correspondence, and certainly personal letters, could be directly penned by their authors. Reports to the Governor-General in Batavia and to the Minister of Colonies in The Hague were composed by men of letters whose status was enhanced by reference to Greek heroes and French bons mots. Such proof of competence and good judgment was demonstrated in no small part by configuring events into familiar and recognizable plots. In empire's "lettered cities" of administrative work, virtue was defined by limited and selective familiarity with the Indies.[69] Those with too much knowledge of things Javanese were penalized, as were those with not enough.[70]

But administrative anxiety was also rightly riveted on those affective states of European colonials that could not be easily gauged, on those not within the state's reach to manage or assess. The public demonstration by European and creole whites in Batavia in May 1848, when family attachments threatened to crash against the demands for state loyalty, underscored

[66] On contempt, condescension, and insolence as markers of social rank, see Don Herzog, "The Politics of Emotions," in *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 202–43. On contempt as "what the honorable have the right to show for the less honorable," see William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 206–34, 225.

[67] On footnotes as the lines that lead into moral communities and their claims to truth, see Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[68] Steven Shapin, *The Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[69] On the "lettered cities" of early colonial Latin America, see Angel Rama's exquisite rendition of the power of written discourse among the "*letrados*" in the making of Spanish rule in Rama, *The Lettered City* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996.)

[70] See Fanny Colonna, "Educating Conformity in French Colonial Algeria," in *Tensions of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 346–70.

that those in charge of the city and the colony knew how much habits of the heart could not be contained as the "private"; they could as easily spiral into a political field not in the state's control. At issue was the contagious, transient quality of sentiment and its portability. Whether certain sentiments were politically dangerous because they were local or because they were smuggled in on the last mail boat via Paris newspapers and by word of mouth, they really did not know.

If epistemology was once the term given to *formal* theories of knowledge and their systematic study, students of social and historical epistemology have since taken it in a very different, worldly direction. Armed with a vocabulary of (epistemic) community, (epistemic) culture, (epistemic) crisis, and (epistemic) practice, more emphasis is now placed on the procedures and activities on which certain ways of knowing rely, not unlike what De Certeau called historiographic "operations."[71] While such a lexicon is more commonly reserved for the study of scientific communities of experiment and expertise, such an approach offers productive ways of thinking about governing practices that, too, depended on how much conviction, experience, and expertise were shared, and the extent to which architects and agents of rule could count on that common ground.

The epistemic practices of science and colonial governance have something else important in common: a preoccupation with "the taming of chance."[72] Much as classical probability theory was to measure the incertitudes of a modernizing world, colonial civil servants were charged to do the same.[73] Both ventures approach the conventions and categories of analysis as neither innocuous nor benign. As interpretive communities, both depend on rules of reliability and trust, on an assumed common sense about what was likely, that allow prediction and direct the political projects that those plausibilities serve.

Both are also communities of expectation. If the sciences participate in "a permanent process of . . . reshuffling . . . the boundary between what is

[71] See Michel de Certeau, "The Historiographic Operation," in de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 56–85. On epistemic cultures, see, among others, K. Knorr-Cetina, "Epistemics in Society: On the Nesting of Knowledge Structures into Social Structures," in *Rural Reconstruction in a Market Economy*, ed. W. Hijman, H. Hetsen, and J. Frouws, Mansholt Studies 5 (Wageningen: Mansholt, 1996), 55–73, and Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.) On epistemic crisis, see Alisdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science," *Monist* 60 (4) (October 1977): 453–72.

[72] Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[73] See Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); and Lorraine Daston, *Classical Probability in the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

thought to be known and what is beyond imagination," colonial governance did much the same.[74] Sound conjecture and expectation can make governing strategies work, or as anticolonial movements have amply demonstrated, make them violently fail. And like scientific communities, new objects emerge between what one does "not quite yet know" and that for which there is not yet a name. Such epistemic objects are produced in the haze of what historian of science Hans-Jorg Rheinberger calls "a mixture of hard and soft," or, as Michel Serres puts it, "object, still, sign, already; sign still, object already."[75] The making of colonial categories shares this ambiguous epistemic space. New social objects were the archives' product as much as subjects of them.

The notion that "granting epistemic warrant is a covert way of distributing power" underwrites colonial studies in some of the field's most productive projects, which trace both veiled epistemic authority as well as blatantly assertive forms of control.[76] But just how that warrant was granted, how firmly entrenched, and how much debate accompanied that process is less often pursued. Some of the problem may be with an overcommitment to Foucault's vocabulary. An "episteme" has come to index a scale, longevity, and hardening of thought-formations that can set us astray. A "regime of truth" suggests a durability of distinctions, a finite field of truth-claims that colonial knowledge-production would never attain.[77] As I will argue in chapter 3, understanding "what happened" in May 1848 calls on different vectors of intelligibility, alternate causalities and attributions of affect that crossed and met. I use the terms "grids of intelligibility" and "regimes of truth" cautiously, with the caveat that both mark epistemic habits and ways of knowing cut through with competing investments and altering claims. As these archives of the Indies' colonial agents and architects evince, it was not epistemic clarity but epistemic uncertainty that generated the densest debates and the longest paper trails that wound their way through a range of seemingly unrelated subjects. Like imperial formations themselves, colonial truth-claims were provisional and subject to change.

[74] Hans-Jorg Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things: Synthesizing Proteins in the Test Tube* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 11.

[75] Michel Serres, quoted in ibid., 28–29.

[76] Quoted in Steven Fuller, *Social Epistemology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 10. See Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), which cogently makes the case for "documenting how [European] 'reason,' which was not always self-evident to everyone, has been made to look obvious far beyond the ground where it originated," 43. As I argue here, lack of the "self-evident" permeated the tissue of imperial governance, producing confused policies born of epistemic anxiety among European colonials themselves.

[77] Among the many places Foucault invokes "regimes of truth," see "Truth and Power," in Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 132.

Tracing the Archival Turn

If "the transformation of archival activity is the point of departure and the condition of a new history," as De Certeau has argued, we are clearly in a new moment.[78] The warning of E. E. Evans-Pritchard in 1951 that anthropologists tended to be "uncritical in their use of documentary sources" had little resonance then.[79] Neither did F. W. Maitland's earlier dictum that anthropology had "the choice between being history or being nothing."[80] Both pronouncements read as fairly quaint today.[81] Among historians, literary critics and anthropologists, archives have been elevated to new analytic status with distinct billing, worthy of scrutiny on their own. One might be tempted to see this as a Derridian effect of the last decade that followed on the publication of *Archive Fever*.[82] But the archival turn has a wider arc and a longer durée. *Archive Fever* compellingly captured that impulse by giving it theoretical stature, but Jacques Derrida's intervention came only after the "archival turn" was already being made.

This move from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject gained currency across the richly undisciplined space of critical history and in a range of fields energized by that reformulation.[83] The sheer number of volumes devoted to "the archive" is staggering: in film and literary studies, in analyses of truth commissions or the human genome project,

[78] De Certeau (1988), 75.

[79] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Anthropology and History," in Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology and Other Essays* (Glencoe, N.Y.: Free Press, 1962).

[80] F. W. Maitland, *Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 249. It was later famously quoted by E. E. Evans-Pritchard in "Social Anthropology: Past and Present, The Marett Lecture, 1950," in Evans-Pritchard (1962), 152.

[81] Some might argue that anthropology's engagement with history has been less a "turn" than a return to its founding principles, an enquiry into cumulative processes of cultural production but without the typological aspirations and evolutionary assumptions once embraced. Others counter that the feverish turn to history has represented a significant departure, a new kind of rupture with anthropology's complicity in colonial politics. Both might agree that the move signals a new way of thinking about the politics of knowledge, what a "colonial legacy" means in practice—the categories, conceptual frame, and practices of colonial authorities that have permeated anthropology's central concerns.

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

[83] Sonia Combe, *Archives Interdites: Les peur françaises face à l'Histoire contemporaine* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994). Dominick LaCapra, too, notes that the "problem of reading in the archives has increasingly become a concern of those doing archival research" in LaCapra, "History, Language, and Reading: Waiting for Crillon," *AHR* 100 (3) (June 1995): 807. See also a special issue on "The Archive," *History of the Human Sciences* 11 (4) (November 1998), and *Penser l'Archive: Histoire d'Archives-Archives d'Histoire*, ed. Mauro Cerutti, Jean-Francois Fayet, and Michel Porret (Lausanne: Antipodes, 2006.)

from rereadings of histories of colonialism to those of gay rights.[84] "Reading" here is an agentive act, one squarely focused on what we know and how we know it. Focus on the politics of knowledge is a methodological commitment to how history's exclusions are secured and made.

One could argue that "the archive" for historians and "the Archive" for cultural theorists have been wholly different analytic objects: for the former, a body of documents and the institutions that house them, for the latter, a metaphoric invocation for any corpus of selective collections and the longings that the acquisitive quests for the primary, originary, and untouched entail.[85] Those differences might suggest sharply defined domains, but the blurring that is so common today is hardly a recent intervention.[86] For, indeed, something resembling the broader social life of an archive, what might be called "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, drew on "hostile" documents to reveal "the gap between the image underlying the interrogations of judges and the actual testimony of the accused."[87] Davis questioned "how people told stories, what they thought a good story was, how they accounted for motive." In her notion of "fiction in the archives," she worked through pardon tales to reveal both the "constraints of the law" and its popular manipulations, both the terms of argumentation and the broader set of literary forms invoked to support or undermine those claims.[88] Still, these were not ethnographies *of* the archive, but in it.

Archivists have been thinking about the politics and history of archives in ways that increasingly speak to a broader community of

[84] Among many others, see Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid, and Razia Saleh, eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), and references throughout this chapter.

[85] For this metaphoric move, see the two special issues of *History of the Human Sciences* devoted to The Archive (11 [4] [November 1998] and 12 [2] [May 1999]). Derrida's valorization of "the archive" as imaginary and metaphor is predominant in both. On the archive as metaphor, see also Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 3–64.

[86] See, for example, Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. 81–114. On contemporary forms of documentation, see Annelise Riles, ed., *Documents: Artifacts of Modern Knowledge* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

[87] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (New York: Penguin, 1982), xvii, xviii.

[88] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 4.

scholars.[89] What marks the past decade are the new conversations between archivists and historians about documentary evidence, record keeping, what features of archival form and content can be retrieved, and how decisions should be made about historical significance and preservation.[90] As storage technology revamps, both question what information matters, what tacit narratives inform contemporary archival practices, and what should be retained as archives' physical forms change.[91] All are asking what new accessibilities and connections are gained—and lost—when parchment and paper gave way to digital recordings.

Colonialism's Archival Grains

> 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.
>
> —Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"

If one were to characterize what has informed a critical approach to the colonial archives, it would be a commitment to the notion of reading

[89] On the history of archives and how archivists have thought about them, see Ernst Posner, "Some Aspects of Archival Development since the French Revolution" [1940], in *A Modern Archives Reader*, ed. Maygene Daniels and Timothy Walch (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Record Service, 1984), 3–21. See also *Les Archives*, in the series *Que Sais-Je?* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959). See also Eric Ketelaar, *The Archival Image: Critical Essays* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997).

[90] See Marlene Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines," *Libraries and the Academy* 4 (l) (2004): 9–25; 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 (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* (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 38–69; James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Uniqueness," *American Archivist* 57 (4) (1994): 632–59. For some sense of the changes in how archivists themselves have framed their work over the last twenty years, see the *American Archivist*, and, most recently, *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, ed. Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006) and "Archives, Records, and Power," a special issue (2 [1–2] [2002]) of *Archival Science*, guest-edited by Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz.

[91] Terry Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The revolution in information management and archives in the post-custodial and post-modernist era," in *Archives and Manuscripts* 22 (2) (1994): 300–329. See also Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives," *Archival Science* 2001 (1): 131–41.

colonial archives "against their grain" of imperial history, empire builders, and the priorities and perceptions of those who wrote them. Schooled to think "from the bottom up," students of colonialism located "structure" with colonizers and the colonial state, and "human agency" with subalterns, in small gestures of refusal and silence among the colonized.

In reading "upper-class sources upside down," we sought to read against the languages of rule and statist perceptions. "Un-State-d" histories were to demonstrate more than the warped reality of official knowledge, to elucidate their textual properties and the violences condoned by such political distortions. In Ranajit Guha's influential formulations, colonial documents were rhetorical sleights-of-hand that erased the facts of subjugation, reclassified petty crime as political subversion, or located violence and unreason as inherent to the colonized.[92] The analytic tactics pursued have been those of inversion and recuperation, recasting colonial subjects as agents who made and make choices and critiques of their own.

Insistence on the link between what counts as knowledge and who is in power to record their versions of it has since become a founding principle of colonial ethnography. Such analyses invite other, more challenging pursuits. In treating archival documents not as the historical ballast to ethnography, but as a charged site of it, I see the call for an emergent methodological shift: to move away from treating the archives as an *extractive* exercise to an ethnographic one. That call has been taken up differently: sometimes hotly pursued, other times merely a nod in that analytic direction. For some it represents a turn back to the powerful "poetics of detail."[93] To others the archival turn provides a way to cut through the distorted optics of colonial historiography and the distinctions that cordoned off fiction from authorized truths.[94]

[92] See Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), where some of Guha's early essays published between 1988–1992 are collected.

[93] See Greg Dening, *The Death of William Gooch: A History's Anthropology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995).

[94] Trouillot, 6–10. See also David William Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Foucault's insistence that the archive forms a system of enunciabilities rather than all the texts that a culture preserves or those institutions that store them guides Thomas Richards's treatment of the British imperial archive as "the fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern." See Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993), 11. 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." See also Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), 79–131. On the archives as an "instituting imaginary," see also Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and Its

Michel-Rolph Trouillot noted with consummate clarity that "historical narratives are premised on previous understandings, which are themselves premised on the distribution of archival power."[95] More importantly, he offered neophytes to archival work a way to tackle what De Certeau meant by "historiographic operations" by distinguishing the archival power lodged in moments of creation from practices of assembly, retrieval, and disciplinary legitimation.[96] If Trouillot urged students to distinguish among these different operations, Nicholas Dirks's call for "a biography of the archive" insisted on examining who was performing that labor by showing to what extent early colonial officials cum historians in British India were dependent on native informants who did the work of collection and cultural translation for them.[97] But "mining" for treasures rather than immersement is still a prevalent approach to archives and an all too expedient research mode.

Feminist historians have long sought out creative ways of demonstrating how, what Bonnie Smith aptly dubbed, "male prowess" shaped archival production, the initiation rites of historiography, and the absence of agentive histories of women excised from documents and excluded from subsequent texts.[98] On colonial terrain the challenge to locate women as subjects continues to critically stretch the scope of the archive in ways that redefine what kinds of reading and writing are historically germane.[99]

Limits," in Hamilton et al., 19–26. Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria's subtle analysis of the grounding of Latin American literary narrative in the early Spanish colonial state's styles of documentation also bears that stamp. See Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria, *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Both Richards and Gonzalez Echevarria take the archive as a template that decodes something else, and both push us to think differently about "archival fictions," though they reserve their analyses for literature rather than colonial archives themselves.

[95] Trouillot, 55.

[96] Ibid., 54.

[97] Nicholas Dirks, "Colonial Histories and Native Informants: Biography of an Archive," in van der Veer and Breckenridge, 279–313. See also Christopher Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), whose attention to the British intelligence service's work through native channels similarly highlights the local purveyors of knowledge to which Europeans were so beholden.

[98] Bonnie G. Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 100 (4–5) (1995): 1150–76.

[99] Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home and History in Late Colonial India* (New York: Oxford, 2003); and Betty Joseph, *Reading the East India Company, 1720–1840: Colonial Currencies of Gender* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). See also Durba Ghosh, "Decoding the nameless: gender, subjectivity and historical methodologies in reading the archives of colonial India," in *A New Imperial History*, ed. Kathleen Wilson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 297–316; Anjai Arondekar, "Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14 (1–2) (January–April 2005): 10–27; and Stoler (2006b).

My own first sense of what I call here "the pulse of the archive" came decades ago when I found myself confronted with reports on the horrific mutilation and murder of a European planter's wife and children in 1876 on Sumatra's East Coast. Multiple reports were collected on the murder, preceding attacks, and speculation on both the most immediate affronts and distant uprisings to which the murder might be linked. Even detailed accounts sometimes were unfettered by specific knowledge of the assault. In an earlier version of chapter 6, I explored how rumor ricocheted between planters and the workers they feared and the insurgents they ignored, undoing facile distinctions between reliable and conjured information, between fact and fantasy, between mad paranoia and political reality.[100] The contrast between neat copy and hurried hand, tidy statements and quick-paced query and response, enraged and tempered narrative, fine-grained knowledge and unabashed ignorance—all struck me as startling testimonies to the workings of empire and to what we still did not know about it.[101] Those challenges remain at the heart of this book and with me today.

Most students of the colonial, who now work with archives in a reflective mode, treat "the archive" as something in between a set of documents, their institutions, and a repository of memory—both a place and a cultural space that encompass official documents but are not confined to them. Some of the most creative work branches out to the range of scripted and performed practices that bear the psychic and material stamp of colonial relations.

Here I do something else: several chapters stay largely within the state's purview by attending to documents viewed by state officials but not always produced by them. As I use the term, the Dutch colonial "archives" were both a corpus of statements and a depot of documents, both sites of the imaginary and institutions that fashioned histories as they concealed, revealed, and contradicted the investments of the state.[102] Power and control, as students of archiving are quick to point out, are fundamental to the

[100] Ann Laura Stoler, "In Cold Blood: Hierarchies of Credibility and the Politics of Colonial Narratives," *Representations* 37 (Winter 1992): 151–89. For an innovative treatment of the work of colonial rumors as the site of the fantastically real, see Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[101] Those challenges prompted the 1996 Lewis Henry Morgan lectures I gave on "Ethnography in the Archives" and years of subsequent seminars bearing that title.

[102] This link between state power and what counts as history was long ago made by Hegel in *The Philosophy of History*, as Hayden White 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." White, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press,1987), 12.

etymology of the word "archive" and should need no iteration.[103] Moralizing stories mapped the scope of state vision, the restricted limits of government responsibility, and what were defined as its beneficent missions.

Nor were they to be read in any which way. Issues were rendered important by where they appeared, how they were cross-referenced, where they were catalogued, and thus how they were framed. Official exchanges between Governors-General and their subordinates, between Governors-General and Ministers of Colonies, and between the latter and the King served as reference guides to administrative thinking; they were abbreviated "cheat sheets" of what counted as precedent and what properly fell under "concerns of state." Some reports were meticulously scrutinized, others were carelessly read and set aside. Archival convention, however, dictated that all were abundantly cross-referenced in ways that produced paths of precedent and mapped relevance. Citation also served, not unlike footnotes, to affirm the import of one's observations, choice of historical context, and implicitly the legitimacy of one's selected narrative.[104]

Some would argue that the grand narratives of colonialism have been amply and excessively told. On this argument, students of colonialisms often turn quickly and confidently to read "against the grain" of colonial conventions. One fundamental premise of this book is a commitment to a less assured and perhaps more humble stance—to explore the grain with care and read along it first. Assuming we know those scripts rests too comfortably on predictable stories with familiar plots. Such a stance leaves intact the assumption that colonial statecraft was always intent on accumulating more knowledge rather than on a selective winnowing and reduction of it. The assumption may accept too quickly the equation of knowledge to power and that colonial states sought more of both.[105] Not least, it leaves unaddressed how often colonial categories reappear in the analytic vocabulary of historians rather than as transient, provisional objects of historical inquiry that themselves need to be analyzed, if not explained.[106]

Colonial archives were sites of command—but of countermand as well. "Factual storytellings"—a phrase Hayden White uses to define what

[103] From the Latin *archivuum*, "residence of the magistrate," and from the Greek *arkhe*, "to command." See Gonzalez Echevarria, 31–34, for a detailed etymology of the term, and see Derrida (1995), 1–3, for his characteristically exquisite treatment of the conceptual entailments of "the archive" as that which commands, shelters, and conceals itself as it gathers together signs.

[104] On footnotes as the pathways into moral communities and their claims to truth, see Grafton.

[105] For a careful treatment of this culling project, see Amin.

[106] For a discussion of this issue, see my "Caveats on Comfort Zones and Comparative Frames," in Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 205–17.

counts as history—did not always prevail.[107] Perturbations in the form of discrepant accounts, dissenting voices, and extraneous detail could disable action, unhinge the "facts," and forestall response. Archival power was no more monolithic than the governing practices that it enabled and on which it was based. Subjugated knowledge erupts in contested ontologies of peoples and things. Countervailing interpretations of what compromised danger and threat could send ripples through imperious states and the polished surface of their writerly modes.

As such, I am drawn to think about archival events with and against Foucault's compelling invitation to treat them as "reversals of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it."[108] Such an approach undoes the certainty that archives are stable "things" with ready-made and neatly drawn boundaries. But the search for dramatic "reversal," "usurpation," and successful "appropriation" can hide "events" that are more muted in their consequences, less bellicose in their seizures, less spectacular in how and what they reframe. Here I treat archival events more as moments that disrupt (if only provisionally) a field of force, that challenge (if only slightly) what can be said and done, that question (if only quietly) "epistemic warrant," that realign the certainties of the probable more than they mark wholesale reversals of direction.

The Watermarks of Empire

Most of these chapters treat specific government archives of the nineteenth-century Netherlands Indies and the problems their authors and collators sought to avoid or address. The final chapters are written in a different register, one which responds to lives that slip in and out of the official colonial archives and their instrumental narratives. (Indeed, some readers may want to turn directly to these last two chapters that trace the biographies of empire, and may find it more compelling to read them first.)

In chapter 7, "Imperial Dispositions of Disregard," I question how much we who study the work of empire know about the dispositions of those it empowered. It wrestles with those habits of heart and comportment recruited to the service of colonial governance but never wholly subsumed by it. More directly, it identifies a "politics of disregard;" the psychological and political machinations it takes to look away for those who live off and in empire, as Valck did, and as many of us might find

[107] See White, esp. 26–57.

[108] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Render*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 76–100, 88.

ourselves inadvertently doing now. Here I take the story of Frans Carl Valck as told through government archives (chapter 6) and as it appears from a private archive (chapter 7) of a very different sort—the family papers housed in a genealogical bureau established decades after Valck's death by one of his scholarly descendants.

The story of his failed career appears here as a palimpsest, erupting at the tender and fraught center of his relationship with his only child, a daughter from whom he remained estranged for most of their lives. Sometimes the course of his Indies career as a colonial civil servant is centrally framed; sometimes it is irrelevant and only partially visible; elsewhere it is utterly absent, delicately unacknowledged, discreetly erased. Viewed from these differences of time, tone, and place, I imagine what it might take to write a history of empire "in a minor key," through a register that conveys the confused sensibilities that cut across Valck's official record, inflecting the collision and collusion between his personal and public lives. It is thus chapter 7 that opens most directly to one way of thinking a colonial history of the present.

When historical ethnography was just coming into its own, John and Jean Comaroff urged us to "create new colonial archives of our own."[109] Some students of empire have sought new kinds of sources. Others have looked to different ways of approaching familiar archives with questions not yet asked and readings not yet done. In this book, it is unexplored fault lines, ragged edges, and unremarked disruptions to the seamless and smooth surface of colonialism's archival genres over which I linger and then attempt to track. My attention is on the field of entangled documents that have been "scratched over" and crossed-out many times. But it is as much on repetitions, what Edward Said reminds us is always about "filiations" pursued or abandoned. "Repetition cannot long escape the ironies it bears within it," or the histories upon which it calls.[110] In these colonial archives, these repetitions join the disparate, enlist the counterintuitive, and provide the vectors of recuperations and ruptures by making familiar what colonial agents sought to know.

De Certeau defined the science of history as a redistribution in space, the act of changing something into something else. Archival labor, he warned, must do more than "simply adopt former classifications"; it must break away from the constraints of "series H in the National Archives," to be replaced with new "codes of recognition" and "systems of expectation."[111] But such a strategy depends on what we think we already know.

[109] Jean and John Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992).

[110] Edward Said, "On Repetition," in Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 111–25, 125.

[111] See De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 74–75.

For students of empire, colonial codes of recognition and systems of expectation remain at the elusive center of imperial rule, its implicit plots and its deflecting and resilient narratives.

When Robert Darnton some twenty years ago identified "history in the ethnographic grain" as what cultural history should be about, he had in mind how people make sense of the world and "thought about how they thought."[112] Epistemic anxieties are precisely about that reflection. Here the ethno-graphic is about the graphic, detailed production of social kinds, the archival power that allowed its political deployment, and the grafting of affective states to those inventions. Reading along the archival grain draws our sensibilities to the archive's granular rather than seamless texture, to the rough surface that mottles its hue and shapes its form. Working along the grain is not to follow a frictionless course but to enter a field of force and will to power, to attend to both the sound and sense therein and their rival and reciprocal energies. It calls on us to understand how unintelligibilities are sustained and why empires remain so uneasily invested in them.

[112] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage, 1984), 3.

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