

SECTION I

The Imperial Optic

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Easel painting, mechanically reproduced and printed illustrations, maps of territory underwritten by the evolving protocols of “scientific” cartography, the camera and still photography, and the moving picture. These are among the many new image-making technologies whose arrival and careers in the colony are charted by the essays reproduced in this section, as they explore whether such technologies and their associated practices inaugurated and consolidated a fundamental reorganization of vision in areas outside Europe, as they did arguably in the metropole. Collectively and individually, these essays move us beyond reductionist and instrumentalist understandings of images as tools of control and assertions of dominance to suggest a more complex terrain of desire, ambivalence, anxiety, self-doubt, and pleasure in which master and native found themselves mutually entangled.

These selections address many other aspects of the mutually constitutive relationship between empire and image-work. First, they help us understand the nature of the colonial visual economy that emerged around such technologies and within which they functioned, even as they transformed its terms and conditions. We borrow the concept of visual economy from anthropologist Deborah Poole’s valuable ethnography of postcolonial Andean photography. Though not dispensing with the concept of “visual culture,” which she concedes serves well in conveying a sense of “the shared meanings and symbolic codes that can create communities of people,” Poole argues that the analytic of visual economy more productively enables us to show that “the field of vision is organized in some systematic way. It also clearly suggests that this organization has as much to do with social relationships,

inequality, and power as with shared meanings and community.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, as many of the essays in this section reveal, meanings accrue as well as mutate when art objects and images (were) moved across imperial boundaries, came to inhabit varied spaces, and often were put to unintended uses. As such, we are more interested in tracking routes of travel than searching for roots of origin, as we follow the itineraries and peregrinations of specific works, practices, and technologies. The concept of visual economy also enables us to place at the forefront of our discussion issues of production, circulation, and consumption, which imbue the image with a more dynamic history and with sheer material presence in the world, as well as compelling us to follow such movements on a global scale.

Not least, the concept of visual economy allows us to highlight another key heuristic concept that has received much recent attention, variously referred to as *inter-ocularity*, *inter-visibility*, and *inter-iconicity*. As Jonathan Crary documents in his *Techniques of the Observer*, a distinguishing feature of visual modernity or modern visibility as it came to be consolidated in the nineteenth century is “a proliferating range of optical and sensory experiences,” enabled by the numerous technological innovations of the industrial age. A modern viewer of any image—be it an oil painting, a black-and-white photograph, or in today’s digital age, a computer-generated graphic—looks on it “not in some impossible kind of aesthetic isolation . . . but as one of many consumable and fleeting elements within an expanding chaos of images, commodities, and stimulation.” As a result, no visual form—or image-world—has a singular autonomous identity to which a potential viewer brings to bear a singular eye or perceptual memory. Instead, “the meanings and effects of any single image are always adjacent to this overloaded and plural sensory environment and to the observer who inhabit[s] it.”<sup>2</sup> In making this argument, Crary built on Walter Benjamin’s discussion in his *Arcades* project of the new dream-spaces of industrial age Paris through which the viewer-as-*flâneur* saunters, peppered with department stores, botanical gardens, museums, railway stations, and panoramas, not to mention the new forms of lighting and technologies of illumination following the introduction of electricity.<sup>3</sup>

Writing around the same time as Crary and on the basis of an argument derived from observing the work of vision in the new public culture constituted by and around museums, television, cinema, sports, and tourism in postcolonial South Asia, the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai and the historian Carol Breckenridge observed in 1992 that:

Each of these sites and modes offers new settings for the development of a contemporary public gaze in Indian life. The gaze of Indian viewers in museums is certainly caught up in what we would call this inter-ocular field (the allusion here, of course, is to inter-textuality, as the concept is used by the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin). This inter-ocular field is structured so that each site or setting for the disciplining of the public gaze is to some degree affected by the viewer's experiences of the other sites. This interweaving of ocular experiences, which also subsumes the substantive transfer of meanings, scripts, and symbols from one site to another in surprising ways, is the critical feature of the cultural field within which museum viewing in contemporary India needs to be located.<sup>4</sup>

Historicizing this insight about inter-ocularly, Christopher Pinney subsequently pointed to the distinctive aesthetic that emerged in late colonial India in the first few years of the twentieth century when “many different media—photography, theatre, chromolithography, and film—were all working together, and cross-referencing each other.”<sup>5</sup> Concurrently, writing about diasporic visual culture, Nicholas Mirzoeff proposed the related concept of inter-visibility to refer to “interacting and inter-dependent modes of visibility.”<sup>6</sup> In imperial contexts, where rival aesthetic regimes as well as new technologies for producing images and for seeing jostle for prominence at a time when European power and privilege operated to dismiss or appropriate older or alternate image practices, the concept of inter-ocularly/visibility is particularly useful in tracking how incoming “colonial” practices ally with or disrupt more established ones, trigger prior associations, catalyze submerged memories, render the unfamiliar recognizable, and frequently reconfigure the recognizable.

The concept of inter-ocularly also allows us to place the humblest postcard or the ubiquitous product advertisement within the same analytic field as the grand history painting, because it enables us to show how “earlier images . . . are forever waiting to erupt in the present as they continually migrate, moving in and out of new times and changing political contexts.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the very persistence of older (and in some cases, more familiar) modes of viewing alongside new ones being ushered in with new image-making technologies makes colonial and postcolonial visual regimes such fecund sites for the emergence of hybrid image-formations and protocols of seeing. Despite the many statements in the official archives of the colonial state sys-

tems about the native's utter fascination-to-the-point-of-adulation with the new technologies of painting, printing, mapping, photographing, or filming that arrived in the colonies, there is considerable evidence that none of these forms were taken on board simply through straightforward copying and passive reproduction of the European norm.<sup>8</sup> In any case, after Homi Bhabha and Michael Taussig, we have learned to think of mimicry in the colonies as being anything but acquiescent and harmless, free of menace or mockery.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, such new technologies did bring in novel practices—such as perspective and realist illusion, or canvas-and-easel painting with oils—that facilitated what Serge Gruzinski has characterized as “conquest via the image.”<sup>10</sup> These pictorial or visual conquests inaugurated novel protocols of seeing illuminated by the chapters in this section—such as the illusionist, the picturesque, the cartographic, the panoramic, and the exhibitionary—even as they examine the modes of resisting these dominant modalities through a resort to the corpothetic,<sup>11</sup> the idolatrous, and the antirealist.

### *Empires of the Palette*

It is clear from numerous studies that the progressive European conquest of Earth provided crucial employment for an army of painters, portraitists, and other visual artists from the metropole, who descended on the colony to peddle their new and prestigious representational practices, especially oil portraiture. We begin this section with essays that urge us to consider the part played by practices associated with paint and pigment—in their sheer materiality—in the new visual order that emerged around empire-building, although there was no straightforward reproduction of these practices in the periphery and, indeed, some serious (and some comic) cases of undoing. The colonies, as we learn from the essays in part 1 of this section, provided not only visual inspiration and motifs but all too often the very stuff—such as Indian yellow—that was used in metropolitan high art.<sup>12</sup>

In historian Serge Gruzinski's discussion, abstracted from his important monograph *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner, 1492–2019*, in which he argues provocatively that “the war over images is as important as ones over oil,”<sup>13</sup> the Spanish territorial conquest of Mexico in the sixteenth century proceeded apace with “the conquering grasp of the Western image,” as this grasp took the form of northern European painted

canvases, and especially illustrated books and Christian engravings (which transformed the singular into the multiple) that invaded the Indian *imaginaire*.<sup>14</sup> Territorial and spiritual conquest went hand in hand with a painterly assault that confronted the Indian with “walls of images.” Although the new visual order might have been backed by the Renaissance “discovery” of perspective and command of realist illusion, these wondrous European norms were frequently undone in the New World so that even a century later they were “poorly mastered,” sacred meanings remained elusive, and the Christian image risked becoming native idol. All the same, the invaders’ images “only foreshadowed other invasions that would perturb the visual habits of these peoples over and again.”

If the ships of Hernán Cortés’s successors came over loaded with paintings, engravings, and images, the vessels returning home also were similarly burdened. Pictures often received the most attention when the crates were unpacked in historian Daniela Bleichmar’s account of the Spanish physician José Celestino Mutis (1732–1809) and his Royal Botanical Expedition to the New Kingdom of Granada (1783–1810). In the evolving science of natural history that she documents for the eighteenth-century Spanish empire in the New World, Bleichmar argues that seeing and painting, art and science were intimately connected to knowing, possessing, and owning. Painted images at the nexus of this connection were “instruments of persuasion” that lubricated the machinery of metropolitan science. “Images preserved and transported the distant.” They came to stand (in) for the actual American plants, flowers, and leaves that European scientists could not hold in their own hands, thus promoting “long-distance knowing by seeing.” Bleichmar’s essay (like several others in this volume) also reminds us that the so-called imperial optic is not solely the product of the European eye and hand, but that native artists, craftsmen, and assistants also actively shaped its contours and terms.<sup>15</sup> Mutis’s workshop, mostly constituted by native-born artists, produced a distinct “American” style for botanical illustrations that exceeded in critical regards the European models on which they were based, as he himself was quick to declare proudly.

If Bleichmar’s account leads us into the hybrid representational practices put in place in the eighteenth-century New Granada ateliers where Mutis trained “American” artists in the novel science of botanical illustration, the historian of modern Britain Jordana Bailkin asks us to consider the sheer materiality of the matter out of which such visions are conjured up in her

intriguing account of one particular pigment, Indian yellow, whose addition to the European color palette she traces to the new metropolitan taste for painting brown flesh. As she follows the itinerary of this pigment from its manufacture out of the urine of cows raised on mango leaves in colonial India to the palette of British artists over the course of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Bailkin also reflects on the visual culture of race, wondering “was it possible for race to exist in *paint* in a different way than it did in colonial law or science?”<sup>16</sup> As European empires expanded overseas from the eighteenth century on, the artist’s palette expanded as well, as exotic colors such as gamboge, ultramarine, celadon green, and indigo, flowed into the metropole.<sup>17</sup> “The centrality of art in colonial encounters,” she argues, “is evident not only on finished canvases, but in the negotiations that preceded them in order to acquire *the stuff of art* itself. Some of the most basic elements of artistic production were themselves products of colonial engagement.” In so arguing, Bailkin, as others in this volume do, moves beyond a focus on representation and production of meaning to study the work of an image or a pictorial practice in its gross materiality and ontological autonomy, some even asking, inspired by W. J. T. Mitchell, what the image or picture wants.<sup>18</sup>

The role of easel and topographic painting in pictorially delivering the colonies to the metropole on a spectacular scale is the subject of Australia-based French art historian Roger Benjamin’s nuanced analysis of colonial “panoramania,” which we have extracted from his monograph *Orientalist Aesthetics: Art, Colonialism, and French North Africa, 1880–1930*. Benjamin’s neologism *panoramania* seeks to capture the huge enthusiasm for the vast circular paintings and murals that adorned the inside walls of colonial pavilions in the numerous universal expositions of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that are symptomatic of modernity’s exhibitionary complex.<sup>19</sup> These gigantic works took easel painting outside the limited sphere of the urban salon to vast expositions in which millions of French viewers were provided with “all-embracing views” of their far-away possessions, albeit only temporarily. With such material demonstration on walls and built surfaces, the empire of the palette reached a spectacular new scale, with spectators transported through the power of panoramic illusionism and simulacra to colonial situations “with an unrivaled sensory intensity” that necessarily needed new modalities of seeing. Benjamin argues that in the decades when panoramas and dioramas thrived as a visual form before

the industrialization of photography and the arrival of cinema, painting's capacity to reproduce the world mimetically was harnessed in such mass spectacles that enabled the generation of popular enthusiasm in the metropole for the project of overseas empire.

### *The Mass-Printed Imperium*

Such arguments connecting paint to empire-building notwithstanding, the average native in lands far away from the metropole was more likely to encounter the European image and visions of self and the world through printed proxies and surrogates rather than the painted canvas.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the historical conjuncture between what Elizabeth Eisenstein has identified as the printing revolution in early modern Europe and the inauguration of that continent's overseas adventures is hard to overlook, although her pioneering work did not explore this connection.<sup>21</sup> The obverse, even dark, side of Benedict Anderson's argument regarding print capitalism is print colonialism, "whereby the diverse colonial territories become abridged and contiguous at the turn of a page."<sup>22</sup> The mass-produced printed image that disseminated across the far reaches of these global empires range from monochromatic engravings of the early modern period that Serge Gruzinski flags for our attention in the excerpt included in this volume to lithographs and chromolithographs, the illustrated book and magazine, cartoons and caricatures, and (not least) the printed advertisement visually lubricating the engines of colonial commerce after the onset of industrialization of print, on which others in this volume focus.

As anthropologist Nicholas Thomas observes in a discussion that takes us into the "mass-printed imperium" (part 2 of this section), the humble but ubiquitous printed image—dismissed until recently as derivative and inconsequential, thus confined to a scholarly "wilderness beyond critical vision"—needs to be taken seriously as a cultural product that had a consequential career as both a visual and a material presence in (post)colonial life-worlds. Extracted from a longer essay in which he goes on to explore the cultural politics of risk, Thomas's selection here offers a historical analysis of eighteenth-century European prints of exotic ethnographic implements, ornaments, and weapons from Oceania, which he reads as "somewhat opaque images that attest more to insecurity than to mastery, and to a disputed knowledge of the exotic." In particular, his work persuades us to

attend to pictorial strategies of decontextualization, through which such objects are abstracted from human use and purposes as they are transferred and translated to print. Discursively evacuated of meaning, the stage is prepared for the subsequent transformation of such objects into dehumanized “curiosities” to be collected, commoditized, and displayed in museums, exhibitions, and other metropolitan sites far away from their former life-worlds of use and affect in distant reaches of empire.

From historian of art Natasha Eaton’s essay on the fate of European prints as they travel in the reverse direction (from the metropole to the colony), we learn that such objects can also become “colonial companions, while simultaneously exacerbating nostalgia” for home among British residents in late eighteenth-century Calcutta. As such, colonial emporia are stocked with these newly auraticized things that are signs of “uncertain, extravagant, desperate living” in what we might call, following Joseph Conrad, Europe’s outposts of progress. Discarded by the European as he or she departs for home and relegated to the rubbish heap of colonial history, such prints found unusual new “tropicalized” lives on the walls and in the living rooms of new Indian patrons, at whose hands their meanings and uses are “de-formed.” As with many others in this volume, Eaton invites us to consider the very thingness of these prints as they assume a quasi-fetishistic stature, regardless of the representational work they do as “English” art in the colony.

Another manifestation of what Eaton characterizes as “the aesthetic of the ephemeral” is the ubiquitous commodity advertisement featuring colonial products that was the subject of a landmark essay by Anne McClintock in 1995.<sup>23</sup> In a response to that essay, historian David Ciarlo, whose analysis of German advertisements from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is included in this section, observes that “visual provocations” such as advertisements do not merely reflect colonial ideology but in fact opportunistically created racialized visions of empire.<sup>24</sup> The circulation of such ads generated a “new visual field” that also entailed “a new way of seeing and behaving,” although this “empire of fantasy” far exceeded the German colonial enterprise on the ground that was in fact largely circumscribed. Ciarlo asks us to consider advertising as a generative force in its own right, a pictorial provocation that might have aided the German state and public toward imperial aspirations, short-lived and truncated though these were in reality (although not for want of trying).

### *Mapping, Claiming, Reclaiming*

Nicholas Thomas urges us to take printed images seriously not only because their mass production allowed them to saturate the world materially and visually but also because “some kinds of prints were taken as peculiarly objective representational truths.” Paradigmatic of such prints are maps of territory that begin to proliferate from the early modern period, backed by the new and increasingly influential practices of cartography, which progressively mutated from art to science as the world came to be subjected to what Terry Smith (in his essay in this volume) has referred to as “the measuring eye.” At the height of the scramble for colonies in the late nineteenth century, Lord Salisbury, prime minister of the tiny island nation in the northern Atlantic that led the pack, observed (possibly in a rare moment of anxious reflection on this matter), “We have been engaged in drawing lines on maps where no white man’s foot ever trod; we have been giving away mountains and lakes and rivers to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the rivers, mountains, and lakes were.”<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the “worlding” of Earth into a geocoded realm of dots and dashes, lines and contours is one of the most consequential outcomes of the unholy alliance between science and empire that the essays in part 3, titled “Mapping, Claiming, Reclaiming,” detail for us.<sup>26</sup> Paraphrasing Martin Heidegger, we might argue that the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as map, resulting in the staging of Earth on a piece of paper before one’s eye as an enframed whole that can be ordered, secured, rendered knowable, and ultimately masterable.<sup>27</sup> Notwithstanding the intriguing reflections of the likes of Jorge Luis Borges and Umberto Eco on the absurdity that propels the hubris of drawing the perfect map of the empire, every fraction of which is rendered visible to the Master’s Eye,<sup>28</sup> the scientific map form is exemplary of what Donna Haraway has called “the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere.”<sup>29</sup> In Benedict Anderson’s memorable words from *Imagined Communities*, as Europe fanned out from the confines of its own continent, “triangulation by triangulation, war by war, treaty by treaty, the alignment of map and power proceeded.”<sup>30</sup> As historians of cartography who write under the influence of J. B. Harley’s pioneering scholarship have documented, this god-trick frequently preceded the messy fact of empire, as maps were first used to claim lands and resources on parchment and paper for European powers well before they were effectively occupied by colonizing bodies and presences.<sup>31</sup>

The selections we have chosen to advance our understanding of this nexus between the emergent science of cartography and the bloody business of empire are drawn from the early Spanish, Dutch, and British empire-building projects. Literary critic Ricardo Padrón takes us back to a time before a unified science of cartography had emerged in Western Europe to standardize representations of space and considers “way-finding” artifacts such as Spanish itinerary maps, nautical charts, and finding guides, which privileged linear distance over abstract space. He thus complicates “the story of territorialization so central to the 1492 Encounter” by demonstrating that sixteenth-century Spanish maps were themselves in the process of transiting from a spatial imaginary rooted in embodied travel to one that came to be governed by the geometric rationalizations of scientific cartography, even as they confronted the contrary Amerindian conceptions of territory that Walter Mignolo, Barbara Mundy, and others have brought to our attention.<sup>32</sup> An important reminder we receive from Padrón’s essay is that heterogeneous ways of drawing and representing space and place were overwhelmed—alongside the consolidation of nation-states in Europe and their colonies elsewhere—by the more or less homogeneous gridded abstractions of scientific cartography.

In Padrón’s account, early modern Spain had a good amount of catching up to do in the world of early modern cartographic science, the masters of which were clearly the Dutch, the preeminent mapmakers of Europe. Historian Benjamin Schmidt tracks “the explosion” of geographical objects from the Dutch Republic in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as witnessed in an array of lavish maps, dazzling globes, and sumptuous atlases that were much sought after in and of themselves, if not for the territories they mapped so beautifully. Rather than the straightforward collusion between cartography and empire we have learned to expect, Schmidt paradoxically suggests that even and especially as Dutch imperial adventures begin to peter out, their geographical production and cartographic reproduction of the world moved ahead in leaps and bounds. “The Republic was becoming less and less engaged in conquering the world as it became more and more vested in describing it,” he argues, almost as if the conquest of the world on paper was much more rewarding than “real” empire for the Dutch. In this account, the Dutch views of the world came to prevail despite no longer participating in world conquest, as they became the principal vendors of cartographic products in Europe.

In contrast, in art historian and art critic Terry Smith’s account of the

British “settling” of Australia, the violent conquest of land—and the “obliteration” of earlier inhabitants—was all too real in the closing years of the eighteenth century and for much of the nineteenth century. The visual regime of colonization, he proposes, is the triangulation of three processes he names “calibration,” “obliteration,” and “symbolization” or “aestheticization.” Through such processes, land was measured, mapped, and “ordered”; the natives rendered invisible; and the whole then incorporated into the very English idiom of “the picturesque,” which was then deployed back in the metropole in pretty pictures used to persuade white settlers to move out to distant places.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to such metropolitan practices that the English settler-artist imposed on the land, Australian Aboriginal imagination about that very land is neither measured nor calibrated. Instead, it is “a visual provocation” to ceremonial song and the telling of elaborate narratives that demonstrate an affective bond with land, rather than an imperializing command over it. Anticipating some of the arguments of the next section, Smith’s essay alerts us to how postcolonial Aboriginal “murmuring” and “mark-making” as it finds artistic expression in artworks such as *Warlugulong* (1976, figure 10.3) by brothers Clifford Possum and Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri, “look back” at the imperial penchant for measurement and mapping. Indeed, as some new work that explores the complex relation between “cartography” and “art” in our times is beginning to show us, visual artists of many stripes have come to favor fuzzy contours and blurred boundaries over the unyielding lines of state and scientific cartography.<sup>34</sup> Smith’s work—as does Sumathi Ramaswamy’s essay in the next section—takes some measure of alternate ways in which some have continued affectively and intimately to inhabit a world made over by the “measured eye” of scientific cartography.

### *The Imperial Lens?*

We close this first section with essays that complicate our understanding of the part played by the camera and the practices of viewing associated with it in furthering what Gruzinski has characterized as “the conquering grasp of the Western image.”<sup>35</sup> Susan Sontag, among others, has noted the congruence between the vocabularies associated with hunting and photography. In colonial contexts, this congruence took an extra charge because of overt affinities proclaimed between the gun and the camera in the arsenal of empire, as in this telling assertion by Samuel Bourne from 1863:

As there is now scarcely a nook or corner, a glen, a valley, or mountain, much less a country, on the face of the globe which the penetrating eye of the camera has not searched, or where the perfumes of poor Archer's collodion has not risen through the hot or freezing atmosphere, photography in India is, least of all, a new thing. From the earliest days of the calotype, the curious tripod, with its mysterious chamber and mouth of brass, taught the natives of this country that their conquerors were the inventors of other instruments besides the formidable guns of their artillery, which, though as suspicious perhaps in appearance, attained their object with less noise and smoke.<sup>36</sup>

While not ignoring the part played by the camera as a proxy weapon and as a not-so-covert instrument of surveillance, the scholarship on the “colonizing” camera—as producer of both still and moving picture—has come a considerable distance from crudely casting it as a tool of the colonial powers to which the hapless native became optical victim. Instead, we are learning of/from much more nuanced ways in which acts of photographing and filming are dynamic performative encounters where there is room for resistance, subversion, and derision to surface and for participation by native bodies and gazes, indeed, for the production of unexpected intimacies in indexical encounters.<sup>37</sup> The colonial photograph or film certainly can reveal the power and reach of the imperial look, but it also may and does disclose moments of uncertainty and anxiety, of the blurring of mastery, of undoing by laughter. Metropolitan theories that privilege the indexical power of the photograph are leavened by arguments that instead stress the “substance” of the image as holding more value for the native.<sup>38</sup> An alternate aesthetics has been located in photographic and filmic practice that undercuts the detached version of Cartesian perspectivalism of an Enlightenment-style modernity imported from Europe and that instead privileges a “corporeal” encounter premised on “getting hold” of the image rather than distancing oneself from it, as will see from Christopher Pinney's essay in the following section. Cinema in the colonies was tied more closely to the imperatives of the colonizing state, so we are perforce compelled to write a different history for this global form when we relocate ourselves outside the metropole. Indeed, as recent postcolonial theorizing about both photography and cinema shows us, the conception and ontology of these media are reworked in the colonial trajectories of these image-making technologies, making their first appearance though they might have in the metropolitan West.

Many of these issues come to the fore in historian James Hevia's essay, which takes us to Qing China circa 1900 at a critical moment when the camera became an image-making partner in a multinational effort to bring to heel the so-called rebellious Boxers who had dared to challenge the increasing presence of the West and Christian missionaries in the Middle Kingdom. Like others in this volume, Hevia persuades us to go beyond the representational work of the image to what he calls, following Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, "the photography complex," an assemblage of actants made up of numerous parts human and nonhuman and a range of agencies visible and nonvisible (the camera itself, but also chemicals and film, optics theory, the photographer, the networks through which the photograph travels, archives where the photograph is stored, and so on). It is such a complex entity that accompanied the multinational armies that marched into Beijing in 1900 and forced the Forbidden City to its knees, the photography complex functioning as an apparatus of surveillance and documentation, as an instrument with which the humiliation of the rebels was recorded and circulated to an eager viewing public back home, and as a pedagogical system through which valuable civilizational lessons were taught in China. Nonetheless, even such an "imperial" photography complex with its shock-and-awe tactics leaves behind "ghosts in the archive." Our ethical obligation then is to "disturb the regularities" of this complex, hence his focus on a photograph that continues to bear traces of its subjects mocking both the imperial/invading photographer and his apparatus.

Mocking and laughing back at Euro-America's fascination with its new image-making technologies is also the subject of cultural anthropologist Eric Stein's ethnographic study of attempts in Dutch Java in the 1930s to use hygiene cinema to discipline and manage the (diseased) native body and incorporate it into a new sanitary order. Hygiene cinema in the tropics functioned as a "colonial theater of proof" in which magnifying lenses, microscopy, and film technology were deployed to make visible and identify the invisible pathogens lurking within the afflicted native body as the true cause of disease, seemingly displacing the spirits, winds, and other notions of pathogenicity of the Javanese life-world. Stein shows how the makers of these hygiene films drew on Javanese shadow puppet (*wayang kulit*) theater to make the foreign technology and its important message "entertaining" and also to mask the inherently coercive thrust of the colonial health project. Yet the visual forms that were used opened up the state's efforts to mockery and outright laughter. Thus, the serious hygiene *mantri*, whose job it

was to educate the ignorant native about contagion and disease, came to be mocked as an “outhouse technician,” and images of the ravaged body of the hookworm victim as they flashed across the screen elicited collective laughter reserved for the comic figure of the Wayang pantheon’s Gareng, which it resembled. How does one interpret such instances of inappropriate laughter at “the wrong” time, Stein asks, and did they necessarily put an end to the violent pedagogy of hygiene cinema? The mockery and laughter, he proposes, served as incitement to discourse, producing evaluative claims about bodies and hygiene. Contrary to colonial claims though, few latrines came to be built then or since.

In the last essay in this section, abstracted from a longer ethnography on the arrival and dispersal of diverse media ranging from radio to video in Kano, anthropologist Brian Larkin considers the built environment of the commercial cinema (*sinima*) theater that appeared in Nigeria in the 1930s as a new kind of public space that seemingly challenged existing hierarchies of gender, class, and race among the Hausa. By their very location on the margins of an evolving colonial metropolis, the *sinima* theaters of Kano were threshold places from where Hausa audiences otherwise confined to Nigeria could certainly travel to an “elsewhere.” All the same, the experience of going to the movies in places like colonial Kano was tainted by their location. “As illicit moral spaces, commercial cinemas repelled respectable people, attracting only the marginal, the young, or the rebellious.” Such origins have cast a long shadow over cinema’s career in places like Kano. Larkin’s ethnography thus calls into question the assumption that “cinema is a universal technology,” promoting similar viewing practices and modes of experiencing leisure and entertainment. As do many others in this volume, Larkin underscores the importance of considering the way certain standardizing forces that we might associate with a particular image-making technology are hybridized by the singularities of the colonial and postcolonial context(s) to which it travels, creating plural forms that are frequently at odds with what one might encounter in the (imperial) metropole.

The imperial optic, then, these selections suggest to us, has been complexly coconstituted, Europe and (post)colony, master and native, mutually entangled in image-making and image consuming, to a point that it is difficult to tell what is specifically “European” at all, hence our choice of the word *imperial*. The technologies considered in this section might have had their origins in the metropole, but what we are learning is that this does not necessarily mean they have had a career in the (post)colony that repli-

cates the experience in the West, diverse enough as that was in that locale as well. To quote Gruzinski, with whom we began this section, colonization ensnared the world “in an ever-growing net of images that was cast out over and over again, and that shaped itself according to the rhythm of the styles, politics, reactions, and the oppositions it met.”<sup>39</sup> The problem of the twenty-first century that has inherited such a world is in many ways “the problem of the image.”<sup>40</sup> *Empires of Vision* and the cross-disciplinary body of scholarship on which it builds compels us to seek the history of this “problem” in five centuries of European empire formation when images—and the technologies and practices that produced and delivered them—became a conquering force through which the world came to be grasped and turned into picture.

### Notes

- 1 Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image-World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 8.
- 2 Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 20, 23.
- 3 Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). See also Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800–1910* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- 4 Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge, “Museums Are Good to Think: Heritage on View in India,” in *Museums and Communities*, ed. I. Karp, S. Levine, and C. M. Kraemer (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 34–55; quotation on pp. 51–52.
- 5 Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 93. For Poole, such “referrals and exchanges among images themselves, and the social and discursive relations connecting image-makers and consumers” constitute an “image world.” “The metaphor of an image world through which representations flow from place to place, person to person, culture to culture, and class to class also helps us to think more critically about the politics of representation” (*Vision, Race and Modernity*, 7).
- 6 Nicholas Mirzoeff, “The Multiple Viewpoint: Disaporic Visual Cultures,” in *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews*, ed. N. Mirzoeff (London: Routledge, 2000), 1–18; quotation on p. 7.
- 7 Christopher Pinney, “The Nation (Un)Pictured: Chromolithography and ‘Popular’ Politics in India,” *Critical Inquiry* 23(4) (1997): 834–67; quotation on p. 867.

- 8 At the same time, we are mindful of Brian Larkin's cautionary insistence that we should pay attention to "the destabilizing, terrifying effects of technology. Not because this is evidence of cognitive difference but because it is a feature of the introduction of technologies across all cultures. We must beware of an agentic theory of history that insists on the autonomy of human subjects who 'indigenize' and 'rework' technologies at will, as this denies the autonomous properties of technologies—the way technologies fashion subjects rather than the other way around." Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 116. See also in this regard Jill H. Casid, "'His Master's Obi': Machine Magic, Colonial Violence and Transculturation," in *The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. N. Mirzoeff (London: Routledge, 2002), 533–45.
- 9 Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (1987; London: Routledge, 2004); Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993). For a fascinating discussion of mimetic encounters in Portuguese Guinea that are expressive of "the right to copy" and domesticate the European through appropriations, see Eric Gable, "Bad Copies: The Colonial Aesthetic and the Manjaco-Portuguese Encounter," in *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, ed. P. S. Landau and D. Kaspin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 294–319.
- 10 Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner, 1492–2019* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 72. For some recent thoughtful reflections on "the colonizer's medium of oil," see Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), chap. 3; on perspective and the European civilizing mission, see especially Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
- 11 For an understanding of the corporeal, see the work of Pinney, who uses it to mean the sensory embrace of and bodily engagement with images that is characteristic of the modern visual regimes in places like South Asia, especially at the popular and devotional level across numerous religious, regional, and ethnic divides.
- 12 See also in this regard Michael Taussig, *What Color Is the Sacred?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 146.
- 13 Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 3.
- 14 Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 3.
- 15 For a comparable discussion from the seventeenth century and French India, see Kapil Raj, "Surgeons, Fakirs, Merchants and Craftsmen," in *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Scientific Knowledge in South Asia, 17th–19th Centuries* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006), 27–59.
- 16 For other takes on this critical question for the early modern world, see Geoff

- Quilley and Kay Dian Kriz, eds., *An Economy of Colour: Visual Culture and the Atlantic World, 1660–1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).
- 17 “The old masters of Europe such as Jan Van Eyck or Jan Vermeer applied their pigments in layer after layer of color mixed with glazes and varnishes, many coming from colonial outposts of Europe” (Tausig, *What Color Is the Sacred?*, 110).
  - 18 W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
  - 19 Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations* (1988): 73–102. There is a growing literature on the role of the exhibitionary complex in the many different European empires, on which see especially Timothy Mitchell, “The World as Exhibition,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31(2) (1989): 217–36; Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Marieke Bloembergen, *Colonial Spectacles: The Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies at the World Exhibitions, 1880–1931* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006); and Zeynep Çelik and Leila Kinney, “Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles,” in *Genealogies of Orientalism: History, Theory, Politics*, ed. E. Burke III and D. Prochaska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).
  - 20 In this regard, see Gruzinski’s comment that the native in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colonial Mexico largely encountered a “Europe in black and white,” a product of the monochromatic engraving and print (*Images at War*, 73).
  - 21 Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
  - 22 Nuno Porto, “Picturing the Museum: Photography and the Work of Mediation in the Third Portuguese Empire,” in *Academic Anthropology and the Museum: Back to the Future*, ed. M. Bouquet (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 36–54; quotation on p. 52.
  - 23 Anne McClintock, “Soft-Soaping Empire,” in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (London: Routledge, 1995).
  - 24 Ciarlo’s essay appears in an edited volume that explores other aspects of German colonial visual culture, a topic on which there is very little scholarship to date. See also in this regard, George Steinmetz and Julia Hell, “The Visual Archive of Colonialism: Germany and Namibia,” *Public Culture* 18(1) (2006): 147–83.
  - 25 J. D. Hargreaves, “West African Boundary Making,” in *Borders and Border Politics in a Globalizing World*, ed. Paul Ganster and David E. Lorey (Lanham, MD: SR Books, 2001), 97–106; quotation on p. 100.
  - 26 For the geocoded world, see John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-Coded World* (London: Routledge, 2004).

- 27 Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Garland, 1977), 115–54, esp. pp. 134–35. We also draw on Bruno Latour's insight, "There is nothing you can *dominate* as easily as a flat surface of a few square meters; there is nothing hidden or convoluted, no shadows, no 'double entendre.' In politics as in science, when someone is said to 'master' a question or to 'dominate' a subject, you should normally look for the flat surface that enables mastery (a map, a list, a file, a census, the wall of a gallery, a card-index, a repertory) and you will find it. . . . The 'great man' is a little man looking at a good map" (Bruno Latour, "Drawing Things Together," in *Representation in Scientific Practice*, ed. Michael Lynch and Steve Woolgar (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 19–68; quotations p. 45, 56).
- 28 Jorge Luis Borges, "Of Exactitude in Science," in *A Universal History of Infamy* (New York: Dutton, 1972); Umberto Eco, "On the Impossibility of Drawing a Map of the Empire on a Scale of 1 to 1," in *How to Travel with a Salmon and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1982).
- 29 Quoted in Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), 65–66.
- 30 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 173.
- 31 J. Brian Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 57. See also Jean Baudrillard's much-invoked statement, "the map precedes the territory. . . . It is the map that engenders the territory" (Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Paxton, and Philip Beitchman [New York: Semiotext, 1983], 2).
- 32 Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995); Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geograficas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). See also in this regard Benjamin Orlove, "The Ethnography of Maps: The Cultural and Social Contexts of Cartographic Representation in Peru," in *Introducing Cultural and Social Cartography*, ed. R. A. Rundstrom (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 29–46.
- 33 See also in this regard Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For a suggestive argument connecting sowing, planting, and other landscaping technologies to the "cultivation" of the French and British empires in the eighteenth century, see Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).
- 34 See, for example, Katharine Harmon, *The Map as Art: Contemporary Artists Explore Cartography* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009).
- 35 The photographic and film camera, in turn, were among many optical devices that made use of the lens and mirrors, such as the Claude glass so necessary for the British picturesque tradition; telescopes, binoculars, photospheres for

- scientific observation; and the magic lantern that became essential in imperial pedagogy as well as for early mass entertainment. For a fascinating recent study of many such devices (although without attending to their imperial reach), see Otter, *The Victorian Eye*.
- 36 Quoted in John Falconer, "Photography in Nineteenth-Century India," in *The Raj: India and the British, 1600–1947*, ed. C. A. Bayly (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 1990), 264–77; quotation on p. 264. For an elaboration of the link between photography and hunting as colonial technologies, see especially Paul Landau, "Empires of the Visual: Photography and Colonial Administration in Africa," in *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Post-colonial Africa*, ed. P. S. Landau and D. Kaspin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 141–71.
- 37 Jane Lydon, *Eye Contact: Photographing Indigenous Australians* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). See also Priya Jaikumar, *Cinema at the End of Empire: A Politics of Transition in Britain and India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); David Prochaska, "Telling Photos," in *Genealogies of Orientalism: History, Theory, Politics*, ed. E. Burke and D. Prochaska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 245–85; Christopher Pinney, *The Coming of Photography in India* (London: British Library, 2008); Lee Grieveson and Colin MacCabe, *Empire and Film* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Lee Grieveson and Colin MacCabe, *Film and the End of Empire* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
- 38 Olu Oguibe, "Photography and the Substance of the Image," in *The Culture Game* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 73–90. For a reconsideration of the yearning for indexicality central to photographic practice until recently, see Pinney, *The Coming of Photography in India*.
- 39 Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 3.
- 40 W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Visual and Verbal Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 2.