

Introduction

IN A PUBLIC PARK in Potsdam (the palatial summer residence of many a Prussian king) there stands a peculiar monument that dates its history back to 1757. The structure is a replica of a Chinese teahouse, around the circumference of which is built a verandah. On the verandah are a series of figures—Chinese men and women pouring tea, playing musical instruments, gazing in the distance, grouped together in conversation. The sur-reality of stumbling upon this structure in the middle of a park in Germany is heightened on a closer look at the statues themselves. Their “foreignness” is depicted in the clothing the male figures wear (pointed hats with large rims) but absent—indeed, strikingly absent—from the perspective of the modern observer is any racial representation. No “slanted” eyes, “yellow” complexion, or long, thin pigtailed adorn these Chinese replicas. Indeed, many of the female figures are garbed in the flowing gowns of the German nobility—they are more *Fräulein* than foreign. What was to define European (and North American) representations of the Chinese in the nineteenth century does not appear to have obstructed the vision of the eighteenth-century sculptors.¹

In 1894, E. R. Henry, in his capacity as inspector-general of police in colonial Bengal, submitted a report to be distributed to all district police

superintendents. The published document, *Criminal Identification by Means of Anthropometry*, contained detailed instructions on the use of anthropometrical instruments and the significance of the data that they provided:

Upon the assumption that these anthropometric data remain constant throughout life—and experience may be held to have demonstrated this—it is certain that if these immutable measurements . . . can at any time be obtained for any particular criminal, his identity is fixed in a manner which will render nugatory any efforts he may make to confuse it by change of name or residence or by personal disguise.²

The use of calipers, sliding bars, and measuring standards and gauges (diagrams of which are generously scattered through the report) were to be provided to all police stations to measure (in strict order) the length of the left middle finger, the left forearm, the left foot, and, finally, the culprit's height. The administrative recording of this information required the maintenance of cards (one card per individual) detailing the anthropometrical data of each convict. On a single card could be found two hundred and forty three principle headings, which in turn were subdivided "according to height, span, length, and breath of the ear, height of the bust, and eye color, this latter providing seven divisions."³ The imperative, Henry was to argue (in a revised report dated 1900), "of being able to fix human personality, of being able to give to each human being an individuality differentiating him from all others . . . cannot be overestimated."⁴

In the later report, Henry was in fact to recommend the superiority of fingerprinting over that of anthropometry as a means of identifying criminals. British India was to be one of the first places to introduce this new science. And yet, if policing methods were soon to change, the site of differentiation was not. The body had come into being.

From the spectacle to science, from clothing to calipers—much had changed from the mid-eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century. Representing difference, it would appear, has a history of its own.

It is this history that the present work seeks to narrate. *Europe's Indians: Producing Racial Difference, 1500–1900*, traces European representations of difference from the time that Columbus inadvertently, and unknowingly, stumbled upon the American continent through to the time when racial theorists, quite self-consciously, were subjecting culture to the measuring instruments and evolutionary gradations of racial science.

Clearly, covering a history that spans some four hundred years in a single book would be too ambitious a task if my intention were to offer a detailed history of events and thinkers. This however, has not been my objective. Rather, this work seeks to account for the historical particularity of European representations of the New World and India by studying Renaissance, Classical Age (seventeenth-century and eighteenth-), and nineteenth-century discourses on the non-West within what I describe as epistemic traditions. The central premise underwriting this work is that to speak of European knowledge is not to evoke a singular history (humanity's journey from superstition to science) but to identify historically bounded and historically contingent traditions of knowing. It is these traditions, I suggest, that mediated the ways in which Europeans saw, ordered, conceptualized, and lived in the world—traditions that provided the rules and logic of their reasoning and thus the grounds on which to recognize “truth” and distinguish it from the “irrational,” “false,” or “superstitious.” It was these same traditions of reasoning through which European commentators identified, translated, and conceived of difference—difference as it was encountered in the wake of colonial expansion and conquest. It was not the singularity of Reason but historically particular forms of reasoning that framed European efforts to identify, contextualize, and translate the culturally unfamiliar.

Thus, the objective of this work is not limited to detailing the content of Renaissance, Classical, or nineteenth-century representations of the non-West. It aims to excavate the epistemic conditions that enabled the thinking of difference at different historical junctures. In so doing, a number of unquestioned assumptions underwriting the histories of European interaction with the colonial non-West come to be challenged.

The prevailing and pervasive presumption that European representations of difference have always already been mediated through the oppositional category of self–other is one such truism that can no longer be sustained. As I elaborate in the next chapter, contemporary scholarship has tended to presume that while European representations have changed historically they are nevertheless always filtered through the mutually exclusive categories of self and other. In other words, self and other exist as two trans-historical containers the contents of which may alter over time, but the form of their articulation remains constant: The Greek/barbarian is simply displaced by the Christian/pagan. While chapter 1 challenges this thesis

directly, chapters 1 and 2 also offer alternative readings of European representations of the New World in the sixteenth century and in the Classical Age, respectively. Thus, in chapter 1 I argue that it was not otherness but similitude that underwrote Renaissance epistemology. It was not radical difference but commensurability mediated through the familiar that rendered the New World knowable. In the Classical Age, we can recognize a noticeable shift from the preceding centuries and yet again, otherness is not the medium through which the Americas are translated. Instead, the indigenous Americans are posited, in contradictory fashion, as both the model of universal reason, freedom, equality, and property-accumulating individuality and a deviation from these same universal norms. It is only in the nineteenth century (the historical backdrop of chapters 3 and 4) that the oppositional logic of self–other becomes a privileged medium through which difference is tabulated and classified.

Situating European representations of difference within the epistemic possibilities and constraints that produced them also reveals a very different interpretation of the historicity of race than traditional historical narratives currently permit. References to forms of “proto-racism” in antiquity, or the medieval preoccupation with “gens” (lineage), as well as the biblical tale of Ham (the exiled son of Noah who settled Africa), can be, and have been, read as reflective of racial thinking in the pre-modern period. To do so, however, risks imposing a particularly modern form of reasoning to bear on pre-modern and early modern traditions of thought.

Recent scholarship that has sought to defend the modernity of racial thought has been no less problematic. In identifying the emergence of racial discourse with evolutionary science, transatlantic slavery, New World conquest, nationalism, or colonialism, this literature has tended to obscure a more fundamental question: How did race become available to thought? Was it simply an outgrowth of colonialism, slavery, science, or colonialism, or is racial thinking itself reflective of and contingent on historically specific forms of reasoning? It is the latter thesis that I defend in chapter 4, arguing that to classify human difference in racial terms is only intelligible through, and necessarily reliant on, certain pre-existing epistemological conditions—namely, the elevation of man as the sole bearer of knowledge and agency and the transformation of the body into a transparent and immutable object available for human representation. It is only within an epistemic con

text that permits the confluence of these two premises—man as subject in a world of objects rendered meaningful through representation—that race can find expression. A meteoric tour from late-medieval through nineteenth-century representations of the body provides the groundwork for arguing, in chapter 4, that it is only in the context of modern (nineteenth-century) reasoning that race can and was appealed to as an organizing principle for cataloguing human difference.

But if, as I have suggested thus far, European representations of difference during the Renaissance, Classical Age, and nineteenth century were born of and contingent on particular traditions of reasoning, it is equally necessary to recognize that these very traditions were themselves informed by Europe's interaction with the colonial non-West. It is significant, as I argue in chapter 3, that the European fascination with history in the nineteenth century—including the vexed question of what precisely constituted the "historical"—was fashioned within a colonial context wherein History came to be identified with European genius. The denial of historical subjectivity, as a number of scholars on the New World have argued, was a feature of early European writings on the indigenous Americans.⁵ In contrast, however, India in the early years of its colonization was presumed to have a past stretching back to the ancient Greeks. By the middle of the nineteenth century, celebrations of India's antiquity had all but ceased. Against European history we confront Indian tradition; against progress through and in time, we encounter native lethargy and unreflective custom. Thus, while the historical etymology of both history and tradition long prefigured the modern, their usage and meaning were thoroughly reconfigured through the colonial prism.

It was this very appeal to historical progress posited against "tradition" that enabled nineteenth-century European philosophers and historians to privilege Europe as the birthplace of a new, superior form of selfhood: the autonomous, individuated, and individualized subject. The European individual stood in sharp contrast to the collective identities that characterized the non-West, beholden as the natives were to tribal, religious, caste, and familial affiliations. And yet, as I argue in chapter 2, it is a little observed fact that the exalted free, equal, rational individual so celebrated in liberal thought and so central to early contractarian philosophy was located in a New World state of nature wherein the indigenous American could be

encountered in his alternating and conflicting role as both the archetype of and contrastive foil against the self-interested, self-regulating, rational individual.

The dual concern with situating European representations of difference within the multiplicity and historicity of colonially configured traditions of reasoning positions this work at the nexus of two bodies of literature that can broadly (though not always precisely) be identified as postmodern and postcolonial histories.

The first of this literature includes an eclectic body of work that nevertheless shares a methodological affinity: the writing of histories that do not presume historical continuity. The influence of Michel Foucault looms large in this project, but the works of Thomas Kuhn, Ian Hacking, and Arnold Davidson has equally influenced my thinking.⁶ The value of this scholarship lies in its effort to produce histories of European thought and practice that recognize such histories to be fractured, nonlinear, and resistant to totalizing and monolithic narratives of progress. In different ways these scholars have sought to locate “thought” within the episteme (Foucault), paradigm (Kuhn), or style of reasoning (Hacking and Davidson) of a given period that made such thought possible. For this reason, such histories are less concerned with the works of individual thinkers or with narratives of cause and effect than they are with the question of possibilities: What conditions made it possible for particular sets of statements to be grouped together, to be rendered as knowledge, and to be constituted as truth in one historical moment—and not in another?

Underwriting such questions is the recognition on the part of these scholars that pre-modern knowledge did not consist of chaotic, incoherent, random, or arbitrary statements. Pre-modern knowledge, in other words, was not bereft of an internal logic for assessing truth and falseness. Rather, the Renaissance and the Classical period, no less than the nineteenth century, possessed a highly elaborate and cogent system of rules and norms that constituted the foundations of their knowledge production. Thus, Thomas Kuhn argued that the more carefully one studies “say Aristotelian dynamics, phlogistic chemistry, or caloric thermodynamics,” the more evident it becomes “that those once current views of nature were, as a whole, neither less scientific nor more the product of human idiosyncrasy than those current today.”⁷

In a similar vein, Foucault's use of the term "episteme" also works to privilege the historical contingency and historical specificity of knowledge production. Where Foucault's episteme differs from Kuhn's paradigm is in the expansiveness of the term: the fact that an episteme speaks beyond the confines of specific scientific traditions to encompass the entire edifice that produces and sustains truth claims in a given historical period. An episteme, Foucault has argued, is a means of organizing "in a coherent way an entire region of empirical knowledge."⁸ The episteme of a given period may not necessarily be recognized or known by its contemporaries, but it finds expression through the repeated appeal of a shared set of rules across widely divergent disciplines or fields of study. Thus, in *The Order of Things*, Foucault traces the historical specificity of Renaissance, Classical, and nineteenth-century studies of language, life, and exchange by excavating the epistemic foundations that rendered these seemingly disparate areas of study commensurable and intelligible to the contemporaries of a given age. In other words, knowledge production, irrespective of the field of inquiry, was recognized as knowledge, was recognized as truth, within the possibilities and constraints of a specific epistemic tradition.

It is this same effort at excavating the rules and unconscious logic at work in the production of truth claims that informs Arnold Davidson's and Ian Hacking's concept of "style." Borrowed from art history, Davidson's and Hacking's respective appeal to "styles of reasoning" is a recognition that Reason, far from being singular and trans-historical, is multiple and historically contingent. Accordingly, Hacking relativizes truth by historicizing the logic by which we arrive at truth—or, to put it in his words, the "propositions to which we reason get their sense only from the method of reasoning employed." In other words, as Davidson elaborates, "Different styles of reasoning . . . determine what statements are possible candidates of truth-and-falsehood."⁹ Thus, while Renaissance truth statements may appear to the modern reader as so many superstitions, a familiarity with Renaissance styles of reasoning would reveal a "systematicity, structure and identity," "a well defined regularity" that corresponds to rules and norms from which Renaissance statements of truth-and-falsity derive their intelligibility.¹⁰

Adding to an already overcrowded lexicon of terms, Hacking's and Davidson's appeal to style as a methodological tool for tracing the histories of reasoning is nevertheless a valuable contribution to the existing

literature. This is so because Hacking's and Davidson's work brings to the fore the necessity of studying concepts as a means for gauging larger epistemological shifts. The emphasis here is not on tracing the etymology of a word so much as in recognizing that the presence or absence of a concept—its disappearance from the lexicon, its sudden emergence into language, or its radically different renderings over different historical periods—is illuminating precisely because all these permutations offer a point of entry into particular styles of reasoning.

Ultimately, for all the differences that might distinguish their scholarship, there is a certain shared emphasis in the works of Kuhn, Foucault, Hacking, and Davidson that can be identified and summarized in two parts. First, the histories explored by these scholars—scientific traditions (Kuhn), knowledge formation (Foucault), statistics (Hacking), and psychiatry (Davidson)—lay stress on the fact that pre-modern knowledges, like modern knowledge regimes, contained an internal logic, an intelligibility born out of particular knowledge traditions that grounded thought within well-governed and regulated systems of reasoning. Out of this first thesis we recognize a second—namely, that if different historical periods were governed by different paradigms, episteme, or styles of reasoning that are often not intelligible to those outside its logic, then the history being written by contemporary historians influenced by Kuhn, Foucault, Hacking, and Davidson will not necessarily correspond to a traditional historiography, reliant as it is on presumptions of progress, incremental development, or individual agents. And indeed, the historical scholarship produced by Kuhn, Foucault, Hacking and Davidson has, at least in some instances, laid emphasis on the discontinuity of European history (the emergence of new styles of reasoning, epistemic frames, or paradigms), the grouping of old concepts or statements in radically different ways, the incommensurability between different bodies of knowledge—revealing in the process how meta-histories of “European thought” can simply not sustain the overarching unity the classification seems to promise.

The enormous value of this scholarship, however, should not obscure one of its chief weaknesses—namely, its failure to recognize and engage with the mutually constitutive relationship between European knowledges and colonial expansion. In so saying, I am not demanding that scholars of European history re-train, for example, as scholars of India, but that to write of European thought in the Renaissance, Classical Age, or nineteenth

century without any recognition of the extent to which colonial expansion may have informed such thought detracts from, and simplifies, the history being written. Herein lies the significance of the other body of scholarship I alluded to earlier—what can loosely be identified as “postcolonial” theory.

A fundamental tension exists between these otherwise sympathetic bodies of scholarship. I say sympathetic because at one level postcolonialism has benefited from the debunking of European meta-histories that posit European history as an inevitable and natural outgrowth of historical development—a development that traditionally has been lauded as a tribute to European genius while simultaneously offered up as a universal promise available for emulation by others. Recognizing the particularity of European thought and thereby challenging its universalist pretensions has been a central theme of much postcolonial scholarship. But such scholarship has not simply been reactive. Rather, postcolonial scholarship has proved to be a necessary corrective to Europe-centered histories in two crucial ways.

First, it has alerted us to the extent to which European thought has been profoundly shaped by the fact of colonial interaction and colonial subjugation. Thus, Anne McClintock’s work has helped to complicate feminist histories of patriarchy, gender, and domesticity by tightly interweaving European discourses of gender with imperial rule and racial representations.¹¹ In a similar vein, Ann Laura Stoler has offered a critical rethinking of Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* by detailing the extent to which European discourses on sexuality were configured and constituted through reference to colonized and racialized bodies.¹² Enrique Florescano has discussed the ways in which early Spanish colonists reconfigured their understanding of history with reference to the geography and peoples of the New World.¹³ And yet other scholars have interrogated the colonially implicated history of an imperial discourse organized around seemingly benign concepts such as “culture” or “tradition,” revealing a history thoroughly immersed within, and born out of, colonial relations.¹⁴

But if one intervention of postcolonial scholarship has been to detail the extent to which colonialism is implicated in European discourses and knowledge production, the second significant contribution lies in its recognition that non-Western knowledges may be resistant to, or incompatible with, Western categories of thought. In so arguing, postcolonial scholars are not engaging in a crude relativism—their concern is not to

defend the “traditions” of other “cultures.” Rather, the objective of at least some postcolonial scholarship has been to interrogate and dismantle the presumed universalism and neutrality of the categories through which Western knowledge has been constituted. The contention of many postcolonial scholars has been that using concepts such as “tradition,” “culture,” or “religion” necessarily distorts (because it reconfigures within Western categories) the multiplicity of ways in which the world has been lived, experienced, conceptualized, and articulated.

Thus, the works of Enrique Florescano and Serge Gruzinski offer detailed accounts of the complex cosmologies that framed the worlds of indigenous Americans at the time of conquest.¹⁵ Their works trace the hybrid and entangled ways in which indigenous cultures were both incorporated within and transformative of colonial thought and settlement. In the context of India, Ashis Nandy and Dipesh Chakrabathy’s critiques of historiography go beyond the more familiar criticism that the non-West has been traditionally constituted as a-historical.¹⁶ Nandy’s and Chakrabathy’s intervention is less a plea for historical inclusion than an argument for particularizing “history,” for recognizing in “history” a particular relationship to time that was not and is not universally shared. In a similar vein, Sanjay Seth’s book *Subject Lessons*, while ostensibly about education debates in colonial India,¹⁷ is concerned less with the colonial content of such education or with the often disparaging British commentary regarding Britain’s colonial subjects. Rather, the emphasis of the work is on how knowledge as it was rendered in nineteenth-century European thought necessarily presumed on particular types of subjects. In other words, it is the cultural and historical neutrality presumed in Western understandings of knowledge and subjectivity that are the objects of Seth’s critique.

Postcolonial histories therefore should not be confused with liberal discourses of tolerance. Postcolonial history does not demand the recognition of difference so much as it challenges the knowledge structures through which difference traditionally has been accorded recognition. For this reason, an integral part of postcolonial scholarship has involved not only unpacking the particularity that underwrites European knowledge but also exploring the radically different cosmologies and knowledge systems that have enabled and framed radically different ways of being in the world. Detailing the multiplicity of ways in which people have lived, related to

their gods, ordered their world, and rendered it meaningful is thus a crucial feature of much postcolonial literature.

Yet my own intellectual allegiance to this scholarly enterprise is somewhat qualified by the fact that, in their efforts to critique colonial discourse or to detail the particularity of non-Western knowledges, postcolonial scholars have at times been guilty of reproducing the meta-Europe that historians such as Foucault have sought to challenge—a Europe that is epistemologically uniform, historically linear, and conceptually monolithic. In other words, if the strength of postcolonial scholarship resides in its efforts to retrieve and foreground the rich, multifarious, and colonially subordinated forms of knowledge and types of reasoning produced by societies outside the West, the effort to produce such histories sometimes inadvertently presumed as its opposition the trans-historicity of Europe itself. What effectively gets erased is the critical work of scholars of European history who have done much to alert us to the particularity, contingency, and fractured nature of European knowledge. Edward Said's effort to trace the genealogy of Orientalism from the ancient Greeks to the twentieth-century North American academy is an exaggerated example of the intellectual pitfalls of such scholarship.

It is the tension between these two bodies of scholarship wherein my own work lies. This work first emerged out of a simple question: If, following Foucault, knowledge as it was constituted in the Renaissance, Classical Age, and nineteenth century relied for its coherence, intelligibility, and (following Hacking and Davidson) ability to discern truth and falsity within the restraints of historically located epistemic traditions, then what implication did this have for European representations of the non-West?

As is usually the case, this initial question quickly provoked another: To what extent was knowledge constituted within the epistemic particularity of European history born out of, and informed by, Europe's relationship with a world outside its borders?

It was out of these initial questions that *Europe's Indians* eventually took shape. My concern in this work is, thus, twofold. The first is to trace representations of difference from the late fifteenth century to the late nineteenth century while recognizing that such representations were beholden to specific historical contexts that belie our efforts to read continuity from one historical age to the next. In other words, my objective in this

work is not simply to catalogue European representations of the non-West but also to map the conditions of possibility that enabled and constrained these representations. Colonialism, not surprisingly, emerged as a crucial “condition” in the history being narrated. Thus, a second, interrelated concern of this work has been to emphasize the extent to which European regimes of knowledge were not hermetically sealed from, or indifferent to, corresponding histories of colonial expansion and colonial interaction.

These dual themes, which offer a unifying structure to the book, are explored in each chapter through reference to very different literatures and via unconventional routes. Most notably, this work traces the historical shifts in European forms of reasoning and, thus, European representations of difference with reference to two specific colonial sites: the New World and India. Both the New World and India were malleable (albeit in different ways) to accentuating the historical faces of European representations of difference over the four hundred years that this work covers. Moreover, in tracing European representations of the Americas and India, it becomes possible to recognize the heterogeneity of European discourses of difference; that the “non-West” was not conceptualized by travelers, philosophers, or colonialists as a homogenous, monolithic site of uniform difference.

While the existence of Africa, like that of India, was known to Renaissance Europe, the very “newness” of the American continent permitted a rare insight into fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century forms of reasoning. More specifically, it dramatized the fact that confronting the “newness” of the New World did not shake the foundations of Renaissance epistemology. Rather, the Americas were simply woven into the lining of existing knowledge. The subsequent reinterpretation of the New World as a state of nature in the writing of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as well as their respective efforts to read in the indigenous Americans the example par excellence of man in his natural state, offered similarly rich possibilities for exploring the epistemological terrain of Classical thought.

In a similar vein, but for very different reasons, India also possessed a specificity that was particularly revealing of European representations of difference. Most notably, the mythological status that India had long possessed (while true of China, Egypt, and Persia, as well) was exemplified by the privilege accorded to Sanskrit in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. The discovery of a linguistic affinity between Sanskrit

and ancient Greek and Latin heralded not only a “discovery” of ancient Sanskrit literature but facilitated the contentious debates concerning the definitional contours of history and tradition. Precisely because of the earlier colonial fascination with Sanskrit and philology, the shift away from textual studies of ancient scriptural sources to anthropological studies of contemporary communities is most dramatically played out in the context of nineteenth-century British India. If India was crucial to European formulations of history in the early and mid-nineteenth century, it was also central in late-nineteenth-century debates concerning race, criminality, and policing: Anthropology rather than philology became the privileged discipline aiding colonial knowledge production. India, in short, became the experimental laboratory for the emerging technologies of criminal identification. Indeed, it is in India that fingerprinting was first introduced.

If the coupling of the New World and India in a single work is unconventional, so, too, is the history this work seeks to narrate. For in insisting that European discourses on the non-West were produced within particular traditions of knowledge, it became necessary to resist the temptation to narrate European representations of difference within a developmental history. Thus, through exploring the multiple representations of difference produced out of the epistemic particularity of the Renaissance, the early modern period, and the nineteenth century, a space was opened up to pursue questions that a more traditional historical method might not be equipped to ask—for example, what permitted certain representations of difference to be articulated as truth claims at one point in history and not in another? Did different periods in history presume on different subjectivities? If so, what relevance, if any, did subjectivity have on the nature of the knowledge produced? When did the body become an object of knowledge? What does it mean for questions of diversity if God, demons, witches, angels, and monsters are accorded volition and agency? What does it mean for our understanding of Man if he is not privileged as the sole source of knowledge and agency? Why did some of the most respected scientists of the nineteenth century adhere to what we can only regard today as the “pseudo-science” of racial biology? What did it mean for Classical conceptions of the individual when the free, equal, rational individual was identified with the New World Indians? To what extent was nineteenth-century historicism shaped by nineteenth-century discourses on “native traditions”? How did historicism reconfigure the historically resilient concept of

savagery? Was the conquest of the New World a precursor to racial discourse? What are the correlations between physiological fixity, policing technologies, and the introduction of fingerprinting in British India?

These questions, like the commentary thus far, provide a very general survey of the concerns that preoccupy this work. I now turn to a more detailed discussion of the individual chapters.

Chapter 1 questions the historical efficacy of evoking self–other as the defining matrix through which difference has been represented throughout European history. Engaging briefly with contemporary works on this subject, I go on to argue that interpreting early European contact with the New World in terms of self–other—where Europe marks the self and the indigenous American is the site of otherness—is problematic if for no other reason than it is difficult to discern either a European self-identity in the Renaissance or the production of a discourse about the “native.”

This chapter argues that Renaissance knowledge formation was not articulated through oppositional narratives, but was governed by the logic of similitude. In so saying, I am appropriating and extending Foucault’s study of Renaissance epistemology to better understand and contextualize early European representations of the New World.¹⁸ I suggest that the New World was rendered into a very old world, because it was enveloped into a pre-existing world—one malleable to commensurability through reference to ancient texts, biblical Scriptures, and popular travel stories.

Chapter 2 is also concerned with European representations of the New World, but with the focus turned toward the seventeenth century and eighteenth century. Through the social-contractarian writings of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, it is possible to dramatize the disjuncture between Renaissance and seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century epistemologies. Having left a world where the hand of God is always present, where society is divinely ordained, circumscribed, and predetermined by His Will, we enter the Age of Man. In evoking the writings of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, I am not suggesting that their works represent building blocks in the gradual cementing of liberal ideals. Rather, their writings provide, through the bounded world of the text, an insight into the larger epistemological terrain of the seventeenth century and eighteenth century. What we encounter in the works of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau is the gradual ascendance of Man as the architect of order, the author of meaning, and the agent of history. Man in this context

is constituted as a free, equal, and rational individual who is first encountered in a state of nature significantly located on the distant shores of the New World. This individual is no less than the Indian himself.

In other words, the individual in the imagination of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau is personified through the figure of the indigenous American. This relationship between colonial contact and the emergence of discourses around individuality not only complicates existing literature on the history of the “individual” by insisting on the relevance of colonialism in the making of European individual subjectivity,¹⁹ but it also works to elucidate one of the defining features of seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century epistemology. For I argue that through the organizing principle of the universal individual, difference comes to be constituted as the “exception.” It is a deviation from a norm, a deviation that finds expression through irrationality in Locke or degeneracy in Rousseau. But what is notable in the work of all three contractarians is that, even though the New World is constituted as a state of nature, this fact does not transform the indigenous American into an object to be studied. He is an archetype of universality (the free, equal, rational individual) or exceptionality (the irrational, familial miscreant), but he is not a figure invested with any historical, cultural, or racial particularity.

This ceases to be true in the nineteenth century—the focus of chapter 3. This chapter traces the shift from, and differences between, the universal histories produced in the seventeenth century and eighteenth century and the emergence of history as a disciplinary science in the nineteenth century. Among the many characteristics that distinguish nineteenth-century thought is the emergence of and emphasis placed on historicism. The principle of universality that underwrote Classical thinking comes to be complicated with a newfound concern for identifying particularity—most notably, in the context of history and culture. Where I complicate this familiar narrative is in arguing that a history of historical thought within Europe cannot be narrated solely with reference to Europe. Exploring this argument through European representations of colonial India, it becomes possible to trace a gradual distinction emerging, over the course of the nineteenth century, between two “types” of subjects—historical actors and traditional peoples, where the former denotes agency and consciousness, and the latter denotes habitual, unreflective practices. Through tracing this distinction, mapped over Europe and its colonies, it becomes possible

to discern the extent to which concepts such as “history,” “tradition,” the “past,” and “culture” cannot be presumed to have an a priori intelligibility. Rather, they were categories of differentiation born out of the specificity of nineteenth-century colonialism. It is only once we recognize the historicity of these concepts that it becomes possible to account for the paradoxical representation of India as possessing a vast antiquity and yet being bereft of history.

But if history constituted one site on which discourses of difference came to be articulated in the nineteenth century, racial science was an equally potent source of explanation. I approach the subject matter of nineteenth-century racial discourse via a circuitous route, which in fact subordinates the history of racial representations to a history of the body and shifting conceptions of subjectivity. Accordingly, chapter 4 begins with Renaissance representations of the body as an entity that is malleable, volatile, and transgressive. The fluidity and permeability attributed to the body in Renaissance thought—explored through reference to the wild man, monsters, hermaphrodites, and medical treatises of the time—constrained the possibilities of recognizing the body in clearly demarcated and racialized terms. The body for the Renaissance did not lend itself to categorical precision. In the Classical Age, a changed epistemic foundation no longer recognized the world and knowledge as divinely ordained. In this new context, only man was recognized as a subject, and it is only with reference to man that meaning, knowledge, and order were deemed possible. Within the episteme of the Classical Age, the body ceases to have volition and agency, and while it retains its malleability, it does so only in reference to the actions of men. Through reference to seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century writings on the imagination, pedagogy, and wild children, I argue that the body in the Classical Age is represented as subordinate and subjected to human reason and that for this very reason the body is not accorded the deterministic significance it was to have in the nineteenth century. It is in the nineteenth century that the body emerges as an intransigent, impassive, and impermeable object. Through reference to nineteenth-century criminal-identification techniques—particularly in the context of colonial India—I suggest that the very impermeability, fixity, and thus measurability of the body accords it with the paradoxical authority to both mark difference (for example, between races) and establish individualized identity (as in the case of policing technology). This chapter, in short, seeks to dem-

onstrate that any effort to write a history of race requires first and foremost that one trace the shifting contours of European conceptions of the body and subjectivity.

We arrive then at the end of the nineteenth century. There is no culminating endpoint to this history, for, as I argue in the epilogue, European encounters with and representations of cultural difference are no less fraught than they have been through the course of the history I narrate. What should be evident by the conclusion of this work is that contemporary representations and engagements with difference are not the fallout of some inevitable and self-evident historical logic but, rather, the product of a history that is indebted to human practices and human thought. The point of the epilogue—indeed, the utopian impulse of this book as a whole—is to suggest that this history can be unmade.