Bearing witness:

Interventions into 19th-century American missionary practice in Kurdistan

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After writing this paper, any acknowledgment of what made it possible feels not only inevitably inadequate but motivated by some perverse desire to disclose relations which have never been, and will never be, fully within my grasp. In the face of others, living and dead, how could I alone be left to determine the limits of my gratitude? It would be much more ethical to let *them* set the terms—but the structure of writing, unfortunately, forbids this; you would have to take that question up with them personally. Yet, even if you could, how dare I claim knowledge of all of the variables which made this work possible? In truth, that formula is not only incomprehensible but also, thank God, infinite.

Without minimizing the impact of those to whom I owe so much, then, writing this paper has taught me to never forget two things. First, only a very, very small measure of the impression others have left on my mind and my world will ever be comprehensible to me; the force which moves across these encounters is far more complex than I could ever imagine. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the list below could only ever be incomplete: recognition is owed to others I will never encounter—or perhaps already have, but those who will never come to mind again. Any acknowledgment, therefore, should begin and end with an acknowledgment of this necessary lack which restrains my ability to fully acknowledge.

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Lastly, and as testament, again, to the incompleteness of this list, I offer praise I am not worthy of giving to those figures who never asked for it: the American missionaries, the Kurdish, Turkish, and Persian elites who welcomed and protected the Americans as they pilgrimaged across foreign lands, the Christians served by the Urmia mission site, those legendary "mountain Nestorians" who lived secluded in central Kurdistan, and so many other nameless villagers who randomly, fleetingly surface in missionary archives. It is the story of the incredibly complex encounters of these long-dead figures which my writing has tried to, in its own way, bear witness. To say I am grateful seems to me far too imposing: allow me only to hope that in their present acknowledgment, and in everything which follows, I have not trespassed too deeply against them.

Abstract

Over the course of the 19th-century, American missionaries worked extensively on the border of the Ottoman and Persian Empires with a community of indigenous Christians they called ‘Nestorians,’ in a region known then, as it is known today, as ‘Kurdistan.’ Reading the archival material they left through a poststructural lens, this paper is a philosophically-grounded case study of the historical movement of American evangelicals into ‘Bible lands.’ While attentive to the many forms of violence missionaries wrought, this paper refuses to grant present-day social scientists the power to right historical wrongs by virtue of their alleged intellectual advancement beyond the missionary pasts they have displaced into archives. Rather, this paper argues that an ethical confrontation of the Nestorian Mission must entail ‘bearing witness’ to it—like the witness, the researcher must remain beholden not to a dispassionate analysis of artifacts but to the event of missionary work itself.

Keywords: archive; American missionaries; Nestorians

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Chapter 1

Returning, or, an introduction

History will absolve me.
Fidel Castro (1953)

The 'origin' of this paper—or at least the first moment when, upon reflection, I noticed something being consolidated, archived within my memory—comes from a line written in *Agha, Shaikh, and State* (Bruinessen 1992). Without neglecting the important criticisms waged against it (see Karimi et al. 2015), this seminal analysis of Kurdish political and social structures written by the Dutch Kurdologist Martin van Bruinessen has long been treated as a compulsory work of reference within the field of Kurdish studies. While the text focuses mainly on contemporary Kurdish society, van Bruinessen is never short of providing historical context to the Kurdistan he visited as a graduate student-anthropologist in the 1970s. The line which I hesitatingly name the fleeting origin of this paper arrives on the wake of one of these deep dives into history.

In his brief sketch of the development of Kurdish nationalism, van Bruinessen remarks that the concept had as a fundamental prerequisite a territorial homogeneity which up until the late 1800s, Kurds entirely lacked. Hence, Kurdish nationalism ought to be considered no older than such historical possibility. Certainly, as anyone in Kurdish studies will tell you, we know the genealogy of the name "Kurdistan" to date back to at least Xenophon's *Anabasis*, who provides the name *Corduene*, or land of the Carduchi, for a region through which the Army of Ten Thousand passed as they retreated from Persia in 401 B.C. (Bulloch and Morris 1993: 55). But it appears misleading, at least for van Bruinessen, to conflate the genealogy of the name *Kurdistan* with the concept of *nation*, a

modern and distinctly Western entity, radically foreign to the region. Van Bruinessen explains that, given the fluid coherence of Ottoman society at the time, within which ethnic groups entered relations of mutual (albeit asymmetrical) recognition, dependence and proximity, the sociospatial uniformity conveyed by the sign *nation* could not be conceivable without dramatic changes in the social and material conditions within the Ottoman Empire. One of these changes, van Bruinessen concludes, was the Armenian (and Assyrian) genocide: "Cynical as this may sound, it was the Armenian massacres that made a Kurdish state feasible" (1992: 269).

From the first time I read this line, the questions which came to mind had little to do with affirming or refuting its veracity but rather in understanding under what pretext a statement like this could be made, who could say it, and what work was being done when it was enunciated. With these questions in my purview, I must first note the work this line throws into relief: many non-Western historians, while still acknowledging the modern historicity of the concept of 'nation,' have located the roots of Kurdish ethnic identity *qua* Kurdish nationalism at moments significantly removed from the event of the Armenian and Assyrian genocides.[1] While some—particularly those trained in Western institutions to think of 'ethne *qua* nation' in terms broadly defined by Western scholars (e.g. Smith 1991, Hobsbawm 1990)—do locate the primary catalyst for Kurdish nationalism in the political fallout of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of modern nation states in the Middle East (e.g. Kaya 2012, Aziz 2014), others suggest that modern Kurdish nationalism emerged in Sheikh Ubdeydullah's uprising against Ottoman rule in 1881 (Jwaideh 2006: 292), others stress the importance of 16th-century production of *Sharafnameh,* a historiography of Kurdistan by Sharaf Khan (Hassanpour 1992, 1994: 3), and still others identify any ethnic group which has lived in the region of Kurdistan but has not since taken on a separate identity (analogous to the vague generalization commonly used today to describe highly disparate ancient Mediterranean cultures as 'Greek') as unequivocally, self-determinedly Kurdish (Izady 1992: xiii, 183-186). In addition, Van Bruinssen's line also obscures the troves of criticism waged against any attempt to uniformly define nationalism. Many Marxists (including Lenin, Stalin, Mao), as well as many anticolonial bourgeois leaders of

the Global South, took great pains to distinguish the nationalism of colonists—which does very often have an intimate association with the advent of genocide—against the nationalism among those who lived under colonization (see Chatterjee 2012: 11; and of course, most famously, Fanon 2005).

My reason for bringing these references to light is not to correct van Bruinessen, but rather to say that there is very different work being done when they conceptualize national identity than when van Bruinessen grounds Kurdish nationalism, however much with reservation, in genocide. Scholarship which either defends the long duration of subjugated peoples' perception of their own identity—i.e. as something irreducible to their historical 'introduction' into 'modern' concepts like nation—or radically distinguishes this coming-to-self from that of the colonist, is not just making a truth claim. It also acts as a political refusal to offer the very real oppressors of a people in the present (and in particular the oppressors' conscripted intellectual laborers, social scientists, philosophers, etc.) any historical or theoretical legitimacy to their violence. Too often, I am suggesting, the work being done by Western historiographies of Kurdistan—even among those who, like van Bruinessen, have declared sympathies for the Kurdish struggle—unwittingly plays to the political advantage of those who continue to deny the legitimacy of Kurdish identity. They do so precisely when they insist on either the ephemeral, recent emergence of Kurdish identity *qua* Kurdish nationalism and/or refute any and all nationalism as in some capacity ideologically backwards—e.g., as inherently genocidal.

As an example of how such statements can provide theoretical scaffolding for the political oppression of Kurds, consider that the Turkish state had throughout the 20th-century convinced itself that Kurds were simply "mountain Turks" who forgot who they really were, speaking not Kurdish but a bastardized Turkish dialect (Fakhry 2012: 40). In turn, the ethnic oppression of the Turkish state could not actually exist because, by the Turkish state's own account, there was no such thing as a Kurd. Both stances mentioned above (the historical contingency of Kurdishness and its backwards and barbaric origins) can easily be used to bolster this claim. More generally, then, it becomes clear here that neglection of the ways in which one's research narrative *can* serve specific interests—and,

moreover, to make so bold a statement as to say that Kurdish nationalism was itself built on genocide—is to be ignorant of how all enunciations, *regardless of their empirical veracity and regardless of the speaker's intent*, bear a political trajectory as they come to be circulated in the social world.

Now, whether specifically Kurdish nationalism or nationalism in general presuppose genocide is an important and provocative question to ask, one which I by no means want to dismiss but rather to problematize. My point is only that the very possibility of asking such a question far exceeds the assumption of political innocence by supposedly impartial social scientific research on Kurdish identity. Ultimately, then, what had bothered me about van Bruinessen is that a specifically empirical analysis of the 'facts,' through which he could restore Kurdish identity to its proper and 'original' contextualization can easily blind one to its explicitly and immediately political purchase—and, to be sure, this is as true for van Bruinessen as it is for the other empirically-grounded Kurdish studies scholars cited above.

Hence, my problem with van Bruinnesen's conclusion was never that it needed to be corrected, because it was not even necessarily 'wrong.' I was more interested in the limits empirical research presupposes, and why the empirical statement—or more precisely, the empirical *form* of such a statement—has come to *endure* in social scientific discourse. That is to say, first, even if data collected in the future comes to *disprove* the content of van Bruinessen's claim, and thus make another truth claim visible, it can do so only by adapting the very same empirical *form*. Already, then, we can say two things: one, a fact's *veracity* in the social sciences presupposes its *empiricity*, and, two, its political purchase, declared or not, comes to fruition as consequence of this empiricity. Whatever its truth value, the social scientific statement *circulates* in the social world, earns its political weight, *through the form of the empirical*—a form which I have just the same repeated by returning to it at the beginning of this paper, as a line I myself *experienced* while setting my eyes on that seminal work in Kurdish studies.

There is hence an underlying operation which occurred and continues to occur, and which has as its lingering, undead effect the circulation of all objects of knowledge in the

social sciences as *empirical* (i.e. as representations of that which has already happened and has already been placed, as being associated with a discrete event, or aggregated events, in space and time)—it is the *nature* of this economy, this production and distribution of empiricities, which concerns me.[2] Now, I am not saying that one cannot or should not go back to disputing the 'facts,' and hence to turning toward new rounds of empirical data to dispute old ones—and this paper is by no means short of such corrective claims. But I am saying that this conversation seems to always take for granted a deeply troubling and endlessly accumulating logic which deserves closer attention.[3] Beneath or before van Bruinessen's line, that is, there is a structure of thought, upon which the credibility of knowledge in the empirical sciences has increasingly come to rest.

First, we can say that this structure of thought begins with the axiomatic *assumption* that what is *real* is that which can be *experienced*, i.e. received by our faculties as a sensuous object situated in space and time. In turn, empirical science presumes (and not merely at the level of epistemology but as an *ontological* claim) that what *is* must be *representable* (and this does not at all exclude but rather emboldens and multiplies the scientific instruments which extend the realm of the representable far beyond man's rather limited sensory faculties). The real is not necessarily, that is, what *has already been* represented, but the real is, essentially, all that is *representable*. Put inversely, what is real is real *if and only if* it can be represented.[4] From this axiom, it follows that the real shares identity with its representation—to be sure, its *empirico-scientific* representation, as qualified by the formal scientific process. This is to say, in contrast to ideology, which it portrays (indeed produces) as a *subjective* mediation of an objective world, empirical science claims *immediate* expression of the real objects it represents—this is, in short, what qualifies the truth-quality of any empiricity.

But there is here an all-too-convenient slippage: science, insofar as it is informed by empiricism, does not therefore see itself as *producing* the empirical world, as if the empirical world were only its own private manufacture of representations. Rather, the mystique of empiricity allows for science to claim, when all is said and done, that it merely 'discovered' a truth anterior to any human knowledge of this truth, that scientific

knowledge is merely the reflection of something which had existed prior to investigation. In turn, the empirical world becomes *both* the *a priori* condition which allows one to perceive (i.e. the fact of empiricity provides for the universal condition that the real is that which has already happened), *and* the *a posteriori* object of knowledge which afterwards verifies the always-already-empirical nature of this cultivated truth. The empirical world becomes both ontological *ground* and epistemological *object* for a researcher-subject whose ultimate task is to collapse the distinction between the two, to insist on an identity between objective world and scientific image. The difficulty follows rather straightforwardly: if we necessarily take an identical, uniformly empirical world as both the founding presupposition of our knowledge *and* its object of representation, then we have a tendency, interior to our structure of thought, to abstract the concrete *production* of knowledge by a perceiving subject into the *observation* of a 'real' world which is *already and afterward* identical. Through empiricism, the subject can labor on the world in order to 'know' it—but, in doing so, he *obscures* knowledge *as such*, i.e. knowledge *as production and productive of world*. What is hence obscured in empiricism is the brute fact that in the very act of *knowing* the world, one necessarily *transforms* it—and I mean this in the very precise sense that *production* of the world is nothing other than the ex-changing of its *forms*.

Now, this slippage which obscures knowledge of production, knowledge *as* production, has always had its consequence in the silencing of the other, i.e. any entity which remains exterior to the common world *both* presupposed and transformed, any entity which remains *without form and unrepresentable*. Insofar as she is granted any ontological status, the other can only be produced in two ways: erroneously as an observable phenomena of (our) world (i.e. a known known), *or* as an imaginative otherness which marks the limit of our thought (i.e. as either a real problem, a known unknown, or otherwise a problematic, an unknown known). *Radical* alterity (an unknown unknown), is something which this structure of thought silences completely, both epistemologically and ontologically—indeed, *it cannot exist* because, in the specifically empiricist structure of thought, that which is unexperienced is unknowable and therefore *unproducible*. Hence,

this slippage between ground and object not only obscures knowledge as production (which is empiricism's ultimate problematic) but it forecloses any relation (or nonrelation) to pure alterity, to i.e. the unproducible and unrepresentable. If we understand the unproducible and the unrepresentable as, in a word, *the other*, then what I am saying is that the empiricist structure of thought forces the total *exclusion* of the exteriority of the other, the possibility of the other *as* exteriority.

Rectification of the silencing of the other in the social sciences has typically meant the *inclusion* of the other as appended subject of *our* common world.[5] There are two problems with this solution. First, pragmatically, 'inclusion' of others into a common world is a political process: it is made possible only by means of the transformation of their modes of life within new and alienating subjectivities, structured by the historically and geographically sedimented relations of power which work to maintain this common world. This is never to say that others cannot provide new *concrete substance* to the world, but that the *form* of their relation to the common world is overdetermined by this historical geographical structure. While I have already explained this in terms of the *empirical* form of objects of knowledge, in the realm of political economy, for several centuries now we can say that 'inclusion' of the other has ultimately meant the cultivation of her livelihood as serviceable to exploitation by capital—'inclusion,' that is, has inevitably amounted to an *extension* of the logic of capital accumulation. I cannot conceptualize a way of 'including' the other which does not also ultimately subordinate her to both logics of capital accumulation and empiricism. Since these logics fundamentally alter her nature, I believe this reconciliatory tactic to be in principle unethical. Second, and perhaps more importantly, regardless of the contemporary modes of either knowledge production or economic production, there will *always* be others who cannot be included in the commons (most obviously, our ancestors and our unborn posterity), and as a result this strategy to continue indefinitely to expand the commons will never include them. Efforts to act on their behalf are perhaps the most obvious examples of the violent and alienating transfiguration of the voice of the other into spirited masks for the most powerful political figures of today.

At least as I see it, the only responsible move for those who are utterly other, who have "nothing in common" (Lingis 1994), is to devise a notion of justice for the other as other—as someone who will not or cannot abide by the rules of the commons as a condition of her own existence, someone who cannot and will never be its subject. While, since Derrida and Levinas, this sentiment can be found in many corners of Continental philosophy, many social scientists, still so heavily informed by empiricism, have rarely attempted to maintain the radical alterity of the other as constitutive of their research practice—indeed, as I just explained, insofar as their research is empirical, they render the wholly other beyond the realm of possibility.[6]

After reading van Bruinessen's line, it is clear, then, I felt driven toward questions which were preliminary to any dispute over the 'facts:' what, for instance, does it mean for a Dutch Kurdologist to make such a powerful claim on Kurdish identity? Is it really the historical emergence of *nationalism* which demands a certain absence or negation of difference, or can we say that the identity between truth and presence is a deeper philosophical quandary associated with the very old relation in which meaning and presence are taken up with Being?[7] Put another way, is the 'origin' of this relation only detectable as a trace in the historical record of the rise of nations vis-à-vis genocide, or is there a precedent here which is much, much harder to escape? If empiricism as defined above is indeed this precedent, how did it come to be, and how does it continue to be?

Central to the historical development of the empiricist structure of thought, and hence the possibility of any intelligible relation to Kurds and Kurdistan, was the ambiguous figure of 'the West.' I first turned toward this figure in order to understand where and when 'Western' interest in Kurdistan and Kurdish people emerged—an interest, to be very clear, I obviously do not escape but an interest which I know only as an inheritance, which I, with every word in this paper, repeat. But following this intellectual genealogy of "Kurdology" proved more difficult than first anticipated, as the lines of heritage, like any family tree, split off in a myriad of directions the further I dug. There was, for instance, the Russian Orientalists who in the middle of the 19th-century defended Kurdish as not a Persian dialect but a distinct Indo-Iranian language (Leezenberg 2016: 2), a point of dissension which,

decades later, would help foster foundational works on Kurds written by two Russians in the early 20th-century: Vladimir Minorsky and Basile Nikitine (Leezenberg 2016: 4). Another line of inquiry, contemporary to these two Orientalists, was opened through interest in Kurdistan cultivated by British military officials like Mark Sykes (1908: 451-486) and Cecil J. Edmonds (1957). And of course, there is the importance of the context common to both: these two sites of knowledge production had been made possible by recent Western imperialist penetration into the Persian and Ottoman Empires, the intensified use of trade routes to East Asia after British industrialization, some of which passed through Kurdistan, as well as bloody skirmishes like the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), the Anglo-Persian War (1856-1857), and the 19th-century Russo-Persian Wars (1804-1813, 1826-1828). Yet, there was also, on a much longer timescale, evidence of both Italian monks (see Eppel 2016: 5) and even the famous Castilian Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela (Brauer 1993: 38) writing, visiting, and living in Kurdistan as early as the 12th-century. Minorsky, for example, comments and confirms some of these earlier medieval writings (1982[1931]). But is it reasonable to call either Minorsky or 12th-century Italian monks a facet of my 'Western' heritage? What, if anything, made these earlier accounts expressive of a distinctly 'Western' worldview, which in turn could illuminate a genealogy of my own 'Western' interest in Kurdistan?

This was the first clue: Only in retrospect, with a dazzling degree of presentism and under an intense pressure which builds and builds in the swelling of the West's cultural archive, could I call any of this my 'Western intellectual inheritance.' The grandeur of 'the West' is so often taken for granted, even by its most well-equipped critics (e.g. Said 1978, Smith 1999), that the radical instability of some of its most fundamental propositions are able to hide in plain sight. What is so Western about ancient Greece (and what is so 'Greek' about 2nd-century B.C. Athens vis-à-vis Sparta)? Or Christ? Or even Norman England? Why do we consider someone like St. Augustine of Hippo, a Roman African, a *Western* philosopher? Why are we seemingly always already critiquing the West on the basis of some of the most outlandish claims made by Western chauvinism—confirming its long duration and remarkably wide reach as a condition of any argument for or against it?[8] Akin

to the way in which we can refute truth only by submitting to the form of its relation to the empirical world, it seems that, likewise, refuting the West necessarily submits to form of argumentation having always already been defined in relation to the West.

In truth, there was nothing 'Western' about the event of Christ as it occurred, but through the sheer pressure and consolidation of an archive which we continue to strengthen, Christ can be inscribed as the penultimate figure of 'Western' 'religion' (and, we ought to ask, what is 'religion' if anything other than a product of 'Western' modernity? [Asad 2003]). I do not want to make it seem as if I am saying that such a claim of Christ as Western is simply erroneous, or that the West can be dissolved, and its historical figures salvaged, merely by pointing out the fundamental arbitrariness of what comes to be classified by the term. For me to deny that today there is a Western inflection always already present when I—a colonist by heritage if not also, wittingly or not, by practice—utter, "Jesus Christ," would be tantamount to denying the brutal history of modern Western proselytism and submitting blindly to the worst form of Eurocentrism. But, just as much as the empirical origin of the Western concept of 'nation' is able to somehow define the possibility of identities foreign to it, like being Kurdish, what I am saying is the very phenomena of the 'West' seems to be defined by the general schema which informs this task—namely, to neutralize the radical difference of the other by offering it historical and geographical representation, i.e. whose existence is contingent on its being-made-to-be-representable by the West.

This insight led me to the following question: can we name the underlying operation which enables events and figures of the past, events and figures no longer present, to retrospectively consolidate into a history of, e.g., the West, or the nation—to, in a word, become *empiricities*? It is through this operation that what is past (again, that which is no longer present) could again become *reproduced* as, e.g., Western—which would not simply represent the relation between myself and my historical circumstances, but would establish the possibility of temporal presence (the present) and nonpresence (the past) more generally, and hence the possibility of history. This operation, in other words, does not just reveal to the West its 'proper' origins; it also repeatedly confirms the absence of origin(s):

this operation *produces* the nonpresence of the past event (its radical singularity and its *unproducibility*) as *the* condition of its own being-present.

This operation is what I call in Chapter 2 *archivization*.[9] In Derrida's commentary on the subject, the root of the word "archive" coordinates two principles: the "commencement" of an origin, and the "commandment" of a law (1995: 1). "Archive fever" is the incessant, incurable compulsion to return to this absented point of reference—an archive (a principle, a law) which is always already displaced, a vanishing point in excess to what is present, safely shrouded in a position of exteriority—as a means of orienting and organizing our statements and actions. As Derrida writes, the archive is not of "memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience," but instead the archive "takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of said memory" (1995: 11). The institution of the archive, in other words, is the result of memory's *failure* to capture the event. The archive does not recover the event, rather it documents this failure. But, importantly, the archive is neither simply a space for dead things, nor is it ever a finished product. The archive is a *process* which paradoxically destroys, anarchives precisely that which it claims to archive (the event). Hence, analysis of the archive seemed for me fundamental in understanding how it is that we can meaningfully speak of 'the West' and its historical relation to Kurdistan vis-à-vis the event of their mutual encounter.

As detailed in Chapters 3 and 4, this way of approaching the archive encouraged me to look for that which was rendered either nonessential or accidental to scholarly Western interest in Kurdistan: namely, the missionary sites which not only accompanied scientific research in the region but preceded almost all of it by several decades.[10] Additionally, it was neither British diplomats nor European scientists but American missionaries which by far spent the most time among the native population of Kurdistan throughout the 19th-century. Neglect of the knowledge missionaries produced about the place and its inhabitants seemed to me a grave error if my attempt was to determine the origins of 'Western' interest in the region. More than that, however, the absence of discussion of the missionary enterprise seemed to me symptomatic of the way in which modern scientific practice has always tried to exorcise itself of its own religious heritage.

Bearing in mind how I had begun to approach the archive, I questioned whether this absence of religion, and in particular the religious form of knowledge production, was neither accidental nor an accomplishment but *the* perpetual condition of the possibility of the empirical human sciences. I wondered whether religion, or more simply *faith*, was being produced as a necessary absence within empiricist epistemology.

Not only were religious missionaries conspicuously absent from the knowledge which social science produces about itself, but also missing, both literally and figuratively in Kurdish studies, was their primary object of devotion: not, in the first instance, Kurds, but rather those members of the 'ancient' Church of the East whom they sought to 'revitalize.'[11] During World War I and the years following, there were several rounds of massacres waged against them by mostly irregular Kurdish forces—now collectively known as the Assyrian genocide—and most of these Christians were either expelled or fled their homeland, becoming refugees scattered across the British Mandate, and eventually across Europe and the United States. In addition to the missionaries who preceded professional scientists, then, I also chose in this paper to focus on the complementary absence of the objects which received their closest attention: the 'native' Christians who had been living among Kurds in Kurdistan up until World War I, with specific focus on those living in the central Kurdish mountains as well as the eastern fringe of Kurdistan at the edge of Lake Urmia, where the American missionary station in the city of Urmia was located (see Figure 1.1).

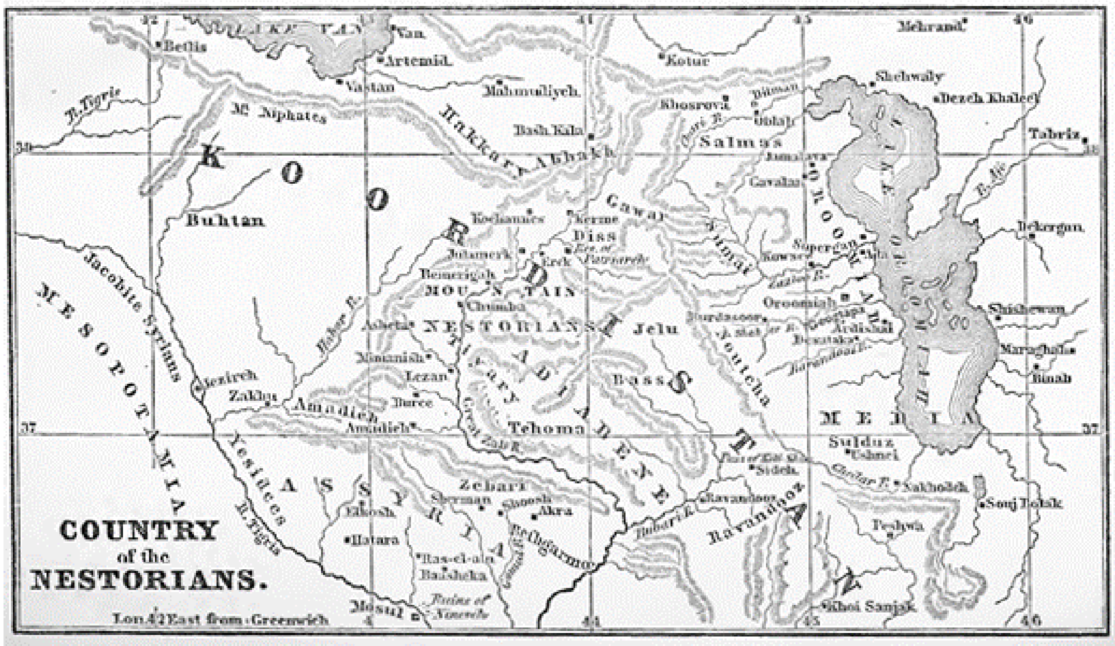


Figure 1.1: "Country of the Nestorians" (Perkins & Laurie 1862: 2). Note the superimposition of "KOORDISTAN" onto the Nestorian homeland.

Hence, the reader will quickly notice that the empirical data used in this paper is only ever indirectly concerned with Kurds, instead focused on the Assyrian Christians who lived among them, at a time when Western interest in the region was just beginning to develop. This is an admittedly confusing detour for a journey which started in comments on the foundations of Kurdish nationalism, but one I found absolutely necessary to do justice to van Bruinessen's line by the conclusion of this paper. That being said, the reader will find very little empirically relevant for Kurdish studies in this paper, but rather an investigation into the theoretical and empirical origins of *absence*—how, in other words, absence comes to be a constitutive part of our world. Maintaining the same sentiment as I previously declared with respect to writing a Kurdish historiography, however, I do not intend to amend that story with a history of the silencing of Assyrian Christians, and neither do I wish to map a geography of their displacement. Instead, I am interested in what the *eventual* absence of these Christians has to do with the gradual development of a 'empirical scientific' discourse which both van Bruinessen and I inherit.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I argue that the development of empirical discourse can be clearly seen as not substitutive but constitutive of missionary practice. This is not to say missionaries were identical to anthropologists, but that a transformation is doubtlessly taking place in their work, from the confirmation and dissemination of God's word to its *production* in so many objects of knowledge, one among many being the body of the 'Nestorian'—the name the missionaries will use to represent those members of the 'ancient' Church of the East. Far from being an outdated model of knowledge production, modern missionary practice *adapted to* and hence became *symptomatic of* an epistemological shift in the 19th-century, turning away from any religious form of knowledge production toward one which was thoroughly secular and empiricist. As I will show, it is absolutely mistaken to say that missionaries were on the 'religious' side of this divide inaugurated by the empirical human sciences, if by this one means they rejected empirical knowledge production. To the contrary, once they arrived to the first mission station in Urmia, missionaries were always already producing in the *form* of empirical knowledge, however much its content was still motivated by prophetic truth. What is most interesting to me in this transformation of missionary practice is the displacement and silencing of faith which the missionaries *themselves* conduct, and which scientific discourse today maintains as a means of grounding its own legitimacy.

Throughout the paper, I tried to pay scrupulous attention to my own archival process, and, in turn, I attempt to acknowledge missionary discourse only as a measure of my own inheritance—neither something which I am able to flippantly dismiss, nor their epistemic violence something from which I am able to cleanly expunge myself, but something which I cannot help but repeat. With this in mind, I try to define in Chapter 5 the chance, the possibility of movement in the archival process, an opening which could allow me to adequately bear responsibility for the violence of missionary practice. I discuss this possibility in terms of the double-practice of reading and writing. I again analyze missionary texts, in particular the Americans' increasingly obsessive emphasis on institutions of writing, in order to reread and repeat, however much with a difference, the very same practice they use to silence native Christians—that is, the practice of writing

which I, as researcher, cannot help but also deploy. Nevertheless, in this chapter I also identify specific empirical examples of indigenous resistance to imbrication in these institutions. By repeating these myself, I argue that, through the oscillation between the practices of reading and writing, the interiority of the text opens unto itself, allowing its subject the space and freedom, or at least the chance, to respond to the other.

It is only after the detours of Chapters 3, 4, and 5 as my 'context' that I felt it at all possible to approach responsibly the Assyrian genocide—and still then very reluctant to feign an escape from the knowledge production of the missionaries on the ground at the time. Indeed, in the Conclusion (Chapter 6), I can only 'return' to America (the land, in truth, I had never left). I returned to interpret a very remarkable phenomena guarded in the missionary archives: the case of "fraudulent Chaldean beggars" who were seen throughout the United States, Europe, and their respective colonies (see MacDonald 2013). In the wake of World War I, Christian sympathy for the plight of the Assyrians was at an unprecedented high, and their care and advocacy was felt as divine responsibility for missionaries of the abandoned Urmia station which had been rendered completely defunct from 1919 to 1923 (DeNovo 1963: 292). The appearance of many of these destitute Assyrians at home, however, was another story: in the minds of the missionaries, these "Chaldean beggars," as they came to be known, were nothing but petty charlatans taking advantage of the goodwill of the American people. While evidence of their appearance in England had been reported by the Foreign Bible Society in the 1830s (Perkins 1843: 350)—that is, soon after international missionary channels had been established in Kurdistan—and Perkins had decried their practice publicly since at least the publication of his 30-page sermon on the topic of begging (1860), the archives show that they had become an especially prominent concern within the United States after the Assyrian genocide.

I conclude this paper by suggesting the phenomena of these "Chaldean beggars" was a critical moment of parallax in the spatialization of Christian sympathy. That is to say, what their appearance allows one to bear witness to is not simply that Assyrians were able to exploit missionary infrastructure dedicated to their subjugation and silencing (Chapter 6). This is no doubt true, but what their appearance at home also unveiled was the

definite horizon of ostensibly universal Christian sympathy—i.e. it exposed universality as never the accomplishment of a specific community, but something premised on the exposure of the community to its utter exteriority (Karatani 2003: 53). Put another way, the existence of the Chaldean beggars within the spatial interiority of the United States radically challenged the proposition of Christian sympathy, revealing an absence of universality, i.e. it posed universality as a *problem*. In order to understand this rejection of Chaldean beggars, I suggest that we ought not abandon the proposition of sympathy, but rather bracket it: hold it in suspension *vis-à-vis* the phenomena of "Chaldean beggars" against which Christians held so much disdain. In turn, a "transcritical critical space" (Karatani 2003: 80) could here emerge, one which would illuminate the hidden, normative rules required for Christian sympathy, but which repositions a *universal* sympathy for the other on the unequivocal and primary basis that they *do not follow these rules*.

In all, this paper serves as a series of attempts to bear witness to others—the other of scientific practice (what has been named religion) as much as the other of missionary practice (what has been named Nestorian)—never on the basis of any *logos*, and never via any assimilation of the Other into the Self, but through maintaining their utter exteriority. This could not have possibly proceeded by way of writing their history or geography. Instead, I had to bear witness to their absence by other means, indirectly and unstably. Ultimately, and paradoxically, what underwrites each of these chapters is the insistence that such a relation to the other cannot be written, cannot at all be of the order of any linguistic expression. If the human sciences desire to maintain fidelity to those others they incessantly exclude from the production of their discourse in order to understand them, it is my overarching argument in this paper that we *must* find a better way of writing about what cannot be written. Invoking Derrida once again, we must find ways to render "*delirious* that interior voice that is the voice of the other in us" (1998: 71).

An open coda

A final prefatory note: this text is, at its highest aspiration, a work of thought—one which, like every work of thought, "cannot be concluded but only abandoned" (Agamben 2015: xiii). In writing everything below, I have tried to remain faithful to the text as something never finished, but something from which one, at some penultimate point, only withdraws. If I did not, my practice of writing would risk becoming either a programmatic reflex losing all sense of life, the mindless fleshing out of a paradigm into which I have been disciplined (Kuhn 1962), or the charade of transcendent inspiration which claims to immanently capture divine truths while yielding nothing other than, to use Spivak catachrestically, "meaningless piety" (1988: 271). Here, I cannot help but return to Althusser's opening comments in *Reading Capital*, a text which he refused to portray as a polished product, presenting it instead for what it was: "precisely, incomplete texts, the mere beginnings of a *reading*" (1970: 13). That this reading is also a writing, as I will show, presents us with the only possibility of movement across the text. Now, I do not mean at all to boast the same stature as that vast monument, only that I know I have never ceased to pay it my tithe (as the reader most likely can already tell in this introduction). Hence, like the work of Althusser—and, in faithful repetition, like the work of Marx—this text remains expressive of a necessary incompleteness to its own conceptual labor, catching itself in the movement toward a new problematic which has already occurred but which is not yet known, within which I can still *wonder* at Infinity precisely as I refuse to turn anything finite into an absolute (Horkheimer 1989: 94). Christians would rightly call this hope (*Elpis*).

My work here is not only incomplete but, as the reader will see, pitted in a struggle against itself, yearning to stand both inside and outside the space it criticizes, moving in parallax with reference to a vanishing point it strives to define but fails to escape. The text is contrite, admittedly stubborn in its own self-scrutiny, but I hope never masochistic. I write with tortured prose but neither for self-satisfaction nor without purpose: I earnestly believe this style of writing aids in the restoration of instability, ambiguity, and contradiction to a discipline which grants too much myopic privilege to inadequately

‘actionable’ solutions in the face of terrifyingly overwhelming problems. Perhaps history will absolve me, perhaps it will roll its eyes in admonition of the pitfalls hidden underneath such passé, ‘poststructural’ traps of thought. No matter the outcome, I can promise you, dear reader, that the tensions I intended to bring to the surface here have already dissipated. They have collapsed into each other in the form of a ‘completed’ ‘social science’ master’s thesis submitted to the University of Minnesota, kept quiet and copyrighted in its ever-engorging archives. In retrospect, upon reflection and return to that which has been archived within my memory, I could never have been so delirious as to believe I am not the interpellated researcher-subject I tried here to resist. My actions were always already overdetermined by those historical and material circumstances. But, in *Jetztzeit*, the time of the now, at the very moment I read/write this sentence, I refuse to forsake my faith, however absurd, that things could be otherwise.

Chapter 2

On the archive

> *Writing makes the dead so that the living can exist elsewhere. More exactly, it receives the dead that a social change has produced, so that the space opened by this past can be marked, and so that it will still be possible to connect what appears with what disappears.*
> Michel de Certeau (1988: 101)

Where am I going and what am I doing when I enter an archive? The purpose of this chapter is to attempt an answer. Before proceeding, however, I should make sure I understand what I am asking. This introduction serves to elaborate the three dimensions of this inquiry—the *where*, the *what*, and the *when*[1]—and explain their co-involvement.

The *where* defines a spatial relation. Presumably, I go *to* the archive because I cannot perform the task—let's say, leaving ambiguous for the moment, of 'writing history'—from the space of the present, from 'events' as they occur, *in* their occurrence. We can then say this with respect to the temporal conditions of writing history: a separation everywhere is first implied, between the event as it occurs and the event as it can be thought. "The activity that produces meaning and establishes an intelligibility of the past is also the symptom of an activity *endured*, the result of events and structurings that it changes into objects capable of being thought" (Certeau 1988: 44). What I am arguing in defining the *spatial* relation between the researcher and the archive, however, is that this is not simply a temporal endurance which separates present from past but also a *spatial movement* which separates presence (here) from nonpresence (there). Now, this does not mean that the archive is *not* present, or that it moves the researcher *beyond* the present. We must recall from Derrida that the event which is no longer present, is only ever thought in the "form of presence…or as a modalization of presence…as past presents or as future

presents" (1985: 34). But it would also be erroneous to say that the archive is *merely* present. The archive presupposes the utter alterity of the event, through which the oppositional logic of the archive, between presence and nonpresence, passes through. Put another way, to be archived, the event had to always already occur. The archive therefore maintains some relation between itself and the event it displaces, and it maintains this relation precisely by *moving* what remains as representative of the event into a new place for safekeeping. It is this archival place which is neither circumscribed completely in nor totally excluded by the present. Its presence exhibits instead what Derrida called spectrality (1994a), defined as the "non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present" (Postone 1998: 371). That archives can be made present at all is testament to this spectral quality of the living present.

The archive, in the very fact that organizes a *movement* through space and time, destabilizes the temporal and spatial divisions (here/there; present/past) which it produces. Like the Holy of Holies, what is curious about the archive is that it grounds itself and locates its authority at the threshold of a spatial division which grants those in its presence sacred access to nonpresence—that is, 'sacred' precisely because it is a relation to nonpresence, sacred because this nonpresence can be felt, hauntingly, as a presence only in its absence and separation. What distinguishes the archive from the holy site is that it is a spatiality within the present which stands as testament to a rupture between specifically *temporal* presence and nonpresence. That is, the archive does not separate time from eternity but rather disaggregates time itself, guarding the border between past and present.[2] Without the archive—or rather, without the interior temporal separation the archive maintains—our own origins could have never been considered *historical*. Put another way, in the archive, the nonpresence which comprised eternity, and which made possible the presence of the world, *transforms* into the past—represented by, made intelligible through its empiricity.

But there are traces of eternity still left in the writing of history: all historiography is preceded by a *hagiography*, impressed by the life of a historian (read: saint) which quietly privileges "places over those of time…The life of a Saint is a composition of

places" (Certeau 1988: 280-281). That is to say, it is still the historian's pilgrimage to the archive which makes 'writing history' possible. Additionally, not unlike the High Priest who entered the Holy of Holies every year on Yom Kippur in order to reiterate his singular relation to God, the cyclical temporality fashioned by a more ancient sense of eternity still leads the *n+1* generation of historian to return again to the archive, to reaffirm the worldly authority of truth.[3] And, like all holy sites, through intimate observance of the objects it guards—and, again, on specific condition of their being-there and not somewhere else; that is, their *being-archived*—this spatial relation of the archive is still made to be *productive* of a knowledge of nonpresence (eternity *qua* past).

It is hence very important to think of the archive not merely as a "repository" (Brown & Davis-Brown 1998: 17), but as a *spatial relation* productive of a certain *form* of knowledge. The archive is not only "the law of what can be said; the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events (Foucault 1989: 145), but even more broadly, the place where empiricity becomes a necessary condition of the event. Just as knowledge of God is possible only after the division between the sacred and profane can be established,[4] knowledge of History is only possible after an analogous division between presence and nonpresence *interior to* time occurs—a split which the historian *did not produce* but rather finds himself perpetually returning to—the result of which is the ordering of time as empirical.

Hence, the first aspect of the inquiry above, the *where* of the archive, concerns this *spatial relation* which ostensibly sanctions me as researcher the authority to produce knowledge about a species of nonpresence interior to empirical time—the past, or history. "If history leaves its proper place—the *limit* that it posits and receives—it is broken asunder, to become nothing more than a fiction (the narrative of what happened) or an epistemological reflection (the elucidation of its own working laws)" (Certeau 1988: 44). Let us call this spatial relation which maintains the status of time as empirical, and hence the past as historical, the *archival relation*.

The second aspect of the opening question interrogates the *what* of archival research practice. Let us call it the archival operation, or *archivization*. While critical

inquiry into archival methodology has been widespread in the discipline of historiography for decades (Gaillet 2012, Nora 1989, Steedman 1998, Stoler 2009), as has been noted (Gagen *et al*. 2007, Moore 2010), there is remarkably little sustained investigation and development of archival methods in the field of historical geography. This is very unfortunate because, as I just tried to outline, I do not believe the archive can be understood without acute attention to and explanation of the specifically *spatial* relation between researcher and archive, something which would putatively be more appropriate for those versed in geographical thought to grasp.

With respect to archival research practice, then, there is something about the placement of archival objects which seems to me clearly indispensable, and it is worth taking this spatial organization more seriously. For me, it has had to do with how the relation between what is present and what is not unfolds across space (here-there), and how this relation grants specific, present domains and their subjects (including myself) the authority to produce knowledge about what is not present from a position *interior to* the (temporal) present. This would be, tentatively speaking, a true geography of the archive. Although this project would strive to answer a very old question, one for which the entire history of Christianity serves as a response, it takes on a new secular-temporal significance within modern historiography.[5]

Nevertheless, the most well-known critical treatments of the archive from within the subdiscipline of historical geography (Ogborn 2003, Kurtz 2001) are more concerned with fostering a greater sensitivity to the sociopolitical construction of archives as they 'found' them, particularly as sites structured by colonial encounters. This is doubtlessly important work to conduct, but the distinction drawn between method of analysis and the objects under investigation poorly conceptualizes both the spatial and operational relation between the researcher-subject and the archive. These works implicitly posit their own archival research as separate *enough* from the colonial encounters they 'find' in archives, such that they are able to re-present them and thus render them intelligible by virtue of this historical (and geographical) distance. Even in the historian Ann Laura Stoler's remarkable work *Along the Archival Grain* (2009),[6] the question of method lends itself only to new,

appended considerations of, e.g., the affectivities archives harbor, the subjectivities which organized their knowledge claims, and the thingliness in themselves 'in themselves'—hence, to read them more 'critically,' through the strategies of the most exciting theoretical trends of today, as old ideas "blazed by a new mentality" (Certeau 2000: 8). We see here the subtle creep of the empiricist relation between subject and object which underwrites our practice, a slippage between the object of knowledge I produce (according to an ostensibly critical, anti-colonial politics) and the *a priori* entities I find yelling back at me in the archives.

There is less scholarship which reflexively questions how archival research is *itself* a method of archivization.[7] For me, any clean distinction between archival research methodology and the archival object itself is absolutely untenable. We must think of archival research as not simply commentary on or insights extracted *from* or *about* an archive, as if we were ever able to stand as detached hermeneuts circumferential to our object of study. Instead, archival research *is* archivization; it can only be understood *as a repetition and reproduction of the archive*. I am not 'finding' colonial objects of knowledge in the archive; I am actively participating in the practice of archivization which reproduces them with every pen stroke. Every impression which presses ink on parchment is an *archive*. In writing, I am *producing and transforming* archival objects as I simultaneously *displace* them. Archivization, in sum, is the act of displacement, the consignment of things to an exteriority, an archive. In this process, they are transformed into empiricities; they become voices of the past which are only after allowed to speak their truth to the present.

Lastly, we have the question of *when*, which seeks (but always fails) to define the very moment of archivization just elucidated: that precise moment when an event is recorded, when an experience is rendered iterable, i.e. *representable* and therefore intelligible. It is important here, as Derrida does in *Archive Fever* (1995), to draw on Freud. Through psychoanalysis Freud strove perhaps closer than anyone before to establish a relation to this exact moment, when an originary force compels—but has not yet accomplished, is itself still *living*—a split between presence and nonpresence, sacred and profane, that force which rests completely outside of memory, which precedes the archive

as that which can be remembered, which in fact presupposes Foucault's "law of what can be said," precedes the very possibility of all historical positivity. To ask of the *when* of archivization is to seek to capture that moment in Freud's *Studies on Hysteria* (2000) when, at the site of Hanold's archaeological dig, the stones which he uncovered could speak for themselves. The moment when the stones spoke for themselves would be the moment when the archive "*comes to efface itself*, it becomes transparent or unessential so as to let the *origin* present itself in person. Live, without mediation and without delay. Without even the memory of a translation, once the intense work of translation has succeeded" (1995: 93). Derrida's remarkable description of Freud's desire to capture this moment in the postscript of *Archive Fever* is worth quoting at length:

> [Freud] wants to be an archivist who is more of an archaeologist than the archaeologist. And, of course, closer to the ultimate cause, a better etiologist than his novelist. He wants to exhume a more archaic *impression*, he wants to exhibit a more archaic *imprint* than the one the other archaeologists of all kinds bustle around, those of literature and those of classical objective science, an imprint that is singular each time, an impression that is almost no longer an archive but almost confuses itself with the pressure of the footstep that leaves its still-living mark on a substrate, a surface, a place of origin. When the step is still one with the subjectile. In the instant when the printed archive is yet to be detached from the primary impression in its singular, irreproducible, and archaic origin. In the instant when the imprint is yet to be left, abandoned by the pressure of this impression. In the instant of the pure auto-affection, in the indistinction of the active and the passive, of a touching and the touched. An archive which would in sum confuse itself with the *arkhe*, with the origin of which it is only the *type*, the *typos*, the iterable letter or character. (1995: 97-98)

And while it is true that no one better than Freud illuminated the "archontic principle" in its psychosexual dimensions, that no one had more vividly demonstrated how the archive—the consignation of both law and its origin *over there* to a space of nonpresence, a repressed memory of murdering the father—only "posited itself to repeat itself and returned to re-posit itself only in parricide;" it is also true that Freud *could not help* but reproduce the archive, in all of its patriarchal logic (Derrida 1995: 95). In the end, when all was said and done, psychoanalysis only served to raise the stakes, to "outbid" its own "classical" forebearers. My point is hence that *I too* am not cured of this fever which Derrida identifies as archivization: a fever which compels me to return to the origin,

consigned as it is to the archive which destroys it. In turn, I repress the Law of the Father, assign it to a place of excess, only then to live *according to it*.[8]

To ask *what* happens *when* is, therefore, to necessarily repeat the archontic principle. To again be clear, I am not therefore dismissive of this operation. Much the opposite: I can only live up to it, admit to this patri-archal ordering of thought so as to, if nothing else, confront it as such. It is both a necessary and impossible question: necessary because only from the archive can I proceed from the law of what can be said, i.e. only from the archive can I say anything at all, and impossible because there is no *when* of archivization—archivization, this consignation and displacement, is that which makes the *when* possible, from which every *when* arises. To ask, "when?" is to archive archivization, and is, hence, necessarily to *anarchive*, to remove that which makes the archive an archive, *from* the archive. Put another way, archivization must logically *precede* its own occurrence; its *when* is precisely that which is anarchived, destroyed, irreparably lost. The *when* of the archive, the capture of which would explain the commencement and the commandment to which I am always already responding, is the zero-point which "cannot have a place in history—an originary non-place—without which, however, there would be no historiography" (Certeau 1988: 91). Or, as Derrida writes, the structure of the archive is spectral *a priori*: "neither present nor absent 'in the flesh,' neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met, no more than those of Hamlet's father, thanks to the possibility of a visor" (Derrida 1995: 84).

I believe the conceptual development of these three elements—the archival relation, the archival operation, and the moment of archivization—allow for a more sophisticated understanding of the work being done in this paper and historical geography more generally than what methodologists in the subdiscipline have come to offer. Altogether, I call this ensemble of elements and their mutual co-involvement the *movement of the archive*. To call this a movement means to resist an explanation of method which would simply and ambiguously proclaim that, through the inspection of artefacts guarded in archival crypts, carefully excavated under some formal guide written by the sharpest theoretical lenses of the present, I have faithfully reconstructed a historical geography of American Protestant

missionary work in Kurdistan. Now, I am not saying I have not been informed by my institutional training—as I am trying to say, if I have said anything at all, it is only by obliging the Father! I am only saying that the archive is always moving. In turn, I could never 're-present' those events in themselves, neither could I apply a method to an *a priori* given historical situation which orders an ensemble of empiricities. I, the historian, am *moving with* the empiricities I reproduce in the archive.[9]

Writing history is thus always a matter of *enacting* the archive, its "performative repetition," which can only ever "illuminate, read, interpret, establish its object, namely a given inheritance, by inscribing itself into it, that is to say by opening it and by enriching it enough to have a rightful place in it" (Derrida 1995: 67). Ultimately, then, what I do when I enter the archive—which is to say what is *necessary* for me to do from before the beginning of every moment of my life, as always already in an archive, already archived and already archiving, what I *cannot but help* to do—is live up to something which has already been asked of me: to want for something I *cannot not* want, a home and inheritance which, since *before* the beginning, conceals the ground of my own being. Derrida writes:

> Inheritance is never a *given*, it is always a task…the *being* of what we are is first of all inheritance, whether we like it or know it or not…To bear witness would be to bear witness to what we *are* insofar as we *inherit*, and that—here is the circle, here is the chance, or the finitude—we inherit the very thing that allows us to bear witness to it. (1994a: 67-68)

In spite of its sacred appearance, which claims its status only by virtue of its banishment from the world, I find myself always returning to the archive: it is what I am and what I do. To seek either its dismissal or its ruin would not in the least be subversive. To the contrary, such self-destruction is the very condition of possibility of the archive—as much as the death drive is fundamental to being human (the circle, the chance, the finitude), destruction of the archive is the archive's own founding principle.

Bearing witness to silence

There is no meta-archive.
Jacques Derrida (1995: 67)

Now, to follow-up on a previous footnote (3): is there a concept of the archive? From what I just explained, it follows that to ask this is necessarily to ask if there is an *archivable* concept of archive. It is hence nothing less than one species of the general philosophical question: can that which enables the condition of thought itself be thought? And, moreover, *when* is this concept? *Who* could articulate this concept? While, above, I explained, at least indirectly, how Derrida walked through the impossibility of an answer in his reading of Freud, it is perhaps more bluntly, if too "excitedly" (Bennington 2014: 116), illuminated in the critique Derrida wages against Foucault in his essay "Cogito and the History of Madness" (1978).[10]

The notoriety of this exchange is now well-known. It helped to inaugurate a ten-year silence between two of the highest-profile figures in 20th-century French philosophy (Derrida 1994b: 227). Originally presented in 1963, Derrida's comments focus on Foucault's then-recently published work, *Folie et Déraison: Historie de la folie a l'age classique* (1961),[11] but I believe they diagnose a rather stubborn problem in Foucault's thought which carries on into *The Order of Things* (1989 [1966]) and *An Archaeology of Knowledge* (1989 [1969]), and hence his most direct analyses of the archive—if not also into his late work. Among the relatively modest criticisms Derrida lays against Foucault, there are also more serious, even embarrassing charges in the essay, particularly as he puts into question the scholarly integrity of Foucault's study of Descartes. To put it bluntly, Derrida's most notorious suggestion in the essay is that Foucault simply did not read Descartes carefully, or even completely, when the latter argues that the 16th-century philosopher sought to "exorcise" madness from the doubting subject, as the means by which he rendered absolutely silent its threat to classical reason (Foucault 1965: 108). According to Derrida's rereading, Descartes had clearly left madness as an open and

inextinguishable possibility *interior to* the structure of thought, i.e. Cogito. In turn, Derrida suggests Descartes never forgot that the possibility of madness is *always* a constituent aspect of consciousness, one which reason could never expel. Now, in the second edition of *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault attached an appendix, entitled "My Body, This Paper, This Fire" (2006 [1972]) in which he rather stubbornly defends the accuracy of his reading to the detriment of actually responding to Derrida's latent philosophical critique: the much more serious problem of attempting to construct a discourse on madness, or any other, from the "interiority of thought" (Derrida 1978: 57). This initial provocation by Derrida, and especially its pivotal figure, Descartes, proved for me indispensable to think through the archive—which, I believe, becomes in Derrida's later work *Archive Fever* (1995) the place within which this problem ultimately culminates.

Therefore, Derrida's argument against Foucault is worth elaborating in further detail. First, it is clear that Derrida from the start of his essay does not cast Foucault's project as either reductivist or in league with the 'modern' historiographies which Foucault is explicitly moving against. No, in writing on madness, Foucault's project is thoroughly critical insofar as it is a project which actively seeks to avoid the

> trap or objectivist naivete that would consist in writing a history of untamed madness, of madness as it carries itself and breathes before being caught and paralyzed in the nets of classical reason, from within the very language of classical reason itself, utilizing the concepts that were the historical instruments of the capture of madness—the restrained and restraining language of reason. Foucault's determination to avoid this trap is constant. (Derrida 1978: 41)

This project, then—against any "history" of the language of madness, any discourse on madness which would leave it subject and disciplined to the reason which defines itself on the basis of its exclusion—would be, in Foucault's own famous words, not a history of madness *per se* but an "archaeology of that silence" (1965: xi). As with Freud, we see that for Foucault there is a similar fascination with the practice of archaeology. There is something of the *arkhe*, it seems, which escapes confinement within either an historical or metahistorical narrative, something which—as opposed to the historian who writes history—the archaeologist 'happens across.' It is a practice, for Foucault at least, clearly distinct from the *production* of a historical discourse, which would not imply *a priori*

coherence but rather the shock at, even humor of originary dissension or disruption (Foucault 1977), a division which had produced an *over there* all along, unbeknownst to us. Hence, again, like Freud, it seems it is also Foucault's desire to capture in writing that zero-point of history which precedes its own occurrence, to bear witness to the event itself. Now, to be very clear, Foucault never claims direct access to the "inaccessible primitive purity" of madness—but rather to uncover, through an archaeology, the "decision" of this split which rendered it silent (qt. Derrida 1978: 43-46).

As much as Derrida indeed stands sympathetic to this project, and its grounding in the historical, political, even ethical necessity of a kind of revolution against the tyranny of reason, he nevertheless feels compelled to question how it is that such an 'archaeology' is not also itself an "ordering," "syntax," or "work," which would hence simultaneously be the "subtle restoration, the *repetition*, in the most irreducibly ambiguous meaning of the word, of the act perpetrated against madness" (Derrida 1978: 41). This is Derrida's first suspicion against Foucault: *if* this Order, as Foucault will later express it (1989), is so powerful, it is so precisely because it "comprises all those who understand it in its own language, even when this language provides them with the form of their own denunciation. Order is then denounced within order" (1978: 42). The problem is Foucault does not claim simply to denounce Order or Reason from the inside, but rather, in an archaeology of silence, to *bear witness* to the movement of its outside—madness becoming unreason. In turn, Derrida asks a question Foucault never answers: whence arrives this privileged position to "exceed the totality" (Derrida 1978: 68) of Reason, which could "hyperbolically" define its Order—or, even more, in Foucault's own later conceptualization of the archive, the "historical *a priori*" (1969: 142)?

"*Total* disengagement from the *totality* of the historical language responsible for the exile of madness," Derrida goes on, "would be possible in only two ways. *Either* do not mention a certain silence…*or* follow the madman down the road of his exile" (1978: 42). Put another way, in a tautological inversion of Wittgenstein: what *can* be spoken *cannot* be silent (2001: §7). In order to be heard, an "archaeology of silence" is just as much subject to the rules of speech it finds itself opposing. From Hegel onward, Derrida

writes, we have learned to be suspicious of any revolution against reason which enunciates itself only *within* reason: "The exterior (is) the interior, is the fission that produces and divides it along the lines of the Hegelian *Entzweiung* [disassociation]" (1978: 46). In truth, history "against" reason "cannot be written, for, despite all appearance to the contrary, the concept of history has always been a rational one" (1978: 43). What Foucault therefore inevitably draws into the realm of inquiry is not *madness* in itself but its internalization within a higher order of reason outbidding what preexisted—or, put another way, a higher *bidding* repeating the *same* order of that "classical" reason he labors so virulently against.

But Derrida does not conclude here: in waging his attack, he does not therefore dismiss or displace Foucault.[12] Instead, the charm of Derrida's most provocative criticisms is that they act as accomplices in both intent and consequence with what is critiqued. Derrida therefore refuses to afford himself an *even higher* bidding with which to dismiss Foucault's claims, that he serves instead as Foucault's (and before, Freud's) most clandestine son—inviting both, in Yerushalmi's brilliant formulation, into a "monologue *with*" (1993). Put another way, Derrida first responds to Foucault as a measure of his own inheritance. He indeed begins the essay saying as much, calling himself Foucault's "disciple" who is "already challenged by the master's voice within him that precedes his own" (Derrida 1978: 36-37). Further, Derrida notes, this relation always arouses a certain "interminable unhappiness" in the disciple, who "does not yet know—or is still concealing from himself—that the master, like real life, may always be absent" (Derrida 1978: 37). For the disciple to "start to speak" is therefore not to simply subdue or deny his voice, but to break this "mirror," or this "infinite speculation on the master" which disables the very possibility of an encounter with the other (Derrida 1978: 37).

Derrida finds his voice not by denying Foucault's claim but indeed by engaging the "simultaneous necessity and impossibility" of "a language declining, in principle if not in fact, to articulate itself along the lines of the syntax of reason" (1978: 44). He intervenes into this project, but from an entirely different dimension than Foucault's characteristic 'philosophy of the concept:' Derrida does not desire to directly fabricate a *concept of* or even *language for* madness, but rather asks to what *subject* madness here could speak. Put

another way, Derrida asks for *whom* such a movement on discourse, through "the agency of what speech," standing between the "double monologue that opposes reason and madness during the classical age" could be considered possible (1978: 44). The subject who could produce such a project as Foucault's, as a 'history of madness,' is one who, Derrida points out, lives at a time when a "certain liberation of madness has [already] gotten underway…that the concept of madness as unreason, if it ever had a unity, has [already] been dislocated" (1978: 45). Derrida therefore identifies Foucault as a specific historical subject (as Foucault historicizes Descartes), through which such a *history* or, as Foucault wishes, *archaeology* of (or, in truth, *discourse* on) madness is made possible.

But, in waging this criticism, Derrida does not himself leave history or leave himself de-historicized (i.e., de-subjectivized). Rather, he knows he can think historicity only from a position interior to history, straining to, like Foucault, hear the echo of what history has silenced. But by the very act of linking the capacity to think madness with a given historical formation, however, Derrida finds his voice in a pivot against Foucault's project, a means to break the mirror. He questions further what silence exists *today*, for the subject known as Foucault, in the enclosure of 'madness' within Foucauldian discourse, indeed the silence which gives the subject 'Foucault' its form (1978: 74). Or, as Derrida writes decades later, "my question [in "Cogito and the History of Madness"] concerned the *site* that *today* gives rise to a history of madness and thereby makes it possible" (1994b: 231-232). Derrida thus points to a question which, to Foucault's dismay, repeats, through parenthetical addendum, the same question which began this section: can what allows (myself) the subject to think (*today*) itself be thought? What Foucault seems habitually reluctant to admit is that this question can never be a historical question: as with the question of the archive, the *when* or the event of the concept would necessarily precede its historicization. This question would be a prerequisite to thinking either historically, genealogically, or archaeologically; it is necessarily philosophical—and, as it turns out, it is precisely *here*, in the opening of *this* philosophical question, where Derrida turns to re-read Descartes.

At the point where Foucault picks up his reading of *Meditations,* Descartes is still considering madness as a means of questioning whether, through sensory experience, there can ever arrive certainty. As is well known, he famously rejects this proposition, but at this particular moment in the text, he is still trying to devise an argument against the "naïve philosopher" to prove that sensory perception can never be unequivocally trusted. To demonstrate this, he uses the example of the madman, who sees things that aren't there without knowing that they aren't there and without knowing he's mad. Descartes deduces that there is nothing in his own sensory faculties which could verify that the things he sees couldn't be the product of some undetectable madness. Descartes suspects, however, that the naïve philosopher will refuse to entertain this line of thought because, merely by virtue of their understanding each other, the naïve philosopher could verify with absolute certainty that Descartes is or is not mad, and therefore his claim of possible insanity to be absurd. At this point, Descartes abandons madness simply because it is not helpful to persuade the naïve philosopher of the latent condition of doubt which is always possible in any sensory perception. The case of madness proves either too singular or too easily discredited by social verification, so he instead points to a more *universal* yet simultaneously *singular* experience: dreaming. It is finally and only with dreaming that Descartes feels he can convince the naïve philosopher that ideas of sensory origin must always be subject to doubt—because, in a dream, one is able to derive knowledge from one's senses that is entirely unsubstantiated and erroneous, despite the fact that one can feel with absolute certainty in his senses those objects of knowledge to be really perceived. Moreover, the others who surround oneself in a dream are mere figments of my own imagination, hence their confirmation or denunciation of one's madness would be equally unreliable. That it is always possible that one might be dreaming, then, provides sufficient reason to doubt the veracity of sensory experience.

This is where, Derrida claims, Foucault abandons his critique, in the "premetaphysical" stage of Descartes' treatise, where Descartes focuses his concern exclusively on immediate sensory experience and perception (1978: 63). Foucault's argument presumes that at this point Descartes has already excluded the question of

madness, long before even considering Cogito. Derrida writes that later in the text, after having disposed of all sensory perception as a basis for truth, Descartes proceeds to the consideration of *total* madness: that which could always threaten thought, even in the absence of empirical reality. It is here where Descartes contends that, if one is to communicate intelligible meaning at all, madness must be escaped both in fact, i.e. from *natural*, or sensory doubt, as well as in *in principle*, i.e. from *intellectual*, or critical doubt.

Descartes therefore could not abandon madness. Rather, in order to 'discover' Cogito as absolute certainty, he is forced to *include* madness as a latent possibility interior to the structure of thought—that is to say, *cogito ergo sum* does not expel madness but the exact opposite: *cogito ergo sum* holds *even if* I am mad. It would have never been enough to simply externalize madness as a latent doubt within sensory objects of knowledge. What Descartes' argument testifies is that madness *returns*. When it shows up, reason does its best to internalize it, but the threat of madness—which is to say, the threat of alterity, disorder, chaos, the other—is irreducible. "The perpetual threat, that is, the shadow of haunting," as Derrida will later say,

> does not challenge only one thing or another; it threatens the logic that distinguishes between one thing and another, the very logic of exclusion or foreclosure, as well as the history that is founded upon this logic and its alternatives. What is excluded is, of course, never simply excluded, not by the cogito nor by anything else, without this eventually returning—and that is what a certain psychoanalysis will have also helped us to understand (1994b: 242).

The question of this return, of how to conceptualize its possibility, is precisely that which cannot be circumscribed by any determinant historical structure. What Descartes shows is that the radical doubt which arises from the possibility of madness—or, more simply, its error—must be considered a *possibility in principle*; it can no longer remain beholden to any concrete experience.

There is no moment *in history* which we could point to as that which splits reason from madness, e.g., as Foucault contends, that "Decision" which organizes the production of classical reason. On the contrary, Derrida insists that Descartes' claim can only be evaluated on the basis of whether it is correct for discourse *in general*:

> In its most impoverished syntax, logos is reason and, indeed, a historical reason. And if madness in general, beyond any factitious and determined historical structure, is the absence of a work, then madness is indeed, essentially and generally, silence, stifled speech, within a caesura and a wound that *open up* life as *historicity in general*. Not a determined silence, imposed at one given moment rather than at any other, but a silence essentially linked to an act of force and a prohibition which open history and speech. *In general*…Although the silence of madness is the absence of a work, this silence is not simply the work's epigraph, nor is it, as concerns language and meaning, outside the work. Like nonmeaning, silence is the work's limit and profound resource. (Derrida 1978: 65-66)

Now, silence is always evoked from the interiority of thought, the very enunciation of which assures the subject his proper distance (1978: 66)[13]. But it is not, and can never be, a (historical) work—it is not a product of the subject but something which the subject is affected by. Madness is only madness if it is madness *beyond* the historical formation of subjectivity, beyond that which *makes possible* human life as historicity. It is by this definition of madness, then, that Derrida provocatively suggests Foucault's own work as inevitably transforming into, when writing a discourse on madness, a "Cartesian gesture for the twentieth century. A reappropriation of negativity. To all appearances, it is reason that he interns, but, like Descartes, he chooses the reason of yesterday as his target and not the possibility of meaning in general" (1978: 66). Derrida's critique amounts to repeating the impossible questions: how can one think the thought which would allow one to think? *What* is the *when* of *that* concept?

Derrida is not alone in this line of questioning. By Karatani's account, it extends back at least to the "Kantian turn," as already having devised a way of thinking through the alterity which underwrites the historical structure of thought. Kant derives this possibility from the "transcendental stance," initiated by what he calls a "pronounced parallax…notably dogged by otherness" (Karatani 2003: 47-52). As Karatani explains, what is meant here is something like the moment when one is made aware of the "thrownness" (2003: 30) of his own experience by way of an intervention of the phenomenal perception of another. As an example, Karatani uses the conflation of phenomena which occurred at the advent of photography, during which the camera, presenting a perspective and productive of objects exterior to experience, could be introduced *within* the subject's structure of thought. What the camera was thus able to do

was reveal certain, very intimate things, such as one's own face, as *more than* their subjective, phenomenal appearance (i.e. as a thing-in-itself), precisely by holding unstably two phenomena at once (i.e. my face in a mirror, and my face in a photograph), within the same structure of subjectivity (held in parallax). Such a position thus makes possible a 'transcendental stance' which, without ever escaping subjectivity, reveals something which undoubtedly exists but is radically distinct from anything the subject had experienced. Put another way, the camera unveils the fact that I can never truly see my own face *as it is*, and that what I had seen and known as my face had only ever been its image.

Now, this parallax view is profoundly unstable, and it cannot comprise a discourse: eventually people get used to the face in the photograph; they accept the objectivity of the mechanical image, as a 'real' image of themselves. But in saying this, we must be very careful: it is possible to erroneously think that what Kant constructs through the parallax view is the slow, steady swallowing of the alterity of the other by willful, subjective consciousness, such that the other serves only to fall into, and can only ever be thought as, a phenomenon of subjective experience. But, according to Karatani, what Kant was trying to do in defining the transcendental stance at the point of parallax, is something completely different. His transcendental stance is not an idealist escape from (or return to) subjectivity on the basis of the exterior perception of other subjects; instead it was the attempt to implode his own subjective self-scrutiny precisely by confining himself to it. "Though it is a self-scrutiny through and through, the transcendental reflection inscribes others' viewpoint. Said inversely, though it is impersonal through and through, the transcendental reflection is still self-scrutiny" (Karatani 2003: 49). The parallax view does not escape subjectivity, but in doing so premises the possibility of subjectivity on an utter exteriority, i.e. the other—both the other subject and the thing-in-itself.

Karatani contends that Descartes, far from being radically solipsistic in his denunciation of all sensory perception, was indeed nearly to the point of reaching Kant's transcendental stance. His major error, however, was in conflating subjectivities: namely, the 'doubting' empirical subject with the 'thinking' subject. Indeed, as in Derrida's reading, Descartes' "hyperbolical movement" is quite like the pronounced parallax of Kant, in

which Descartes pits his own thinking against total madness in the structure of Cogito, which is a singular and absolute certainty transcendent to *both* reason and madness—there is a "value and a meaning of the Cogito, as of existence, which escape the alternative of a determined madness or a determined reason" (Derrida 1978: 67). In the experience of Cogito, Descartes *outbids* both reason and madness; he claims to think a thought which is the absolute condition for both. This would seem to have the appearance of the "transcendental standpoint" just elaborated—but, as Karatani notes, Descartes can only do so by obscuring the "I" which thinks with the doubting "I," which in turn confuses its self-evidence for the "I" which thinks as proof of its identity with the transcendental "I" (2003: 87). Put another way, Descartes never comes to terms with the fact that 'doubt' is not something the subject *wills into* his structure of thought, but something which enters the structure of subjectivity solely on the basis of the intervention of the other. Descartes never admits that the transcendental standpoint which can be reached at this point is *neither* the standpoint of the original empirical subject, *nor* is it the standpoint of the critical, doubting subject—it is the open interiority of thought which could only be made possible by the existence of the other, and hence which only arrives transcendentally.

It is here where, Karatani argues, Kant breaks radically from Descartes, by always locating the "transcendental critique" in a position "distinct from the faculties discovered by it" (2003: 95). The transcendental critique does not emerge 'from' the thinking subject—again, the parallax view does not comprise a discourse. Instead, it emerges precisely from the parallax view which radically *transcends* the cognitive faculties from which it could be thought. For Kant, this meant the "'interstice' between empiricism and rationalism…Between them [Kant] encountered the paradox between being in the world and being the subject who constitutes the world" (2003: 95). What Kant discovered at the point of their interstice was not, like Descartes, Cogito-as-rational-self, but instead a transcendental movement—not, that is, of the conscious subject, structured as he is in a particular discourse and therefore in obeisance to its social and historical formation, but a *movement of the other* which always falls outside.

This and only this, is what confers freedom (the ability to act beyond what overdetermines you as subject) and hence responsibility in the world, i.e. freedom can arise only vis-à-vis the others who cannot be anticipated, for whom one must respond, but can do so only transcendentally (Karatani 2003: 124). The subject who acts freely, who traverses history, then, is precisely the one who *experiences* his own subjectivity—what is historically given in order to think, what structures consciousness—in pronounced parallax, i.e. experiences his discursive formation as *the movement of difference*, at its interstice:

> The historicity proper to philosophy is located and constituted in the transition, the dialogue between hyperbole and the finite structure, between that which exceeds the totality and the closed totality, in the difference between history and historicity; that is, in the place where, or rather at the moment when, the Cogito and all that it symbolizes here (madness, derangement, hyperbole, etc.) pronounce and reassure themselves then to fall, necessarily forgetting themselves until their reactivation, their reawakening in another statement of the excess which also later will become another decline and another crisis. From its very first breath, speech, confined to this temporal rhythm of crisis and reawakening, is able to open the space for discourse only by emprisoning madness. This rhythm, moreover, is not an alternation that additionally would be temporal. It is rather the movement of temporalization itself as concerns that which unites it to the movement of logos. But this violent liberation of speech is possible and can be pursued only in the extent to which it keeps itself resolutely and consciously at the greatest possible proximity to the abuse that is the usage of speech—just close enough to *say* violence, to dialogue with itself as irreducible violence, and just far enough to *live* and live as speech. Due to this, crisis or oblivion perhaps is not an accident, but rather the destiny of speaking philosophy—the philosophy which lives only by emprisoning madness, but which would die as thought, and by a still worse violence, if a new speech did not at every instant liberate previous madness while enclosing within itself, in its present existence, the madman of the day. It is only by virtue of this oppression of madness that finite-thought, that is to say, history, can reign. (Derrida 1978: 73-74)

Therefore, the only chance which could afford escape of the enclosure of the "madman of the day" lies in the space of what Karatani calls transcritique—that which is initiated by a pronounced parallax at work *within* the present structure of thought, that which does not return the Other to the Self but which guarantees the other as something *in excess to* both my experience and my cognitive faculties. The transcritical space is "where one has to confront different languages, thoughts, and value systems; and from which it is impossible to induce a certain positive doctrine" (Karatani 2003: 135-136). In turn,

transcritique serves to inscribe the viewpoint of the other while never leaving self-scrutiny, introducing "an objectivity (qua otherness) that is totally alien to the conventional space of introspection-mirror" (2003: 49). This objectivity can only be experienced as an openness fundamental to experience *itself*, as the necessary possibility of constant displacement. Indeed, not just a function of experience but of *archivization*—that is, in the very act of archiving, inscribing, consigning, conferring our experience, we must also *displace* it from the realm of the living. Operating within the transcritical space is tantamount to performing this archival, scriptural *movement* within the open interiority the text.

How does this flight into dated philosophical debates help us better understand the archive? By now, it should at least be clear that when I speak of the archive (despite not being able to define its concept), I am by no means using a conventional definition. The archive is not simply a physical place where one goes—as if by archive I was only referring to specific locations, e.g., in my research, the vaults underneath Houghton Library, or those at the Presbyterian Historical Society. The archive is a place which mediates the spatial relation between temporal presence and nonpresence—and even this description I hope does not sound too conclusive but rather inadequate and provisional. Further, my own writing about the archive necessarily contradicts itself: I have implied that the archive is both an inaccessible place, prior to the advent of a *when*, yet also, insofar as I caught myself archiving in the very act of asking *what* happens *when* I enter the archive, I implied that I was always already *in* an archive, already archiving, and that the archive is something I had been tasked with, since before the beginning, of living up to. The archive is, then, not exactly the "law of what can be said," as Foucault argued. It is a place which memorializes (which is to say, repeats what is lost, mourns for it) not the *logos* or language of History, but its *other*.

Insofar as I can only speak as historian *from* the archive, I accrue an authority to produce knowledge of something which has rendered absent—i.e. the past, a temporal other. Again, I remind the reader of the affinity archivization has with consecration, and hence the archival relation with the sacred relation: what archivization *does*, in spatial terms, is consign things *over there* to a privileged place, entrusts them to a reserve in excess

to the present but without ever transgressing it, "in a system of synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration…The archontic principle of the archive is also a principle of consignation, that is, of gathering together" (Derrida 1995: 3). This is to say that to produce knowledge about the past, to render the past as an object of knowledge, implies not only a temporal division which displaces the past from the present but *also* an analogous spatial division between presence and non-presence, a division which both the archive and its faithful technicians (historians, archivists) serve to maintain. I can only be responsible for this knowledge—that is, in both senses, I can only be held responsible for it, and I can only *act* responsibly with it—insofar as I inherit it and commit to make room inside of it to be affected by others.

Despite her dismissal of Derrida, Steedman (1998) in fact also affirms this. She is indeed keenly attentive to historiography as a spatial *process* which labors on memory, such that the archive is both the site of its production and the space it produces. Against Derrida (although without adequately considering the discourse of Freudian psychoanalysis to which he is clearly responding), she sharply distinguishes memory as not *merely* the raw material of historiography, neither is it synonymous with archive: "The Archive is not potentially made up of *everything*, as is human memory; and it is not the fathomless and timeless place in which nothing goes away, as is the unconscious" (1998: 67). Practices of memory are what initially gave rise to history, Steedman insists, and they are not in themselves defined by the cultural activity of historiography.

Nevertheless, her larger point is that historiography has indeed shaped memory since its emergence, in particular via its mediation by the archive. For Steedman, what is interesting about this archival mediation is its apparent reversal of the

> general impulse of modernity, to turn space into place, and to find a home in the world… The Archive then is something through the cultural activity of History, can become Memory's potential space, one of the few realms of the modern imagination where hard-won and carefully constructed place can return to boundless, limitless space. (1988: 78)

What the archive serves to do, then, as the "potential space" of memory, is offer its participants an openness and capacity to imagine which is *spacing* rather than ordering and constricting. To put back into the terms I am trying to develop here, Steedman sees in this

archival and sacred relation to nonpresence a raw potentiality which moves *beyond* what has been historically determined, beyond the present which is organized and secured within modernity in pure stasis, exhumed of all becoming, all 'chaos.' She reproduces, to repeat Descartes, the archive as hyperbolical, while striving, or claiming to strive, for something like the transcendental stance of Kant.

In turn, I must repeat again: as much as priests are not the mediums of any eternal realm transcendent to History, neither do archives or their historians provide us with secret doors to open, limitless space. In this sense I am an unequivocal materialist: no intelligible *concept* transgresses what is historically given, precedes what Foucault called the "historical *a priori*" (1989: 142-148).[14] To think the archive is always to already ground it; it cannot be thought of as *a priori* space. But that does not mean it can only be negatively defined, i.e. only in terms of historical places, empiricities. Rather, space is affirmed as the *spacing* of place—such that the task of the geographer, ultimately, is to "let space take place" (Doel 1999: 10). What is most important, according to our philosophical investigation, is in how we name *who* is doing the return: absolute freedom is *not* a condition of the structured subject; it is a condition of the subject of this 'interstitial space'—and this is the ultimate lesson I take from the long detour through Foucault, Derrida, Descartes, and Karatani. What returns to "boundless, limitless space" is not 'us,' insofar as we are historical subjects, productive of knowledge of objects by virtue of our relation to them. No, what always returns is that *pure difference*, that *otherness*, which nevertheless can only arrive *interior to* our structure of thought, that which made possible knowledge, emplacement of the archive, intelligibility of the past, foreign lands, and ourselves. It is only through committed relation to this pure difference, positioned always an exteriority, that any experience of freedom, or any movement of thought, can arise.

Itinerant archival intervention

Language is not the 'house of being' (Heidegger), but the place of itinerant alteration.
Michel de Certeau (1988: 317)

In a paper published nearly two decades ago, Barnett brought Derrida into conversation with the field of human geography in an attempt to, in his words, "deconstruct" the presumption of "context" which plagued the discipline (1999).[15] The imperative to contextualize, Barnett feared, was awarded too much taken-for-granted authority by the social sciences, such that historical, geographical, cultural, political, etc. 'context' had, without much critical inquiry into the meaning of context, become the necessary ground for understanding otherwise abstract principles, ideas, discourses, representations, and so on. Put another way, in order to be understood at all, geographical thought needed to be given coordinates, staged in a specific location, attached to or in fulfillment of the particular places which furbished its identity—but that there could be this distinction between stage and act in the first place was always assumed, never proven.

What Barnett sought to question, under the moniker of "deconstructive analysis," is hence precisely this moment of enclosure which separates text from context and allows us to experience them both as such (1999: 282). In his interrogation, deconstruction does not do away with context, as has always seemed to be implied in Derrida's frequently misquoted, notorious line on the subject (1976: 158). Rather, as Derrida went on to say: "if there is no-thing outside the text, this implies, with the transformation of the concept of text in general, that the text is no longer the snug air-tight inside of an interiority or an identity-to-itself…but rather a different placement of the effects of opening and closing" (1981: 35-6). Deconstruction reveals context to no longer be the stable, common ground of received understanding, as it simultaneously reveals that the meaning of a text is not simply the projection of its context. In their mutual disposition—their pronounced parallax—emerges a transcendental critique, in Karatani's (or Kant's) sense, which can only and always open the subject to the possibility of the other, precisely in the affirmation

that the text is *always already other to itself* (again recall the specter, the non-contemporaneity to the living present). Indeed, like the Kantian transcendental position, this possibility of the other is something which "can only be thought, but cannot *be* or *exist*, that is, it cannot be *intuited*" (Karatani 2003: 87). The transcendental stance, like the possibility of the other, is always distinct from the faculties which discovered it—it does not belong, in Cartesian terms, to the 'thinking subject' but instead the 'doubt' fostered in the "field of social difference" (Karatani 2003: 80).

Still further, Barnett argues that "deconstructive analysis" illuminates the fact that to be read 'out of context' is a fundamental condition of any writing as writing: "writing must be repeatable and remain legible even in the event of the disappearance of its author or any specifiable addressee" (1999: 286). Not only is this a fundamental condition of writing, Barnett goes on, but a condition of all language: in order to communicate meaning at all, it must from the very beginning have an iterable and hence displacing capacity to exceed the event of its enunciation and be understood. This means that the possibility of repetition guarantees meaning is from the beginning in excess, such that there is no way to read the text as if it were only 'completed' by its proper 'context.'

Far from therefore dispensing context, however, in deconstruction the reader "affirms a heightened awareness of contextualization, [now] understood as the limitless potential for texts to be rearticulated in an infinite number of times and places" (Barnett 1999: 288). Without this opening always already interior to the text, no movement, spacing, or transference of meaning would be possible—or, what amounts to the same thing, meaning would not be possible.[16] Conversely, we betray the possibility of the movement of meaning (and hence the possibility of meaning itself) the moment we write text and context into determined *a priori* opposition, such that the text does nothing but 'return' to the identity of the context which originally expressed it. No, the text never 'returns,' its origin *is* this dislocation of meaning established by the very fact of its iterability. The fact that meaning can be repeated affirms the possibility of their escape from 'context' from the very moment of its enunciation.[17]

Hence, only in deconstruction—and particularly deconstruction of context as containment, origin, or identity of meaning—can reading and writing become 'free' acts, and therefore only in deconstruction do questions of justice or responsibility become visible (Derrida 2002). It is in this precise sense that Derrida describes his interpretation of deconstruction as no longer exegetical but a "political intervention in the political rewriting of the text and its destination" (1985: 32). I can assume responsibility for the text only when my reading and writing are no longer merely loyal to where the text was 'really' headed all along, where it had 'really' imagined itself ending up, but rather when I make space for, or abide by, the "other *of* [that] heading," again in Derrida's sense (1993). That is, I can only act responsibly in the world when I am not only beholden to some meaning terminable by 'context' but also when I bear myself open and accepting of an interminable otherness which traverses all meaning—to put back into Karatani's terms, when I also affirm the possibility of unanticipatibility *within* my own subjective self-scrutiny. This responsibility always comes in the temporal tense of a futurity, even when its reference point is a past event, such that the question of reading, e.g., missionary archives so as to bear witness to their deconstruction, cannot be a question of *what* happened *when*, of returning meanings to their broadened colonial and cultural contexts (Makdisi 2008),[18] and neither can it be a return to the historical context of the text's archivization (cf. Ogborn 2001, Kurtz 2001).

After transcritique, or perhaps at precisely its moment, the return to the archives can never be a "straightforward going back to the empirical world" (Karatani 2003: 97). Reading the archive responsibly can only be an opening toward "the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow. The archive: if we want to know what that will have meant, we will only know in times to come. Perhaps" (Derrida 1995: 36). Counterintuitively, the question of the archive has absolutely nothing to do with a 'return' to what 'really' happened, i.e. a return to more empirics, and neither does it concern the feigned restoration of authentic historical or geographical context. To read the archive responsibly is not really to 'return' to history at all—if we are to know what it means, the archive must rest on a performative "to come

whose archive no longer has any relation to the record of what is, to the record of the presence of what is or will have been *actually present*" (Derrida 1995: 72). Its meaning rests, ultimately, not on any order of knowledge, but on a *faith* that what promises itself *now*, when one reads the archive, will come, *is* that which comes.

It is in this deliberately tortured manner that I have desired to write on American missionaries in Kurdistan. I repeat: I am by no means seeking to reconstruct a history or geography of modern Western missionary work, in either apologetic affirmation (Blincoe 1998, Coakley 1992, Taylor 2014) or critical denunciation (Rogers 2011, Harris 1999, Makdisi 2008, Grabill 1971, Tejirian & Simon 2002, 2014). "The voguish desire," Doel noted two decades ago with just as much relevance today, "to engage in theoretical accommodation, *rapprochement* and reconstruction on the basis of a summation of perspectives is counterproductive; one cannot overcome, or efface, a vanishing point through the accumulation of lines of flight" (1993: 384). This does not mean I have not remained sensitive to spatial and temporal difference; indeed, in my encounter with missionary texts, like Doel I seek nothing *but* to "grasp, write and perform the *movement* of difference" (Doel 1993: 377). But this is an entirely different understanding of difference than one which seeks to gather up all their observable instantiations in order to archive them—or, even worse, simply submit them as 'subjects' back into the commons—and which can no longer mean the de- and re-construction of an old discourse "blazed by a new mentality" (Certeau 2000: 8).

More importantly, insofar as my reading is faithful to 'deconstruction,' it is only insofar as deconstruction has nothing to do with a "destruction, dismantling, un-building and fragmentation" of the world around us (Doel 1993: 384). Deconstruction is not a *labor* of negation (madness is never a work!), neither will it ever be the holy office of the priest *qua* researcher-subject. Quite the contrary, it is that which *resists* the impartial and retrospective work of so-called 'critical' analysis: this incessant stitching and splicing which the observation of difference allegedly affords the researcher via his own privileged tools of disciplinary knowledge/power. Make no mistake: if a geographer is telling you how things are different *over there,* he is always already anticipating returning this

difference to an economy of the same—already secretly, pervasively preparing in *your* mind the possibility of rendering this difference intelligible—of assimilating and conquering its otherness in his own discrete/discreet colonization of meaning.[19] My desire is of an entirely different order: to experience the monstrous monstrosity which arrives when, I repeat, we render "*delirious* that interior voice that is the voice of the other in us" (Derrida 1998: 71). This is still an intervention, to be sure—into the text, into the archive, and so on. Or rather, it is an *itinerant* intervention into the text: roaming, always in search of an author, abiding not to what is intervened but the mere fact that such intervention always moves oneself elsewhere, without the time necessary to prepare in advance.

But I must be very careful here: this paper should absolutely not be taken as anything like the tired ethnographic exercise of 'denaturalizing' one's own ideology "in order to reveal the cultural, a peculiar blend of objective arbitrariness (things human could be, and indeed elsewhere are, otherwise) and subjective taken-for-grantedness" (Rosaldo 1989: 39). Again, I do not desire that my project arrive at the expense of the other, at the labor of her negation, or as a feigned and unsolicited leap into her 'world' solely for the benefit of enriching the mundane experiences of my own. No, as I have tried to explain, I desire to displace my own inheritance without any delusional and violent pretense of escaping it, precisely by *bearing witness to this inheritance*, by *living up* to and freely acknowledging responsibility for it.[20] Again, and, that which renders myself delirious is the voice of the other *already within me*. With every word, I am on the search for what Derrida had described as the hyperbolic "first act" of Cogito (1978: 67), that Cartesian *salto mortale* which *perhaps* exceeded, however unstably, all that was historically given—a faith which dives, as Kierkegaard would say, into the absurd. But further still, to receive this *faith* through the most radical doubt, at the height of a pronounced parallax which, on the basis of my own self-scrutiny, might eventually serve not to conscript me into the discipline, doing nothing but digging up more flesh to present to its epistemological groundskeepers, but rather to *happen across it* in the course of my living, as a measure of my own inheritance, already irreparably unsettled and displaced.

Chapter 3

The legend of the Chaldeans/Nestorians/Assyrians

> *Little by little [the writing of history] has replaced the myths of yesterday with a practice of meaning. As a practice (and not by virtue of the discourses that are its result) it symbolizes a society capable of managing the space that it provides for itself, of replacing the obscurity of the lived body with the expression of a 'will to know' or a 'will to dominate' the body, of changing inherited traditions into a textual product or, in short, of being turned into a blank page that it should itself be able to write. This practice of history is an ambitious, progressive, also utopian practice that is linked to the endless institution of areas 'proper,' where a will to power can be inscribed in terms of reason. It has the value of a scientific model. It is not content with a hidden 'truth' that needs to be discovered; it produces a symbol through the very relation between a space newly designated within time and a modus operandi that fabricates 'scenarios' capable of organizing practices into a currently intelligible discourse—namely, the task of 'the making of history.' Indissociable from the destiny of writing in the modern and contemporary West until now, historiography nonetheless has the qualities of grasping scriptural invention in its relation with the elements it inherits, of operating right where the given must be transformed into a construct, of building representations with past materials, of being situated, finally, on this frontier of the present where, simultaneously, a past must be made from a tradition (by exclusion) and where nothing must be lost in the process (exploitation by means of new methods).*
>
> Michel de Certeau (1988: 6)

The previous chapter amounted in not a stable declaration of method but an itinerant "intervention" into a historical geography of missionary work in Kurdistan (see also Ismail 2005: xxxviii-xxxix). That is, the intent of my research, in Doel's words, is again not to fabricate a historical geography of missionaries but to "grasp, write and perform the *movement* of [temporal, spatial] difference," that movement which makes possible a

historical geography—that chance, that parallax (1993: 377). It is a movement I live up to, which I cannot help but desire to repeat, however much with a difference.

Now, my opposition to writing a historical geography of the American mission to Kurdistan will be perhaps most evident in the fact that, again influenced by Barnett, the 'contextualization' of missionary practice, a ubiquitous habit of history and geography research papers, is only sparingly deployed here. This is very deliberate: I do not believe the 'real' 'context' of missionaries is where my writing receives its authority. To be clear, this is not a matter of any willy-nilly abandonment of context. I do not make *absent* context, but I do leave it intentionally impoverished, wanting. Any consideration of historical and geographical context below should never be understood as deterministic of the objects of analysis—whether the missionary texts or the native Christians—but as purposefully unsettling and incomplete. I do this because I am trying to think of context in a very different way than that which produces the text as either its concentrated reflection or its exhaustive distillation. In reading, I am always *repeating* the text in a new 'context,' and the text shapes this context as much as the context shapes the text. Thus, against a historical geography which would serve to resituate missionaries in their 'proper' context, I try only to read missionaries as, one, a movement, and two, a measure of my own inheritance—i.e. the missionaries which I am reading with the posture of an (ostensibly) scientific researcher. In reading the archives, I cannot help but repeat their work—their movement—however much with a difference, as the necessary means of my bearing witness to it.

This should not at all imply apologetics. I am hardly enthusiastic about or blindly devotional toward my inheritance (nor should I be). Quite on the contrary, I will confront their violence (Chapter 5), but I believe that a meaningful confrontation can only take place as itself a confrontation 'in context' with the violence I myself wage on *that* text, precisely as I rewrite it. 'Context,' if it still has any meaning here, cannot be that which fully encloses a text, that which defines its possibility and production, but context as that which *bears its face* to the text so as to mutilate it and be mutilated by it. The ultimate context of any text, therefore, is *the reader*, this strange subject who must bear his face in order to receive any meaning from the text.

It is not at all my desire to receive the archival materials I read as an "unintended, purloined letter" (Steedman 1998: 72): to do so re-entrenches outmoded privileges of the historian as subject and archive as object; and, moreover, it misunderstands the relations between intention, subject, and structure. To say that in the archive, I can wield such power as to unveil hidden meanings written by long-dead missionaries is a voyeuristic fetish. If I had managed to say anything in the last chapter, it could not be surmised from this that unintended messages are even what I believe the archive in the first place contains. The object in the archive bears only a trace of the event of the purloined letter. The object in the archive is not this letter; it is an *artifact* which, insofar as it actively structures my subjectification as researcher, is always already and entirely 'intending' my research, long before I enter.

To read is hence always to read *vulnerably*: to read is to expose oneself to the text. Two centuries and thousands of miles could not mask the need, regardless of intention, to bear my face when I read, and it is not as if when I see and affect the text, the text cannot see and affect me. *Pace* Foucault, I do not and cannot desire to lose my face either when I read or when I write (1989: 19). Now, today one has many instruments which make it very easy to ignore one's own face, or to treat the text as if it had no face—and modern scientific practice, like missionary practice, would be nothing if not for the ability to do both.[1] But the truth is I cannot help but bear my face to the text, and thus I open myself to the possibility of the same trespasses with which I scrutinize it, the same misunderstandings, challenges, violations. I wrote what follows in Chapters 3 and 4 attempting to always be receptive of the fact that I bear my face, and to imagine what the text might read when it reads me. This, in turn, has led me to refuse any radical distinction between what I am writing and what has been written by these missionaries. Indeed, it is my underlying claim in the chapter that the social scientist repeats, takes up tasks already prepared by the missionary. I do not doubt that I repeat this errand.[2]

To state the argument of these next two chapters clearly: 19th-century American missionaries to Kurdistan were modern scientific thinkers who, fearing the grip of secular thought at home, attempted to reconstruct their faith elsewhere, but they did so on

epistemological grounds which were already thoroughly empiricist. This project failed not because faith was no longer possible but because faith was rendered antithetical to an empirical reason. Whereas empiricism demands falsifiability and a sensuousness toward truth, a truth which demands faith is both unfalsifiable and non-sensuous. But this failure to reconcile faith with empiricism was not simply a result of bad judgment on the part of the missionary: insofar as they were committed to empiricist epistemology, my point is that it was not possible for missionaries to see this discrepancy, precisely because faith is that which is rendered silent within empiricism; it is the visible field of empiricism which structures faith as its interior invisibility.

However, far from desiring some final exorcism of faith from the world—which, to note, has been *the* political task of modern science, a task which it has miserably failed to accomplish—I believe there is something to learn here about faith's excessive relation to empirical reason which has too often been obscured by the historical havoc of Western 'religion' and its complicity with Western imperialism.[3] I am hazarding to say that what one can *learn* from the crisis of meaning which transforms missionary practice below is that faith is a principle which constitutes the very possibility of knowledge production, even as it remains invisible within empiricist thought. To read missionary work in Kurdistan closely, therefore, is not to feign purity from their general structure of their 'ideology' (read false consciousness), and neither is it to approach them with the fiction of a sober scientific mind which can see now, with the privilege of a 'critical' vision cultivated over the course of nearly two centuries, what was concurrently present then—had the missionaries not been so ideologically blind to be able to notice. No, the task in my view is to work *within* their structure of thought as part and parcel of my own, in order to identify with its fundamental contradiction (namely, that between faith and empirical reason), so as to open their texts to new movements.

In what follows, I study the source materials written by 19th-century missionaries on the "Nestorian," a which name they apply to the ancestors of those who today most commonly self-identify as Assyrian Christians (and sometimes Assyro-Chaldean or Syriac). Akin to something like the use of the term 'Indian' for inhabitants of the New

World, I believe this not simply to be an error of ignorance but evidence of the emergence of a different object of knowledge radically distinct from the others which it named—that is, the construction of the Nestorian not as wholly other but as something symptomatic of a new epistemological structure within which missionary practice necessarily operated. As a term, to be sure, "Nestorian" far predates American missionaries (see Yohannan 1916: 4-5), but it is repeated here with a difference. It serves as testament to a gradual, historical and geographical shift in the Christian's relation to the other, from one which premises itself on a divine truth guaranteed in advance and everywhere, toward one which adapts to the mold of empiricist knowledge production of the modern human sciences. Put another way, Christian experience in the world shifts from confirmation and dissemination of God's word to its empirical *production* in so many objects of knowledge, one among many being the body of the Nestorian.[4]

On naming a rumor

> *Shut out from intercourse with the rest of the world by the nature of the place, [the Chaldeans] are never visited by travellers. The face of the country is partly plain and partly mountainous; but the mountain tract is by far the most extensive, and so very healthy, that the plague, which sometimes rages in the countries all around, has never been known to infect this district. The population consists of about 500,000 persons, who are all Christians. They are free and independent of the Arabs, Turks, Persians, or Tartars, in the midst of whom they are situated; and though several attempts have been made in different ages to subdue them, they successfully repulsed them all. The last great effort was made by the Turks in the beginning of the 17th century, in which they lost 100,000 men and five pachas, and have never since attempted to invade them. The Chaldeans constantly live with arms in their hands to preserve their independence, and they do no lay them aside even when they assemble in the churches for divine service on Sundays. Their government is a republican form, at the head of which, is a patriarch, who exercises both a spiritual and civil jurisdiction.*
>
> *The Missionary Herald* (xxii: 120)

Above is the first account of Nestorians (here still called 'Chaldeans') recorded by American missionaries. I will first consider the work that this initiation of the Nestorian into missionary discourse, before moving on in the next chapter to the 'empirics' of

missionary practice, i.e. the consolidation of the Nestorian into a disciplined history and geography. It is important to clarify that this is not a strictly linear relation: the work of this story does not have as its final or even intended product the historically and geographically consolidated Nestorian object. To the contrary: the work of this initial story in many ways (as explained below) works *against* the conscription of the Nestorian into an empirical object. This narrative will have to be reworked, repeated, and renovated. An analysis of the *difference* of these repetitions is what concerns me here. It is this movement of difference into both a new history and a new geography which will allow for the production of a Nestorian object.

To begin, one can see that the story repeated above hardly constitutes a scientific report, instead maintaining something like the status of a legend—a narrative received from elsewhere, finding harbor in a space between pure fable and empirical falsifiability.[5] Yet, even in its initial reception, it is far from innocent. We can be sure that an "operation" has already taken place; its retelling has "eliminated otherness and its dangers in order to retain only those fragments of the past which are locked into the puzzle of a present time" (Certeau 1988: 287). Already, that is, we can say that the Nestorian presents himself as a pressing concern for missionaries, even in his legendary form, as a mystery to be unveiled through their vocation. But we can also say that the legend does not reveal itself as such, as already the product of an operation; rather, it presents itself as the "raw material," in Althusser's sense, of an unwritten text, which missionary practice will serve to labor upon, but raw material which is in itself

> already elaborated and transformed, precisely by the imposition of the complex (sensuous-technical-ideological) structure which constitutes it as an *object of knowledge*, however crude, which constitutes it as the object it will transform, whose *forms* it will change in the course of its development process in order to produce knowledges which are constantly *transformed* but will always apply to its *object*, in the sense of *object of knowledge.* (1970: 43)

That is to say, while the legend presents the Nestorian as something raw and unadulterated, hidden in the heart of the Middle East, to be gradually recovered through missionary labors, we must immediately clarify that the missionary already starts with one object of knowledge, already organized, "however crude," and it will be transformed into another—

what I have been calling since the previous chapter, borrowing from Foucault—'empiricity,' which takes History as its mode of being.

Now, legends are only one source of raw material circulating within the "complex (sensuous-technical-ideological) structure" of modern scientific thought, alongside e.g. both quantitative 'data' and qualitative 'experience.' Legends, however, retain the especially nude quality of a rumor, marking them with a very different weight and movement than data, subjective experience, an established fact, or even the most speculative scientific theory. Ironically, the lack of their seriousness allows them far greater freedom of range: rumors can be passed along without much resistance precisely because they are not expected to 'live up to' the rigor, exactitude, and discipline of objects of scientific production, nor are they under the auspices of some perceptive subject. Rumors appear without any authorship, property, agency, or subjectivity whatsoever. They can skillfully navigate vast distances, evading capture. As a sacrifice, however, they give up any claim to veracity—hence, under empiricism, when received as a rumor, legends lose any inherent authority. They must be read as deaf and dumb to their own voice and movement: rumors know not what they do. Nevertheless, the rumor is one of the most important ways through which the voice of the other echoes, reverberates across a discourse.

The shift in status of the Nestorian as rumor to empirical object reveals a great deal about what is happening to the missionary's relation to the other. The rumor is both a comfort in what it conceals and a discontent in what it reveals. *Comforting* and *concealing* because, as raw material, there are so many places left in the legend for the other to hide—their texture holds together the frayed threads of a countryside (of its folklore, or its witchcraft);[6] it is not the uniformly manufactured textile of an imperial science. There are still so many points of penetration, strategic entrances one could use to exploit and subvert the text. This is, moreover, the direct result of the fact that the missionary who repeats the legend of these ancient Christians is by his own admission not in control of the rumor, is not its author.[7] He is only repeating what he claims to have heard. Another speaker can very well come along to refute or corroborate the claims previously in circulation, and the

missionary would have no authoritative recourse or scientific reference with which to refute them. In short, *the missionary takes the rumor on its word*. The legend of the Nestorian is at this point only hearsay, a coming and going which leaves only the slightest trace, gripping the tongue or the ear with only the slightest friction. The momentum and openness of the legend overwhelms any possible security of its truth: the existence of Nestorians was probably never in doubt, but saying this misses the point. In the legend, I am arguing that scientific veracity is not the fundamental force behind this legend's movement across missionary discourse. What mattered most was not that the legend be proven by some detailed deposition or a body of empirical data, but instead that the story be disseminated and proselytized.

But legends are also *concealing* and *comforting* for the missionary who records them. There is always something liberating about repeating a rumor, precisely because the repeater does not bear the burden of authorship. It is of course not as if the missionary simply repeats the legend without also leaving his own social and historical residue in the second iteration (another operation), but he is more than capable of playing the fool—that is, he can always claim he is only repeating what he has heard. Rumors, directly as a result of their lack of authorship, afford a plausible deniability against the cultural imperialism which helps structure them as 'raw material' to be labored upon in the first place. In the same way that so many other forms of raw material do not bear on their face the imprint of their colonial structuration–e.g. 'timber' is seen merely as the name of a natural resource, not a historical concept associated with capitalist exploitation—legends *qua* rumors are 'received' with so much feigned innocence by the missionary, without any admission that they were already operated upon.

Hence, the apparent absence of labor on the rumor implies an absence of a *subject*: rumors are considered 'heard,' not produced. There is, to be clear, still a subject speaking (the missionary), but, in the repetition of a rumor, missionaries can conceal their own movement between several subject formations. At one moment they can appear as embattled soldiers of Christ, the next moment they are treasure hunters, and, at times, earnest secular truth-seekers, carried into the darkness of Mohammedan lands on quest not

of the light of the Holy Spirit, but that of universal meaning.[8] I should be clear: in these foreign lands, the missionaries are never not soldiers of Christ, as they are never not truth-seekers or treasure hunters, but there is a mobility and ambiguity to these figural forms which has not yet consolidated into a discrete and discursive subject—this will come only with the consolidation of the missionary's *object* in geography and history: the Nestorian. At the moment of rumor, it does not seem clear, even to the missionary himself, what a missionary's business really is. He is molded only by rumor; he is still in search of an author.[9]

But this first mention is also more *revelatory* because the moment one speaks of the rumors one hears, it passes through a "structure of iterability" (Barnett 1999: 287) which once again renovates them for use in radically different contexts. Counterintuitively, rumors often appear more alive and self-propelling than the subjects which speak them, precisely because they tend to exceed their own linguistic structuration. Language, as I have been trying to say, always has this capacity, but especially rumors bear an improvisational and adaptive appearance, without any *stage* to rigorously define them in advance. They are not yet the decrees of the prince or the technical, 'empirical' reports of his scribes, definitively situated in space and time; they remain the non-localizable groans of a countryside.

Now, this notion of rumor is very different than how the missionaries to Kurdistan will eventually write the Nestorians, when Nestorians are not strangers telling them stories but objects produced through the recollection of the missionaries' own experiences.[10] But here in the play of the rumor, something else is being revealed beyond what can be remembered, something in excess to the meanings working within the archive. Again, no authorship: no missionary claims these rumors as their own offspring, their own subjective experience, or their own *responsibility*. The rumor reveals not only an intercourse of meaning, then, but it is also a "speech without writing, the song of pure enunciation, the act of speaking without knowing," having in as its affect "a pleasure in saying or in hearing" (Certeau 1975: 227). In both hearing and repeating a rumor, something seizes over the missionaries which is not under their control, something *affects* them. But this is

precisely what becomes *disconcerting* about the rumor: these rumors deposit themselves into missionary discourse as if they were wholly other, as affects whose origin is exterior to the missionary—as not, that is, rendering delirious the voice of the other *within them*. Because rumors are always already dislocated and differential, they obscure the very operation which had already been performed in order to receive them as raw material—that 'structure of structures.' This operation in itself is thereafter not only capable of being ignored by missionaries but is an operation in itself rendered utterly unintelligible.

As the Nestorian body consolidates within the discourse of Protestant missionaries, so many more layers of scriptural sediment will compile, and this originary legend, the very foundation of all mission work to the Nestorians, will be forced to buckle, subject as it becomes to greater and greater pressure of something which increasingly comes to look *empirical* and *falsifiable*. Just as the raw material exhausts itself as both *body* and *cavity* of the commodity; the legend *qua* rumor exhausts itself into a body and cavity for a new missionary project.[11]

* * *

Like any good legend, then, that of the hidden Nestorians was received by the American missionary enterprise not by first account but having already been traded through several hands. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), by far the most dominant American missionary enterprise throughout the 19th-century, picks up these rumors in 1826 from a man named Dr. Robert Walsh, Chaplain to the British Embassy at Constantinople, who had apparently heard of these Christians from a "Chaldean" Bishop residing in Peru. Extracts of Walsh's account were in turn reprinted in the *Missionary Herald*, the periodical published by the ABCFM, part of which was repeated again in the passage heralded above.

This newspaper was widely distributed across patron churches in the United States as well as to missionary stations across the world (Oliphant 1938: 128). Moreover, this story of the Nestorians was explicitly published to inspire "more certain and full information respecting the condition and character of this people" (*MH* xxii: 120-121). This suggestion will arise again in the American Board's instructions to Smith and Dwight

upon leaving for their 1829 mission-siting expedition to Armenia, in which the Board suggested that, in addition to their primary objective, the two explorers might make their way down to the "wandering shepherds" of "Koordistan" in the south (*MH* xxvi: 75). Again, I should be clear: the rumor is still moving predominantly by virtue of its being-rumor, not as any distance measured by its inherent veracity; what is first important in the rumor is not that it is verified but that it is disseminated, hence that it can be fabricated as raw material upon which e.g. Smith and Dwight can perform their labors.

From Walsh, the legend tells of a sect of indigenous Christians of mysterious origin, who are, at present, buried but still living beneath the system of what Smith would call a "Mohammedan delusion" which now reigns over most of their ancient homeland (qt. Speer & Carter 1922: 317). We thus see in this passage that the figure of the Nestorian, even in its 'raw material,' had always presumed in the mind of the American missionary a division between themselves and the followers of the 'false prophet' who had for 1200 years cast deception and darkness across this land, obfuscating a great Christian truth which predates his followers, and of which they are hopelessly unaware:

> For, the savage has few ideas, sees only the objects just about him, perceives nothing of the relation of things, and occupies his thoughts only about his physical experiences and wants. He knows nothing of geography, astronomy, history, nothing of his own spiritual nature and destiny, and nothing of God. (Anderson 1845: 13)

Yet, this raises an overwhelming contradiction for missionaries, because, unlike purely savage lands, Mohammedan lands did not simply appear as wild spaces totally absent of history or intellect. Rather, they were places saturated in Biblical references, inhabited by historical peoples which had buried a Christian identity with truth which American missionary practice was only just starting to cultivate (see Makdisi 2008: 66-67, 102). This truth was not reckoned to be destroyed, only no longer manifest on the surface of things—that is, no longer in "physical experiences and wants" but in the "relation of things." In turn, the veracity of one's faith became less and less a matter of conviction, and more a hidden essence to be proven by a structure which puts facts into relation with one another—hence the widespread denunciation of "nominal" Christians by American evangelists, a category which importantly did not only include Oriental Christians

(Anderson 1834) and the Russian Orthodox (Campbell 1834), but as well their very own licentious countrymen, succumbing as they were to the vices of an increasingly materialist civilization.

Yet, there is still much ambivalence when it comes to the missionary attitude toward science. It is true that *lack* of scientific knowledge was testament to the ignorance of the savage, but one of the earliest missionaries to the Near East, Levi Parsons, "repeatedly noted and decried the Sabbath-breaking, ignorance of the Bible, swearing, intoxication, and shameless 'infidelity' where '*Reason* is made *omnipotent*' in the United States" (qt. Makdisi 2008: 56).[12] That is to say, *Reason* for Parsons also played an important part in the nominalization of Western civilization out of which it grew; or, put another way, Reason was transforming the world into a title without substance. The gift of Reason therefore, on the one hand, allowed for the differentiation between native and Western to first be drawn—that is, it allowed for a figural and literal *distance* to be traversed by missionaries—but, on the other, Reason was, like the Mohammedan, burying 'truth' far beneath appearances which could now no longer be trusted—the structure of Reason, that is, had as its consequence something which had long been attributed to Satan: the nominalization of life on earth. Reason for the missionary becomes unwittingly pharamakonic, the poison and its antidote.

The missionaries fear a shallow, secular world which has forgotten its own meaning, and this phenomena appears doubly: in the profanation of the West, and in the fallen state of those pure 'ancient' Christians in the East. But, as we shall see, their own response to this crisis will necessarily take the form of the empiricist human sciences Parsons will route himself against. That is, the form of their relation to truth will parody the empiricist relation between subject and object, such that they cannot merely carry Providence on the order of the self-willed *conviction* of the Nestorians—which is now rendered *merely* professed, nominal—but instead the *production* of a new object: the Nestorian body. We are not there yet; the narrative of the Nestorian still needs to be reworked, but already in the rumor, the missionary sees something fresh, pure,

unadulterated, something which can act as resource for the truth which has escaped the phenomenal world.

But slowly, truth will open like a tremor across the text. As Grant writes upon his first experience entering the country of the "Independent Nestorians" in Kurdistan:

> in their munition of rocks, has God preserved, as if for some great end in the economy of his grace, a chosen remnant of his ancient church, secure from the beast and the false prophet, safe from the flames of persecution and the clangor of war…I could not but regard it as a branch of the true church of God, though immersed in the darkness of gross ignorance and superstition and spiritual torpor, if not death. (1838: 10)

Notice that the legendary quality of the Nestorians is still repeated here, but with a difference. It tells of a struggle between eternal truth and fleeting corporeality, but it also informs Grant of an altered relation to truth. Truth becomes something no longer revealed by the *appearance* of the 'ancient' Christian in Muslim lands, described in Walsh's account, and no longer simply affirmed in their confession of Christ, but a truth *in spite of* his "superstitious" and "ignorant" appearance. The Nestorian's faith, expressed in his voice, obscures a deeper truth the Nestorian himself could neither speak nor understand. A new difference cuts across the legend of the Nestorians, separating the nonessential, disposable dross of the diabolical (the beast and the false prophet, worldly corruption—in short, Islam and its historical effects on Christian faith) from a pure kernel of truth waiting to be polished and extracted. "Nineveh is laid to waste!" Grant writes in his journal with great exasperation, "Who will bemoan her? She is empty and void and waste…her people [are] scattered upon the mountains and no man gathered them" (1838: 2).[13]

An important note on temporality: again, the legend is not a 'preliminary' stage of the consolidation of the Nestorian object, and it never completely exhausts itself. It proceeds alongside, repeating again and again with a difference. Grant's comments above are long after Nestorian mission is founded by Justin Perkins in "Oroomiah" in 1836, and indeed it is Asahel Grant who is so seduced by the legend that he travels in 1839 to the Kurdish mountains and becomes the first American to ever visit the region.[14] Before even entering Nestorian country, however, we also see the legend repeat in Grant's retelling at the edge of the mountains in a village called Duree. There, Grant reports that his Kurdish

servant, who had been sent to accompany him by the *agha* of Akra (and who had already been with him for a week's travel), was too terrified to proceed, "lest he should fall into the hands of some of the independent Nestorians" (ibid: 8). Grant's retelling of this incident must is still informed by the legend: the Kurdish servant becomes a diabolical figure warded off by the zealous Christian piety of the place they were about to enter. Kurds see the Nestorians "as almost invisible…represented as having the power of vanquishing their enemies by some magical spell in their looks" (ibid: 8). Indeed, additional details will be informed by the legend: when the Kurds of Rawanduz attempted an invasion, the Nestorians were "said to have seized six or seven of the Koords and cut off their heads and hung them up over a narrow bridge which led to their district, as a warning to the Koords who might attempt to invade them" (ibid: 8). From then on, and despite having been under the auspices of various Turkish pashas and Kurdish emirs for most of the journey from the mission station at Urmia to Duree, Grant could no longer depend on the support of the corrupt Muslim world which surrounded him. Against the Mohammedan decadence which laid like ash on the landscape, he was now entering a sacred space, and a Nestorian bishop at Duree offered him a young Nestorian to accompany him into the mountains.

Gradually, as I have been saying, this legendary quality born to the '*it is said*,' that passive voice of the authorless rumor, will largely subside (although never to be eliminated, only increasingly silenced), not into the mere corroboration of Nestorian testimony but the *production* of Nestorians as artifacts, and the form of religious practice will change along with the relations it constituted. It is not any causal relationship but merely this *movement of* both spatial and temporal *difference* (an over there, an 'ancient,' Christian past) which I have been trying to highlight. Missionaries will fade before the judgment of God as He who conditions the veracity of their statements; their most sacred spaces will increasingly appeal to secular scientific tribunals.

What will be offered to this court is no longer the conviction of faith but the *body of the Nestorian*, who will be marked by such profound historical and providential significance as to warrant the expansion of his reproduction as an object of knowledge—a significance which, the missionaries make clear, the Nestorians themselves could not

possibly understand, at least not yet (see Chapter 5). This will come in the form of an intensification of the missionary project as well as the scientific expeditions which will proceed shortly after. Indeed, just 20 years later, the famous British archaeologist Sir Austin Henry Layard will turn the Nineveh which Grant here laments as waste into one of the most productive and epic British archaeological digs of the 19th-century (Layard 1867; Fagan 2007). Although Layard was never interested in the Assyrian Christians, instead the 'ancient' Assyrians—that is, the Assyrian Empire of c. 2500 BC—his archaeological site will nevertheless deploy, precisely, the concrete living labor of natives—Kurds, Assyrians, and Arabs—to exhaust itself in the production of 'ancient' Assyrian artifacts. What I am saying is that missionary work in Kurdistan is perhaps even more pernicious than Layard's digs, because the Nestorian is not even for the missionary living labor: he is the stone which speaks, that stone which Layard attempts to uncover—the raw material, the object to be labored upon a means of production enabling missionaries to reap the 'profit' of a new discourse concerning the historical geographical Christian identity.

But, simultaneously, as I said above, a *comfort* grabs hold of this legend in its nascent state, precisely by virtue of its still frayed texture, and its reluctance to settle into empirical, disciplinary form. The comfort for the other who will be named Nestorian is a result of a place to hide in the confusion of his name. Nestorians are here named by Walsh—as they will often be called by Westerners over the next several decades—"Chaldeans," an identification which even at the time would have been ambiguous at best, else completely erroneous. While there were most likely self-identified Chaldeans in the areas Walsh describes above, these regions, at least those in the Kurdish mountains and especially the Nestorian town, seat of the Patriarch, he mentions, "Jolemark" (Julamerk) (*MH* xxii: 120), were at the time of his writing nominally Ottoman regions under the relatively independent authority of the Church of the East—or, what most later 19th-century Western literature will call the Nestorian Church.[15]

Now, "Chaldean" and "Assyrian" had been used without meaningful distinction for inhabitants of northern Mesopotamia by authors ranging from classical historians of the Islamic Golden Age like Yaqut al-Hamawi and Abu al-Fida to more recent Ottoman

scholars like Assemani in the 18th-century (see Rassam 1897: 171-183). We should of course also bear in mind that the most politically and socially meaningful self-identifications in this region at this time were not based on such broad and abstract definitions as a broad geographical area, let alone a nation, but instead one's clan or village of birth. Nevertheless, beginning in the 16th-century, "Chaldean" does become a religious designation bestowed by the Roman Catholic Church onto Mar Shimun VIII Yohannan Sulaqa as he entered into communion with the Holy See after a schism erupted in the Church of the East in 1552. This schism was the result of numerous factors, perhaps the two most important being the internal disagreement on the subject of hereditary descent of the patriarch—which, in the Church of the East, proceeded from uncle to nephew—and reunification with the Roman Catholic Church, both questions being heavily instigated by Franciscan missionaries who had recently settled in northern Mesopotamia. Further exacerbating the tension within the Church was the notoriety of residing patriarch Mar Shem'on VII, in particular his allegedly excessive patronage of concubines and alcohol. As a result of these controversies, in 1552, bishops in the northern districts of the dominion of the Church of the East rejected the transference of the title of patriarch to Mar Shem'on VII's nephew and instead elected a monk in Alqosh, Yohannan Sulaqa, to head the Church (Baum & Winkler 2000: 113).

The existing ecclesiastical structure of the Church of the East, however, posed a significant problem to this election: Sulaqa needed a bishop of metropolitan rank to consecrate him, and none were willing to commit to such a harsh betrayal of their allegiance to the Church. As a means of skirting this issue, Franciscan missionaries convinced Yohannan Sulaqa to pledge communion with the Holy See, through which he could be consecrated by the papacy as patriarch of the Church of the East. Sulaqa obliged, and, in 1553, he traveled to Rome, where he confessed Catholic faith and Pope Julius III consecrated him, recognizing him as patriarch "of the Chaldeans" (Yana 2000: 80). This title was only respected by the northern districts, however, and the schism left in place two different patriarchal lineages, dividing the Church of the East in two. On the one hand, there was the "Shimon line" started by Mar Shimon VIII (the name Yohannan Sulaqa took

as patriarch), but on the other hand there remained the "Eliya line," respected by those in the southern districts who followed Mar Shem'on VII's chosen hereditary successor, his nephew Eliya VI.[16]

But things do not end there for either the now-Catholic Shimon or the extant Eliya line. After a century of internal strife, the Shimon line reinstituted hereditary succession and fully broke communion with the Holy See in 1692, once again claiming independent status. However, only a portion of those following the Shimon line respected this decision, against which there emerged and remained another patriarchal succession known as the "Josephite line." This line gained official recognition from the Holy See in 1681, and periodically thereafter, as the line actively remaining in Catholic communion. Importantly, this line, beginning with Mar Joseph I, was given by Rome the title of the "Patriarch of the Chaldeans deprived of its patriarch" (Wilmshurst 2000: 26). Eventually, in 1830, this Josephite line would merge with *another* extant line of patriarchs based in the Rabban Hormizd monastery in Alqosh (the monastery where Yohanna Sulaqa originally resided) who had split from the Eliya line from 1780 onwards, and who had elected Yohannan Hormizd as their patriarch after the death of his uncle, Eliya XII Dunha, in 1780. The union of the Josephite line with the Alqosh line in 1830 led to the consecration of Yohannan Hormizd by Pope Pius VIII as the "Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans." With this reunification, the Shimun line, which, it is important to remember, had originally been the only line of Assyrian patriarchs in full *communion* with Rome—and, to note, had absorbed what remained of the Eliya line in 1804, long after the Alqosh line had split off—now became the only Assyrian patriarchate which remained *independent* of Rome, the rest now nominated as "Chaldeans" by the Catholic Church under the patriarchate of Yohannan Hormizd.

Despite this exceedingly intricate succession of patriarchal lineages, what is clear and consistent is that the term "Chaldean" was applied by Rome as an explicitly religious denomination designating allegiance, and never an ethnic or genealogical affiliation—indeed, a hundred years before Mar Shimon VIII, Rome had also named the Syriac Christians living on Cyprus, who had recently realigned with the Holy See under

Archbishop Timotheos of Tarsus, as "Chaldeans" (O'Mahony 2004: 435). As in the original bull consecrating Mar Shimon VIII, the term "Chaldean" was a reference which honored the geographical birthplace of Abraham, who was at the time known as coming from "Ur of the Chaldees" (Yohannan 1916: 2).

"Assyrian," on the other hand, was a name both the Assyrians and those around them had been using since the ancient kingdom of Assyria. It was not, at the time of Walsh's writing, a name used to refer to religious affiliation. Nevertheless, the denominational geography of Chaldeans and non-Catholic Assyrian Christians roughly divided at the Kurdish mountains: to the west and southwest, such as the cities of Alqosh, Mosul, and Nineveh, one would find a predominance of Christians realigned with the Holy See, identified as Chaldeans, while those Christians to the east, around Lake Urmia, northward toward Lake Van and Diyarbakir, and those living in the Kurdish mountains in the cities like Qodchanis and Julamerk, were mostly independent Assyrians. The primary locations which Walsh references as inhabited by independent Assyrians are all either in the Kurdish mountains, immediately to the south, like Amadiya, or immediately to the north, like Diyarbakir.

Hence, Walsh's use of "Chaldean" is a vague or otherwise *empirically* inaccurate name for the people to which he is referring. Walsh's error is even more embarrassing, however, as he writes that "the Chaldeans of the mountains, who are the vast majority, have hitherto rejected all submission to the church of Rome, which denominates them heretics" (*MH* XXII: 121). The irony, of course—and hence the looseness, the chance for movement and the subversion made possible by the scientifically negligible status of the rumor—is that the name Chaldean was, at the time of his writing and for hundreds of years prior, the name used by Rome for those eastern Christians who *did* enter into full communion with the Holy See. In a report following their landmark expedition, now more empirical than legendary, Smith and Dwight move to correct Walsh's error: "'The present Chaldean Christians are of recent origin," Smith writes, "It was in A.D. 1681, that the Nestorian metropolitan of Diarbekr, having quarreled with his patriarch, was first consecrated by the pope patriarch of the Chaldeans…It means no more than papal Syrians"

(Smith 1833: 187). As my previous investigation showed, this is itself both an oversimplified and itself inaccurate historical account of the name, to be sure—and it should be noted that Abraham Yohannan, among others, will afterward claim indigenous right to using the name "Chaldean" to refer to include the region's non-aligned Christian population (1922: 2). It nevertheless shows at least one dimension of what is required for a rumor to be shifted toward a seriousness which could render these newly-discovered Christians intelligible—that is, a markedly increased degree of their historicization. I will follow this movement even further in the next chapter, but it is important to here note that already, we see the rumor transforming.

Now, one way to read this error is that Walsh is symptomatic of the West's attempt to capture and control the "right to signify" (Bhabha 1994: 233), i.e., in this instance, the right to name, such that the "Chaldeans" become subject to a discourse which violently imposes an entirely foreign significance to their extant mode of life. It is hence not the innocent error of a wrong name but the interpellation of these Christians within a colonial horizon of meaning. Even further, to say that calling an independent Christian a Chaldean is erroneous, and to prove it as I have just done, is *also* to condition truth to the order of the empirical. What I insist is that this is hardly a 'check' on colonial violence but in fact beholden to a mode of knowledge production which colonial violence itself put in place, and through which colonial violence perpetuates. Empiricism *is* the colonial mode of knowledge production; it not only authorizes its truth as empirical but as well bounds the possibility of its own error to the empirical as well.

Put another way, in order to *correct* the error, one must already assume that both truth and error are modes of the empirical, i.e. their essential condition is, one, their falsifiability and two, their being-experienced. To say, as another example, that "Indian" is a misnomer when applied to those native to the Americas not only does not subvert colonial discourse but, quite on the contrary, *rationalizes it*: colonial discourse moves not only toward the consolidation of its *own* truth through the production of empirical objects of knowledge but *also* strengthens its ability to define its own errors on this same order of empiricity. Put more simply, there is nothing subversive about calling colonial discourse

'incorrect,' insofar as being incorrect is something which can only be defined retrospectively, according to an empirical world which had already been there—that is to say, it comprises always already past events signified as history. It must be said that colonial states (and, for that matter, missionaries and scientists) have been quite willing to concede error insofar as errors receive their evaluation *only once they have already occurred, but never at the moment of their occurrence*. Put another way, only once their violence can be historicized and archived, given a place within state discourse—sanctified as a zone of grievance, mourning, memorial—can it be either represented as such or falsifiable.

I do not reject this reading, and, as it should be clear, I reached such a conclusion only by repeating the empiricist (and hence colonial) verification of the erroneousness of calling 19th-century Assyrian Christians "Chaldeans." Nevertheless, I do think that the colonial texts reproduce themselves porously, and that, in this error, we might not only bear witness to colonial violence but also see something else alongside, or at least the possibility of radical doubt which enables this violence *within* the mark of mistaken identity. What could be more liberating, after all, than to be confused with someone you are not—think of what you could get away with without a proper name to live up to![17] To be sure, such a space is not all roses; it is indeed as fleeting as it is terrifying. Mistaken identities fall, simply by happenstance, into shadowed spaces, "labyrinths of deviance" where something previously present in a discourse can lose its, if only for a moment (Wood 2007: 10). But they are nevertheless spaces, or spacings to be exact, where, under the cover of a sweltering sun, disguised in the cloak of another, the other has absolutely nothing to lose.

Subject only to a dark interior and a quiet space, one gains the freedom of movement in the night of a Christian historical geography only just beginning to assemble. In the next chapter, however, I will show how this possibility which remained latent in the rumor wanes smaller and smaller, as the form of missionary practice adapts to an empiricst logic premised on verifiability. Rumors, like faith, is something without proper author or measure. They will indeed never go away—rumors always return—but they will become increasingly revoked and invisibilized.

Chapter 4

From disciple to discipline: The empirics of modern missionary practice

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the term "Assyrian" and its derivations had long been in use with reference to the local population, either those aligned or non-aligned to the Catholic Church. Indeed, the moniker "Assyrian" has been used more or less consistently for some portion of inhabitants of the region since the ancient Assyrian Empire. Now, "Syrian" and "Aramean" had also been used in antiquity, sometimes as coterminous in semantic range to "Assyrian," but distinctions could be found elsewhere between Syrian and Aramean/Assyrian as referring to separate geographical regions, particularly in some passages of Strabo (Syria being designated as to the west of Assyria) as well as in the later works of Josephus (Andrade 2014: 303-304). As for the Assyrians themselves, as recent indigenous scholarship has shown, they have had indeed confirmed the relative consistency of this use in their own Aramaic texts written over the past two millennia, many texts of which the West has been at best unaware and at worst poorly translating since "Assyria" peaked its interest a few centuries ago (Gewargis 2002: 78).

Despite all of this, when Smith finally visits the "Chaldeans," he will elect not to replace this name with Assyrian, or even Syrian or Aramean, but instead *Nestorian*—a term of Catholic origin which served to designate the foundational heresy of the Church of the East (explained below). It was also a name which the Assyrian Christians adamantly rejected, directly refuting its use by missionaries—for instance in Justin Perkin's journal, when he used it in conversation with a bishop in Jilu who preferred to be called Chaldean, against the bishop "humorously" remarked, "We shall soon be at war if you do not cease

calling us *Nestorians*" (*MH* xxxi: 163). But in doing so, in repeating this particular name, Smith will not repeat its Catholic valence *per se*, but instead rewrite the legend of these people into an explicitly *evangelical* historical geography which, ultimately, will cultivate the Chaldean *qua* Nestorian as an empirical object of missionary knowledge. As I will show in this chapter, in contrast to the Chaldean, a name for Smith of "recent convention," the "Nestorian" will serve to signify the historical legitimacy of evangelism, right in the geographical heart of ancient Christianity. Nestorians will become, in the eyes of the American missionaries, the first true dissenters against Rome, the first true evangelicals after Paul, and the first missionaries to the East. It is a truth hidden, indeed as *unconscious* as it is *interior* to the Nestorians' own Christian identity, which the missionaries will spend nearly a century attempting to excavate from beneath the layers of Mohammedan waste which had corrupted the geography of ancient Christendom.

Consolidation of the Nestorian body into history

The full report of Smith and Dwight's expedition was published in 1833, with excerpts from their letters to the Board being released in issues of the *Missionary Herald* in the two years prior (xvii: 15-18, 72-75, 245-247, 349-351; xviii: 12-15, 33-35). They never made it as far as the Kurdish mountains, the heart of the legend, but did manage to make brief detours to "Oormiah" (Urmia) and Salmas in western Persia, where thousands of Nestorians resided (Smith 1833: 362-411). Smith begins his first letter from Urmia already with markedly increased concern for historical and geographical placement than had been disclosed in the legendary rumor of the Chaldeans.

He prefaces his observations, for instance, with a brief history of Nestorius, of whom the nomenclature Nestorian originates. Nestorius was the Archbishop of Constantinople who was excommunicated by the third general council at Ephesus in 431 A.D. He was charged by the council with two heresies: preaching the rejection of the title of "Mother of God" for Mary, mother of Jesus, and the teaching of two distinct hypostases

(i.e. no hypostatic union of God and Man) in the Incarnate Christ. Smith explains Nestorius's subsequent unjust exile as such: at the urgent behest of his most virulent opponent Cyril, and prior to the opportunity for Nestorius' supporters to arrive and help defend him, the council at Ephesus quickly and quietly ruled against Nestorius, condemning him of heresy on both accounts, and banishing him back to his home monastery at Antioch (Smith 1833: 363). His followers, however, had continued to refuse to accept the ruling, adhering to his teachings even after his death, and culminating Nestorian thought into what became known as the School of Edessa. As tension grew with the Church, the School and other supporters of Nestorius were compelled to move eastward into the Sassanian Empire, out of political reach of the Holy Roman Empire. Once there, they comingled with local Christians of the 'Church of the East' who had claimed independence from all other churches, including Rome, since the Synod of Isaac in Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 410 AD (Baum & Winkler 2000: 19).

Over time, at least from the perspective of Rome, Nestorius and his teachings gradually became associated with these eastern independent Christians. Yet, to call them "Nestorians" is a dramatic overreach: despite Smith's claims to the contrary (1834: 364), according to Baum & Winkler, there are no church documents recovered from this time period which would suggest that Nestorian's teachings ever became official church doctrine of the independent eastern Church. Rather, Nestorius was only ever honored as a "martyr of Antiochene Christology…Christianity in the Persian empire of the Parthians and Sassanians did not begin with Nestorius nor was there a dogmatic split from the Church of the Roman Empire in the fifth century named after them" (2000: 32). For the American missionaries, however, the Nestorian revolt was profoundly significant having little to do with its theological content. Rather, it was for them the first major strike against Roman Catholicism, a common enemy for the Americans as much as for the Nestorians, as much as for the ancient independent Christians under the Sassanian Empire. Put perhaps too bluntly, the placement of the Nestorians Smith visited at this pivotal moment in Christian history allowed for the *archetypal* legitimation of Protestantism. Another name, and another error—but now with the force of history behind it. Not simply in spite of its

erroneous nature but directly because of it, this name will hold for 19th-century missionaries as the primary reference point for their "Nestorian" mission, offering a means by which missionaries can properly *historicize* both their object of devotion and their own missionary practice, and in turn help consolidate the Nestorian as a new, empirical object of knowledge.

Of further interest for Smith was the vastness of the evangelism of the "Nestorians" after their relocation to Persia: "We have on record a list of no less than twenty-five metropolitans," Smith boasts, "who acknowledged the supremacy of the Nestorian patriarch" by the time of the Islamic caliphates (1833: 365). This is one of several threads which begins to sew the body of the Nestorian into a new historical discourse. Again, this is never necessarily new content—the origins of the Nestorian Church had been already well documented by Assemani in the *Bibliotecha Orientalis* (1719-1728; see Gewargis 2002), a reference frequently cited by the missionaries to the Nestorians[1]—but content repeated in new ways, under new forms. In the discourse of American missionaries, the Nestorians begin to transform from a *legend* into a *history*, setting far more deeply the roots of a Christian identity within these distant Mohammedan lands. We see this also in the journal of Grant during his last tour of the "mountain Nestorians" in 1841, when he writes of the importance to "rekindle" the legacy of the Nestorians, enabling them to once again send "their missionaries to Tartary and China" (*MH* xviii: 218). And again, in the missionary instructions to Holladay, Leyburn, and Stocking, all destined to the Ottoman and Persian Empires, Anderson writes: "We are indebted to the Oriental churches for the holy scriptures. They too, support the first preaches of the gospel, and the first Christian missionaries. Theirs were the first martyrs. They were in fact the parent churches of the Christian world" (Anderson 1836). Anderson especially hopes that, through the Nestorian mission, the Oriental Christians "may soon be roused to emulate the missionary zeal of ancient times, when the Nestorian church alone sent more than 600 of her sons into India and China" (ibid).

This same historical consolidation of the Nestorian is dramatically embellished in Perkins' memoir:

> And it is too much to believe that this ancient church, once so renowned for its missionary efforts—its heralds of salvation having carried the gospel for centuries, in the face of danger and of death, even into China,—still possessing rare native capabilities, as well as such felicity of location for the renewal of like missionary labors—is it too much to hope and believe that it will awake from the slumber of ages, put on again the beautiful garment of its espousal to God, and become bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners, to achieve triumph of Zion?— that it will again diffuse such a radiance of the blaze of truth as shall put for ever to shame the abominations of Mohammedanism, roll back the corrupting tide of Papal influence, and send forth faithful missionaries of the cross in such numbers and with such holy zeal, as shall bear the glad tidings of salvation over their own dark plains and mountains, and aid in speeding their flight around all the world? (Perkins 1893: 82)

Here, rumor is no longer constitutive of the movement of meaning of the Nestorians; a discourse is beginning to take hold, producing an object, the Nestorian, which calcifies, for which missionaries like Perkins and Grant will dedicate their entire lives in order to see this object secured into its proper place in both history and providence. This is not to say that the discourse is either ever fully controllable or unalterable: "The structure of a composition does not retain what it represents, but it must 'hold' enough so that, with this escape, the past, the real, or the death of which the text speaks can be truly staged—'produced'" (Certeau 1988: 98). The other here objectified as Nestorian will always find opportunity to subvert and open the discourse the missionaries will desperately try to contain and institutionalize (see Chapter 5).

I am only suggesting a hidden movement: the moment Nestorians are produced as *objects* of a missionary discourse, their meaning is no longer either simply the result of a play of rumors or a testament of their faith. The body of the Nestorian is being consolidated in a discourse which now seeks to silence them so as to speak *for* them—that is, an empirical discourse which places missionary as its subject and native as his object of knowledge, a relation forged and reproduced through the proto-ethnographic investigations of first Smith, then Grant, Perkins, Stocking, Oldfather, Coan, Shedd, and on and on. It is a form of relation which increasingly becomes the exclusive means of producing knowledge *about* them. Any voice the Nestorian maintains is no longer sprung from the rumor, the "mouthpiece of the limit" (Certeau 1984: 127), the rumor on the hills of a countryside, but an utterance interior to missionary discourse itself. As Grant writes in an

"Appeal to Pious Physicians" written shortly after he arrived (December 27th, 1836), in which he writes of the desperate need for medical practitioners to meet the call of these destitute others, which "comes on every breeze, from the four quarters of the globe, and the isles of the ocean, 'Come over and help us'" (1847: 211).

Again, the Nestorian is of importance to the missionary because he is found, through the production of a body of facts which are gradually coming to define him, to be resting unawares at the origin of the history of evangelical proselytism. He is living proof of an ancient tradition—he is, quite literally, an "ancient" Christian, an adjective the missionaries will use frequently to describe their objects of devotion, mission, and research. Moreover, the importance of the Nestorian is not merely another counted for conversion, as it may have been for the earlier American missions to the Indians. The Nestorian mission is not merely the self-propelled expansion of Christendom into 'benighted' regions, as it may have appeared at the height of the legend of the Chaldeans. The mission here necessarily becomes the site of an archaeology of a Christian identity, the imposition of a production of knowledge which will demand missionary practice adopt into new scientific form. The truth of the Gospel cannot simply be communicated here, spread across the surface of the earth; it must be *uncovered*, excavated from beneath the deceit and 'nominalism' which now shrouds it. As much as Anderson desires it to be so, as this new mode of knowledge production strengthens, missionary practice *cannot* simply be to "proclaim abroad the fact, history, design and effect of [the Lord Jesus's] atonement, and bring its renovating power to bear as widely as possible upon the human race" (1845: 5-6). Missionary practice cannot be "preeminently spiritual;" it must now *produce* a discourse in order to receive its meaning (1845: 8). Missionary practice must *produce* the objects to which it will preach.

While the next section will dive more deeply into the consolidation of the Nestorian into a missionary geography, of which the longer development of the mission station will be especially important, I should note here, that, even after Smith and Dwight's very brief encounter with Nestorians at Urmia, only lasting a few days, they recommended that not only would a station be warmly welcomed but actively patronized by Abbas Mirza, the

crown prince of Persia. In addition, Smith highlights Urmia as of geographically strategic importance, as a

> prop, upon which to rest the lever that will overturn the whole system of Muhammedan delusion, in the centre of which he has fixed himself; that he is lighting a fire which will shine out upon the corruptions of the Persian on the one side, and upon the barbarities of the Koord on the other, until all shall come to be enlightened by its brightness, and the triumph of faith will crown his labor of love. (1833: 264)

In January 1833, Justin Perkins was appointed to the Nestorian Mission at Urmia (Perkins 1843: 27). He would later reflect his motivations for mission work and echo similar sentiment as Smith: "What geographical position could be more important, in its bearing on the conversion of the world, for a Christian church to hold, than that occupied by the Nestorians? – situated, as they are, in the center of Mohammedan dominion, and far toward the center of benighted Asia" (Perkins 1893: 81).

On September 8th, 1833, Perkins received his instructions from the secretary of the American Board, Rufus Anderson, at Andover, alongside Smith, who was heading to his mission at Malta. The instructions to Perkins are as follows:

> The Committee would state, then, that the Board is, emphatically, *a society for observation*. The condition of the world must be ascertained, before it can be improved; and it is surprising how little information, suited to our purpose, is obtainable form the whole body of those travelers whose investigations have been prompted by mere secular motives. How often has Western Asia, for instance, been traversed by such persons. Yet, missionary societies find it almost as necessary to investigate those countries, as if those men had never travelled. The politician, the soldier, the geographer, the antiquarian, the man of mere taste, and the man of mere insatiable curiosity, are all of use to us, as travelers; but we are obliged to send after them our own messenger, with special instructions, before we can safely venture upon an extensive system of missionary operations. So that our investigations, as you perceive, will necessarily be *coextensive with the ground which we would occupy*. (Anderson qt. Perkins 1843: 28; emphasis in original)

If I have so far sketched the consolidation of an object of knowledge, these comments are the most concise articulation we have seen yet of its respective subject—no longer simply a soldier of Christ, headed into the night of Mohammedan lands clinging on only to his faith in the Lord, but the clear demand to be a reflection of the secular scientist obfuscating his truth. Again, I am noting here the *movement* of difference in the constitution of the missionary himself, a movement which forces him to adapt his religious practice and his

previously ambiguous figure to an entirely different form of knowledge production which will, eventually, engulf the entire missionary enterprise.

19th-century American missionaries performed all of their work in stark defiance against an encroaching empirical world, while, simultaneously, they attempted to forge within it their own distinct, singular path. Ironically, that is, they seem to concede that they can only resist by mirroring the form of the empiricist human sciences they route themselves so passionately against. The form of their relation to truth, that is, parodies the empiricist relation between subject and object; i.e. a Christian subject who now perceives, in Althusser's words, that the "knowledge of that real object itself" is a "real part of the real object to be known" (1970: 39), hence obscuring the process of its own production of the objects of knowledge, viewing them merely as 'real' and impartial bodies of truth. They cannot carry Providence on the order of the self-willed *conviction* of e.g. the Nestorians, which is now rendered *merely* professed, nominal—this being a dramatic reversal of the Franciscan solution to the schism of 1552, which was for Mar Shimon VIII to simply confess his Catholicism to Rome.[2] In contrast, missionaries now need to establish a relation to truth no longer guaranteed in advance. They are forced into a *production* of knowledge about the Nestorian—an archive to be unearthed, an anthropological other to be translated, and, finally, a birthplace of Protestant Christian identity to be situated within and anchoring an emergent missionary geography.[3]

Consolidation of the Nestorian body into geography

It is an error for any historian to attribute the product of their labor as merely an historiography: it is also always a geography. Moreover, this geography manifests on both sides of the division between past and present. First, in the present, as I tried to explain in Chapter 2, it is in the geography of the archive which confers a spatial relation between the objects it harbors and the authority to write about these objects granted to the historian. Again, this is what I called the archival relation: nothing more than the spatial relation

between presence and nonpresence *produced* by the division between a present and a past-made-again-present. Conversely, historians are never simply speaking of merely a *past* when they write history, but a *past* and *place* where spatial difference is necessarily implied. No historian today lives in the 3rd-century BCE, and likewise, no historian today lives in the Assyrian Empire. The condition of the historian's writing-history thus does not simply imply a division between past and present and a division between here and there *within the present*, but also a division between a here and a there *within the past*.

Altogether, the archive then divides the epistemic field of historiographical geography into four quadrants: present-here, present-there, past-here, and past-there. Chapter 2 amounted to an examination of the relation between present-here and present-there (the archival relation), and the previous section of this chapter served to orient the reader to the temporal relation the missionaries attempted to forge between a secular, modern present and its (now divided and mutable, 'traditional') Christian past, for which ancient Nestorian bodies served as artifacts, empiricities which testified to the historical relation of Christian identity. This section examines the relationships between the spatial difference of the Christian other *as an historical other*: namely, the relation between the past-here and past-there.[4] It was not enough to only suppose a division between present and past in the constitution of the Nestorian, if this division didn't also imply a *prior* distinction between here and there. Failure to write spatial difference into Christian history would mean a contiguous, self-identical, and boundless Christendom which, for the missionaries, evidently wasn't the case, else there would be no need for missionaries. That Nestorians were primitive evangelists was insufficient justification for mission work: missionaries also needed to write a geography which implied a profound spatial displacement between here and there which *endured* into the present.

The Nestorian body was not simply a floating, placeless relic of the past but the becoming-space of time, which the mission needed to capture and situate both historically and geographically—i.e. to archive it, to consign it to a place *over there*, a place toward which the American missionary does not simply wander but *returns* in holy pilgrimage to his own origin. Again, as with a temporality grounded in the historicization of these

"ancient" Christians, an empirically informed sense of space ultimately became necessary. Missionaries adapted their religious practice to a place-making which, while undoubtedly religious in content, was entirely empiricist in the form it took, the objects it produced, and the relations between subject and object it constituted.

As with my previous, empirically-based historical arguments, I will start this section on the consolidation of the Nestorian into geography via another seemingly accidental and tangential relation (analogous to my study of patrilineage in the Church of the East, or the historical significance of the name "Nestorian," neither of which receive adequate attention in modern historiographies of the American mission to the Nestorians). It is perhaps helpful to again remind the reader I do this deliberately, as exercise in destabilizing the concept of 'context.' I perform this destabilization again not to prove why or show how things 'really' happened, but as a means of capturing, performing, and writing a movement of difference which ripples *today* across American missionary geography.

Decades before the founding of the American Board, a peculiar religious phenomenon had swept through the country known as the monthly concert. Otherwise known as the "Monthly Concert of Prayer for the Conversion of the World," (Newcomb 1836: 1), this form of worship originated in the premillennial sentiment which stirred in the United States and the United Kingdom. Its purpose was to gather the faithful in public prayer, in invisible concert with other communities across the world, for the coming Kingdom of God. While concerts of prayer were first practiced by revivalists in Scotland in 1744, a letter conversation between a Scottish Presbyterian minister, John Erskine, and the American Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards brought the practice overseas. Edwards was immediately enthusiastic about the spiritual potential contained in these concerts. He wrote back to Erskine a very lengthy letter in support of the practice which in turn was published in 1746 as a book, entitled *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, For the Revival and Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth…* (see Edwards 2009). In this book, Edwards describes the initial motivation for the concert as such:

> In October, A. D. 1744, a number of ministers in Scotland, taking into consideration the state of God's church, and of the world of mankind, judged that the providence of God, at such a day, did loudly call upon such as were concerned for the welfare of Zion, to united extraordinary applications to the God of all grace, suitably acknowledging him as the fountain of all the spiritual benefits and blessings of his church, and earnestly praying to him, that he would appear in His glory, and favour Zion, and manifest his compassion to the world of mankind, by an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit on all the churches, and the whole habitable earth, to revive true religion in all parts of Christendom, and to deliver all nations from their great and manifold spiritual calamities and miseries, and bless them with the unspeakable benefits of the kingdom of our glorious Redeemer, and fill the whole earth, with his glory. Consulting one another on the subject, they looked upon themselves, for their own part, obliged to engage in this duty; and, as far as in them lay, to persuade others to the same: and to endeavour to find out and fix on some method, that should most effectually tend to promote and uphold such extraordinary application to heaven among God's people (2009: 791)

The method the Scottish ministers devised was to set aside a time for synchronized prayer across their ministries which might help expedite the coming of the Kingdom. The routine was first proposed to be weekly, on the Saturday evening and sabbath morning, as well as including a more "solemnly" schedule to occur quarterly on the first Tuesday, or "first convenient day after" (2009: 794). This periodization was never intended to be obstinately "absolute" but rather an affirmation of "friendly, harmonious resolutions" which were never binding but simply encouraging of general concurrence of prayer across all observing churches (2009: 794).

Justification for the efficacy and significance of concerted prayer came directly from Scripture.[5] First, Edwards reckons that there "has never yet been any propagation and prevalence of religion, in any wise, of that *extent* and *universality* which the prophecies represent" (2009: 798). That this has been foretold he gathers from (Ps. 72:11, Isa. 2:2, Ps. 40:5, Jer. 3:17, Isa. 46:23, Ps. 45:2, and Matt. 13:33). Further, he confirms that the "universal prevalence of true religion in the latter days," i.e. those days immediately proceeding Parousia, has already been prophesied (Ps. 2:8, Ps. 22:27, Ps. 67:7, Ps. 98:3, Isa. 45:22, Ps. 113:3, Mal. 1:11, and Ps. 65: 8) (2009: 799). "These things plainly show, that the time is coming when the *whole world* of mankind shall be brought into the church of Christ; the *fulness* of both, the *whole lump*, all the nation of the *Jews*, and all the world of *Gentiles*" (2009: 801). Edwards separates this prophecy very distinctly from anything

accomplished by, e.g. the Roman Empire, which was imperial but never a fulfillment of the above prophecy, neither in its *extent* nor its *duration* (2009: 801). That is to say, not only is the Kingdom of God to claim under its dominion the entire world, but it also will "reign with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4) "by which we must at least understand a very long time" (2009: 802).

Additionally, according to Edwards, prayer is not only effective in the advancement of the apocalypse but it must necessarily precede the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the corners of the world. This prayer must also come importunate: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in earth" (Isa. 62: 6, 7). That this prayer ought to be also done in union, Edwards first justifies through Luke 3: 21-22, in which the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus' disciples on condition of their specifically unified prayer. It is evidenced again in Acts 1:4, when the disciples are gathered before the ascension of Jesus into heaven and they are instructed by him to return to Jerusalem and continue in "*united fervent prayer* and supplication. It seems they spent their time in it from day to day, without ceasing; till the Spirit came down in a wonderful manner upon them, and that work was begun which never ceased, and all the chief nations were converted to Christianity" (2009: 820). Union is also for Edwards the "peculiar beauty of the church of Christ…As it is the glory of the church of Christ, that in all her members, however dispersed, she is thus *one*, one holy society, one city, one family, one body; so it is very desirable, that this union should be *manifested*, and become visible" (2009: 826). Further, Edwards argues:

> It is highly desirable, that her distant members should act as one, in those things that concern the common interest of the whole body, and in those duties and exercises wherein they have to do with their common Lord and Head, as seeking of him the common prosperity. As it becomes all the members of a particular family, who are strictly united, and have in so many respects one common interest, to unite in prayer to God for the things they need; and as it becomes a nation, at certain seasons, visibly to unite in prayer for those public mercies that concern the interest of the whole nation: so, it becomes the church of Christ which is one holy nation, a peculiar people, one heavenly family, more strictly united, in many respects, and having infinitely greater interests that, are common to the whole, than any other society visibly to unite, and expressly to agree together, in prayer to God for the common prosperity; and above all, that common prosperity and advancement, so unspeakably great and glorious, which God hath so abundantly promised to fulfil in the latter days.

> It becomes Christians, with whose character a narrow selfish spirit, above all others, disagrees, to be much in prayer for that public mercy, wherein consists the welfare and happiness of the whole body of Christ, of which they are members, and the greatest good of mankind. And union or agreement in prayer is especially becoming, when Christians pray for that mercy, which above all other things concerns them unitedly, and tends to the relief, prosperity, and glory of the whole body, as well as of each individual member. (2009: 826)

From the aforementioned premises, universal prayer thus becomes the means by which God can bestow his grace universally. This leads Edwards to his last and mot important scriptural confirmation of need for concerted agreement in prayer: "I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth, touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 18:19). Insofar as God manifests explicitly in the union of the church, His Kingdom will come immediately after the whole world is united in prayer to Him.

By the time of the American Board's rise to prominence, the concert of prayer had mutated into a monthly as opposed to weekly occurrence, while still retaining its means to "pray for the blessing of God upon the efforts of the church, for the salvation of the world" (Newcomb 1836: 1). In addition, at least for Newcomb, the quality of these meetings became a "sure index of the state of religion in the church" in observation, such that if attendance was high and spiritually enlivened, "there we find the flame of piety shining out upon the world;" in contrast, where there is little interest, "we may safely conclude that a state of religious declension and spiritual barrenness prevails; professors are carnal, and worldly minded; sinners are pressing, in vast multitudes, unconverted, and perhaps unwarned, to the judgment; and every domestic effort languishes" (1836: 7-8). Moreover, the monthly concert now confers the sentiment that the "*missionary spirit* is emphatically the *spirit of Christ*…It is that spirit of expansive benevolence, which grasps the *whole world*, as an object of Christian sympathy and effort" (Newcomb 1836: 7-8).

Altogether, then, we can conclude that there was something felt by early American missionaries, following in the footsteps of Edwards, that union and simultaneity of a certain activity, prayer, were indispensable means to usher in Christ's reign. This bears the mark of the intensely revivalist and premillennial influence of the period, which considered the

end of time, while always providential, not as simply a passive inevitability but one which provided for Christians an active and indispensable role to fulfill: worldwide evangelism. More importantly, its occurrence or absence across space gradually served as index for an evil which has *endured* and indeed *strengthened* throughout the Year of the Lord, which has separated regions of lightness and darkness to the present day. The evangelical project has here carried on and revived the necessary task of enlightening and consolidating a world which had been previously separated, and which will only become whole and in union upon the arrival of the Kingdom at the end of time.

Quite early on in the tenure of the American Board, however, the act of proselytism had in itself proved insufficient persuasion on the domestic front: awakening the "missionary spirit" at home—i.e. what mostly amounted to soliciting money from church patrons—required a more definite object of prayer than either what had been prophesied or the abstract, vague conceptions of an 'evangelization of the world.' As a pastor in the First Congregational Church at Bennington, Vermont testified, there was something wanting in the monthly concert, which might "give clear and vivid conceptions of the wide extent to which this is a dark world, and of the very limited prevalence of the gospel as yet" ("On the use of missionary maps" 1869: 9). This pastor notes how at first, he would try to describe the conditions of a place, its relative population of pagans, papists, and Mohammedans, and a history of their expansion and confrontations with Christians, but his attendees failed to see this "lost world *as it is*" (ibid: 9). The pastor devised a solution. He hired a carpenter to cut a board, seven feet in length, five in breadth, upon which he painted a large "Map of the Evangelical Condition of the World" (see Figure 4.1), in which those dominions influenced by (Protestant) salvation were colored in white, and those areas in absence of the Holy Spirit (including Catholic territory) were darkened with black India ink (ibid: 9-10). The next monthly concert, the pastor suspended this board above the pulpit, repeating the same information as had before, with the only difference now being the use of a map as reference which hung on the wall behind him:

> In the evening of that day, the attendance at our Monthly Concert was doubled; and when the brethren prayed, they prayed as never before; as though they had seen the 'darkness' which 'covers the earth,' the 'gross darkness' which 'covers the people.' Said a brother in

> the church, the next day, 'I had no conception that such a great proportion of the world was without the gospel.' (ibid: 10)

Revs. Daniel Crosby and Dr. Hooker recount their own experience of the effective use of maps as reference while noting the history, productions of country, objects of commerce, and so on (ibid: 5, 11-12). Rev. Samuel I. Prime would use maps to teach travels of Jesus and his apostles across Judea (ibid: 8). Rev. Barnes also emphasized the importance of study with maps, to give an "*intelligent* view of the obstacles which exist to the introduction of the gospel (ibid: 12). Likewise, the Secretary of the American Board himself, Rufus Anderson, would defend the critical importance of studying geography in an 1841 paper submitted to the Board: "the pastor will not answer his own or his people's expectations, in the use of missionary maps at the concert, unless he himself *studies* missionary geography, especially in relation to the subjects in hand" (58).

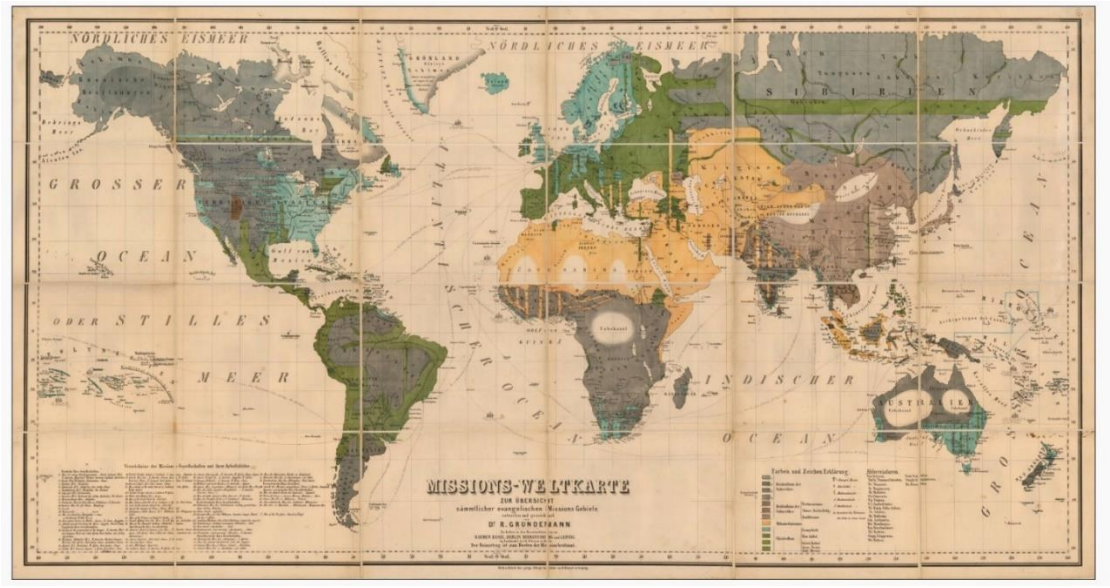


Figure 4.1: The 'General Missionary Atlas' prepared by Rev. R. Grundemann, a German Lutheran (1862). Note the mass of darkness which shrouds much of the non-Western world, and the plague of Islam which corrupts its closest periphery. NB: this is not a reproduction of the map specifically used by the pastor in Bennington, but was a map heavily anticipated and distributed by the American Board and American Sunday School Union in the late 19th-century ("On the use of missionary maps" 1869: 24)[6]

Just as we saw in the development of the mission as a society of "observation" which would produce the Nestorian as an object of Christian history, we see as well an adaptation by Christians at home to a concern for spatiality defined by the modern, empirical map. If modern historiography operates on the empiricist presumption of a 'real,' homogenous, empty time out of which events occur linearly and consecutively, then modern geography proceeds from analogous assumption: that space is an empty container, a reference point for which places can be defined as a function of their experienced difference. Through maps, the American Board and its associated churches show here an affirmation of an empiricist spatial relation: the *subject*, who is universal and occupies the perspective of empty space (who observes the world, like God, from high *above* its plane), and who can establish from this vantage point specific places as *objects* of knowledge. That it took maps to 'prove' a reality which in turn demanded missionary work is direct testament to a dramatic shift in the spatial thinking of a religious practice conforming to a secular geographical thought. It is through the map that the pastor can intimate to his attendees the direct correspondence between an *empirical fact* of the world and its *location* on the earth.

In the above interpretation, I borrow heavily from Wood's semiotic approach to cartography. For Wood, the map is a convention peculiar to modernity, which always conveys the notion that "*this* is *there*…the '*is*' functions as a statement of equivalence" made possible by the process of "posting" a proposed meaning onto the "sign plane of the map," a signification which fixes the specific instance of a concept (i.e. *this* street, *this* church) to a specific signifier (a physical mark on the map), which, taken together as a sign, equates to a specific spatial location in the world (2010: 52-58). Important for Wood is that maps not be considered mere representations of what is but challenged on their own terms as "systems of propositions, arguments about what the world might be" (2010: 8). Maps are *productive* of a specific form of relation between space and meaning, equating one with the other and vice versa. The map is, moreover, the result of a silent, displaced, *archived* mass accumulation of data which differentiates its final product as something intelligible against something subjectively experienced: "the map presents us with a reality we *know*

as differentiated from the reality we *see* and *hear* and *feel*" (2010: 16). This is not at all to say that the map obscures the empirical, but rather that it transforms subjective spatial experience into objective, 'real' fact. The map stands in for and is read as reality *itself*.

Through their use of maps in the monthly concert meetings, 19th-century Christian evangelicals testify to precisely the same effect—that is, maps substitute a reality unable to be experienced with one which can now be known. Maps, for the churchgoers, *are* that intelligible reality. They transform *arguments* for Christian proselytism into spatial *facticities*. Through the re-presentation of the world in the evangelical map, sociospatial relations are confirmed precisely by their being-empirical—that is, in the aggregated inscription of past *events* which have unfolded unevenly across space. Hence, the evangelical map is fully enmeshed in the logic of empiricism which structures its spatial relation: it is still founded upon, on the one hand, a spatial division between a subject (a place where truth is spoken) and an object (a place where truth 'lives'); and, on the other, a slippage between the reality passively *observed* and that reality *reproduced* in the construction of the map. The pastors quoted above argued that empiricities in the absence of a spatial dimension insufficiently presented a 'real world' to their church patrons: it was only in the supplementation of maps that mission sites became 'real.' Even further, the spatial difference which manifested in the present always presumed an historical *endurance*, borrowed from the original motivation of concerted prayer: a processual outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the Time of the Lord became, simultaneously, the Time of History. This is finally to say that Parousia is not only a temporal but a *spatial* unification—that is, Parousia is the accomplishment of the universal by way of the absolution of all temporal and spatial difference. That the map became so pivotal as an indication of progress toward this goal is testament to the fact that, by the 19th-century, it had been increasingly necessary to prove the fruits of 'faith' empirically as the *accomplishment* of missionary geography.

That being said, on the surface, the pastors were adamant to maintain the separation between the spiritual content of their evangelism and the 'secular' science they parody. They are very clear that what they are doing should not at all be considered simply scientific

education. Rev. Barnes writes: "My object has not been to teach geography as a science, but to teach whatever might bear on the subject of missions" ("On the use of missionary maps" 1869: 12). Rev. HB Hooker provides an even more dramatic distinction:

> "No lecturer, in any of the departments of science and learning, enjoys higher satisfaction in his studies than may the pastor, with a true missionary spirit, in those of which we speak. 'The field is the world,' over which he can expatiate, and in which he can prosecute his researches… I love…to stand before a map of a nation, especially a map of the world; and, pointing the audience to it, to say, 'There are the regions, the continents, the islands of a fallen world. Our Redeemer is their rightful possessor, though the present ruler is the prince of darkness. We are wresting them from Satan, by our missionary triumphs. We have set up the standard of redeeming love, *here* and *there*. We have *this* nation now sitting at His feet 'whose right it is to right;' and *that* is beginning to humble itself before him. We have a little spot on *this* dark continent illumined with his gospel; and on *that* benighted island we have 'set up our banner.' We have made openings into the realms of sin and death, and our beloved missionary co-workers are there, distributing the bread and the water of life. The world is our Lord's, and we are conquering it for Him. There is it; a vast field; but through his power and grace we shall prostrate every idol, break down every strong hold, and cause every knee to bow to the Prince of peace.'" (ibid: 16-19)

Despite separation of secular and missionary use of maps, for Hooker, *this* nevertheless becomes *there*—the posting of signs to the map in a relation of equivalence to the 'real' empirical world, is precisely what Hooker finds so powerful about the use of maps in the monthly concert. This is, again, testament to a very modern sense of spatiality, premised on the production of knowledge as a relation between subject and object, and a conflation of the phenomena observed and the object of knowledge about this phenomena which is subsequently produced. What's more, it is the precise task of the missionary steps *into* the frontier he has created, and interface with what has by his own spatiality been rendered absent, benighted, those dark spaces of Grundemann's "General Missionary Atlas" (Figure 4.1), in order to transform its "void into a plenitude, of the in-between into an established place" (Certeau 1984: 127).

Figure 4.2: "Province of Ooroomiah with the principal Nestorian villages." (see Bibliography)[7]

One of the earliest Eastern frontiers to be traversed by the American Board missionaries was Nestorian country (or Kurdistan). It is in this sense, of turning the void into a plenitude, that the spatiality of the Nestorian becomes, like language, and like history, a *phenomenon*, an appearance "to be translated" which "allows unity to be restored by folding upon one another all the heterogeneous peelings that cover an identity of substance" (Certeau 1988: 223). If we bear in mind Grundemann's evangelical map of the world, we might consider Figure 4.2 as one way in which the Urmia mission 'filled in' or

spatialized the benighted lands they entered. What is signified on the map, the Nestorian villages, is simultaneously a productive silencing of what it absents: the vast Muslim population which lived around and within the site depicted. Indeed, by virtue of their absence, these other spaces become naturalized, features of the map only marked by depictions of Lake Urmia, rivers, and the Kurdish mountains to the west. This cartography then can complement the many textual descriptions of Kurds in missionary accounts which operate so often as figural analogy to the various threatening features of the natural landscape of the Nestorians. As one example among countless others, after noting a scourge which had plagued the region surrounding Erzurum in his travel writings, Grant notes:

> But I was mercifully preserved from the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. The vials of God's wrath appear to be fast exhausting themselves upon these Mohammedan countries; the symbolical Euphrates is drying up that the way of God's people may be prepared…When distant from any settled habitation we were more exposed to the predatory Koords, men of violence and blood on the one hand, the destroying pestilence on the other. (MH xxxviii[b]: 211)

In the spatial imaginary of the missionaries, Kurds are seen as a naturalized threat in contradistinction to "settled habitation," synonymous with the effects of environment, disease, and famine which plague the countryside.

But maps also serve as an instrument which will assist the missionaries in spatializing their relation to the city of Urmia and its own Nestorian inhabitants (Figure 4.3). The mission site will heavily convey the appearance of a fortress, the interior of the mission completely walled off, from "twelve to eighteen feet high," with bastions at every corner.[8] It is as if the map is doing everything it can to convince its reader of the security and permanence of the mission, of the impermeability of the truth which it claims to harbor. Not only guarding from any incursion of wild Kurds but meticulously organized from the inside, with places defined by the daily activities which are to occur in them. An intense discipline of space therefore emerges on the mission premises, through which could the mission act as *axis mundi*, dispensing the Holy Spirit to the rest of the Nestorian countryside.

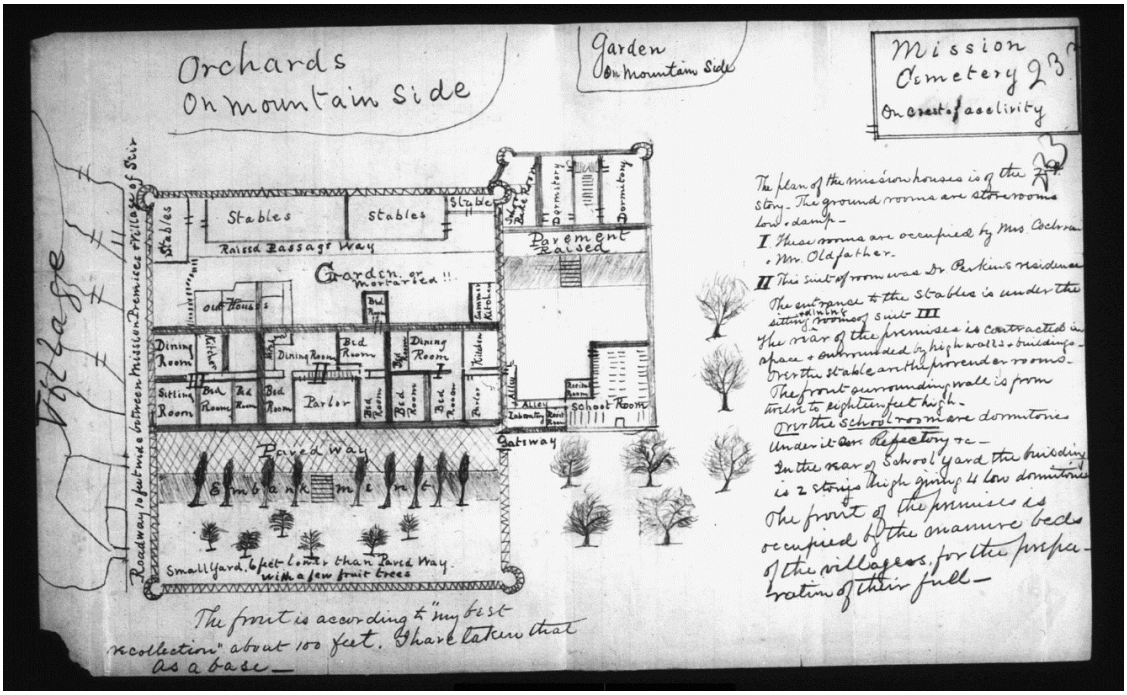


Figure 4.3: *Sketch of Missionary Grounds at Urmia by Oldfather (1874). Included in the annual expense reports for the Urmia station as submitted to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.*[9]

If, in the rumor, shadowed spaces sanctioned the constant threat of total subversion; the spatiality of the Nestorian mission is, like its temporality, far more rigidly discursive, more tightly regulated. This, again, does not mean it is impregnable, but that it is very clearly objectified—a product of the labor of the missionaries themselves, that which therefore became their responsibility, its maintenance felt as absolutely necessary in the sustainability and success of their project. In a word, missionary geography, like its history, becomes *authored* by the missionary subject—both a definite temporality and a definite spatiality will be necessary to site a production of the Nestorian body. Indeed, it is precisely upon entrance into these benighted spaces, with not only Bibles but scientific tools in hand, that the darkness miraculously clears. Maps of the mission site, wrought from the aggregation of empirical information, can now be associated with a fixed location in space at Urmia from which the outpouring of the Holy Spirit can take place.

The invisibilization of faith in the empirics of missionary practice

Throughout this chapter, I have exhibited arguments for not only *what* missionary practice in Kurdistan was but *how* to read it. Without directly defining it, I have tried to repeat what Althusser identified as the ingenuity of Marx's critique: it is not that Marx saw with more acuity the *same things* that Adam Smith saw, i.e. it is not as if, had Smith's vision just been sharper, he could have already seen what Marx saw decades later. No, the radical difference in Marx's approach has nothing to do with a sharpness of focus or better tools to apply to the same form of analysis. It has to do with a radical transformation of the problematic upon which Smith's questions rested. Marx's reading discovered not 'real' objects to which classical political economy was ideologically blind, but an entirely different epistemological horizon able to see a fundamental relation between what was and was not present *within* e.g. classical political economy. Marx understood that, in *any* given worldview, there were things "invisible within the visible field of the existing problematic," as a condition of the visible field *itself* (1970: 27). Put another way, Marx saw that

> classical text itself says while not saying it, does not say while saying it. Hence it is not Marx who says what the classical text does not say, it is not Marx who intervenes to impose from without on the classical text a discourse which reveals its silence—*it is the classical text itself which tells us that it is silent*: its silence is *its own words*. (1970: 22)[10]

But we should here twist Althusser further, force him to say things he himself would not say: this silence does not merely help identify the problematic, or structural condition of the work of ideology, but rather this silence serves as window to, in the spirit of Derrida, its excess, its chance, its finitude.

Put another way, it is precisely *intention* which is located in the silence of the text, the absent center of an overdetermined structure. The possibility of intention is therefore always in the realm of the unverifiable: it is not on the order of reason but of a communal faith which grounds any given structure of thought. Or, to translate this sentiment into terminology more familiar in this paper: by reading political economy in a certain way,

Marx *experienced* its pronounced parallax vis-à-vis a 'critique.' He bore witness, however incompletely, to the open interiority *of the text*, brushing up against what Foucault called the "stark impossibility of thinking *that*"—but, and here again *pace* Foucault, it is a relation to something silent and *spectral*, which structures the alterity of the other *from within* one's own structure of thought (1989: xvi). This relationality does not imply empiricism—a relation between the radical non-presence of the subject and a world *presented* to him as a composite of real objects he experiences—*but faith*—a relation which maintains the discrepancy between the existence of the self and the radical nonpresence of the other.

In his own crisis of meaning, the missionary desperately struggled to maintain a relation of faith in a world which disassociated faith from what is true. In modernity, the missionary found himself within a world in which empiricism reigned, where that which possessed the quality of veracity was that which could be falsified, that which could be produced, tested, and verified against 'real' experience. The missionary could not help but mimic this relation. The Nestorians were rendered nominal Christians, but the production of their phenomenal appearance in missionary discourse helped rectify an obscured truth no longer present on the surface of things: an ancient Christendom as a much as a Coming Kingdom. The process of producing this knowledge is, as I have tried to explain, thoroughly empirical, drawing on both their historical observation, recorded for millennia, as well as their present conditions. The ultimate cost of this production was the exhaustion of the labors motivated by faith into an intelligible object of their discourse, such that the missionary made his practice operate precisely *on the condition of this absence of faith from the empirical objects he produced*. What missionary practice thus reveals in this transformation is that the social scientist could never spirit away his own religious pretenses, even after naming its study the study of 'ideology.' The mission had always and still remains in the shadow of the field site. The modern human sciences continue to reproduce faith as its absence (and, what amounts to the same thing, its 'axiom'), upon which their observations draw the strength to commence.

Chapter 5

Reading/writing violence in Kurdistan

If the previous chapters detailed a practice of *reading*—of one's own experiences, the origin of 'evangelical' Christianity, the geography of Christendom, and the coming time and space of the apocalypse—then this chapter deals with missionary practice in relation to reading's often indiscernibly parallel dimension: *writing*. While we should not forget that reading always implies writing, reading is also that which prepares the possibility of writing—that is, one *performs* or *takes up* what one reads through the practice of writing. It is difficult, if not impossible, to think of this sequentially, as both reading and writing take place at the same moment—the moment the eyes set their gaze on the page, one is already writing. But they are nevertheless two distinct operations. First, reading acquires meaning from an order, a grammar, a syntax already shared, within which the reader is already socialized. Reading is, in de Certeau's language, the possibility of "acquired rationalizations," the development of "criteria of selection" which prepares the *possibility* for the production of meaning (Conley 1988: x). Writing, on the other hand, is this *concrete* production of meaning which "replaces the traditional representations that gave authority to the present with a representative labor that places both absence and production in the same area. In its most elementary form, writing is equivalent to constructing a sentence by going over an apparently blank surface, a page" (Certeau 1988: 5). Further, in writing, the "present, the postulate of discourse, becomes the profit of the scriptural operation: the place of the production of the text is transformed into a placed produced by the text...Writing disperses through its chronological staging the reference of the entire narrative to something unspoken that is its postulate" (1988: 90). Put another way, writing therefore

takes as its necessary postulate an acquired rationalization—that reading which is received in the present—only in order to transform and indeed displace this postulate for the sake of something *produced* in the act writing, such that the postulate, the *a priori* present, becomes its unwritable reference point—it amounts to a blank page.

Again, writing acts in parallel, however much apparently indistinguishable, with the process of reading. The oscillation between the two—the reception of meaning in reading and the production of meaning in writing—is very close, in my mind at least, to what Bhabha calls, in another context (re: minority discourse and the narration of nation), the "perplexity of the living," caught as it is in the in-between of image and sign: "the judgement of living is perplexed; the topos of the narrative is neither the transcendental pedagogical Idea of history nor the institution of the state, but a strange temporality of the repetition of the one in the other—an oscillating movement in the governing *present* of cultural authority" (1990: 307). This perplexity of the living, in my view, works as an appropriate description of the subject's relation to the text as much as the world (and the two of which, cf. Doel, should no longer be considered distinguishable [1993]). It is therefore in this double-movement of reading and writing, pedagogy and performance, portrait and proxy, where the subject *lives*; it is their "identity-in-difference" which is the "place of practice" (Spivak 1988: 277).

Now, my approach to missionary texts in the present chapter has been formulated bearing this oscillation in mind for two reasons. One, it is because I believe facing up to the violence of missionary practice is not about condemning them for what they could not possibly see (see Chapter 4); and it is also not about transforming history into a gavel through the labor of 'critical' social sciences. Instead, facing up to this violence *must* come as consequence of the violence I wage simply by picking up their texts, *must* come as consequence of that practice of writing *I repeat*, which always proceeds from the violence against origin which writing repeats, in a deafening silence, on the blank surface of the page.

If I am not mindful of this violent initiation into writing, I cannot possibly claim to be doing anything differently than the missionaries who ignored the same relation between

subject and text as they read/wrote their historical geographies on the bodies of native Christians. As I previously argued, when we read missionary texts, we are always already transposing them into completely different contexts. We are not just pulling letters from the archive like some dusty old filing cabinet; we are produced by and productive of these artifacts and filing cabinets (Kurtz 2001). "Purloined letters" (Steedman 1998: 72), as I have been trying to say, are always already transformed into inheritances which social scientists ought to bear witness. Acknowledgment of wrongdoing, or the pursuit of its rectification, is as much a question of the position of the *historian* as it is the text to which they bear their face. Moreover, as I also tried to show in the previous chapter, the falsification of missionary beliefs or the flippant ideologizing of missionary practice is itself an unwitting mimicry of the very same empiricizing tactics these missionaries themselves applied to native Christians. What I had attempted to do is develop a deeper understanding of this process of mimicry in order to consider why I also, in this very investigation, continue to feel compelled to repeat 'empirical work' in order to justify my own research—I am still, already and after, archiving.

The second reason I am mindful of this oscillation between reading and writing, however, is because it is precisely through this movement that the experience of parallax (Chapter 2) becomes possible. Indeed, the very possibility of this oscillate is always "dogged by otherness" (Karatani 2003: 91). To *write*, which would not simply be to *repeat*, would always be emergent and indeterminate, affected by something exterior to the meanings one acquires by reading. The very possibility of writing, and of reading what one writes, marks the necessary-possible escape from any and all acquired meaning—all 'context.' I refer back to Karatani, who sees in Kant's transcendental critique the means by which the subject arrives at the universality of phenomena only *through* positing the otherness of the other. That is to say, universality for Kant arrives not at all as the colonial assimilation of the Other into the Self, but rather through the introduction of an other who can be thought transcendentally but can never "*be* or *exist*, that is, it cannot *be intuited*" from the closed premises of a self-determining, willful subject (2003: 87). Hence, it is an other which can never stand in identity with the self—but who therefore does not introduce

"relativism into our thinking," as if we understand the other merely as a subject who is subject like us, only subject to different rules or norms, but rather the "one who makes us face the problem of universality" (2003: 53). The other forces us to recognize that we ground a universal proposition *not* in the abstraction of general principles from the agreement of specific experiences (which would be an indefinite, but not infinite or universal proposition), but rather only via the positing of a singularity deprived of all experience, indeed deprived of all language. It is only upon the introduction of the singularity and the otherness of the other whence a universal claim can be posited, directly and unmediated by any heterogeneity, intersubjective agreement, or 'common sense.'

Now, according to Karatani, Kant also takes this proposition of the other as that which forces the problem of universality specifically with regards to the consideration of the universality of morality. A *universal* moral could not ground itself in a specific community's codes, neither could it come from specific subjective feelings of e.g. pleasure/pain—both paths are generalizing, hence heteronomous, never autonomous, views of morality. Instead, Kant brackets both, positing that a universal morality could never be derived from a specific community or from the individual, but only from the singular-universal principle of *freedom*. In order for morals to be possible at all, in other words, an action has to retain the potentiality to be either good *or* bad, a condition which must be unconditional to any historical situation which treats specific actions as either/or. In saying so, Kant's point is never to negate natural causality nor the pursuit of self-interest, but to bracket both in order to derive from them a transcendental stance that freedom, and hence morality, can only come if one is able to obey the autonomous, universal command: "be free!"

Yet, if not from a specific community, where would this imperative come from? "It originates from Kant's transcendental attitude itself—that which entails the imperative: 'bracket it!'" (Karatani 2003: 118). Put another way, the transcendental arrives precisely at the "pronounced parallax" which results from antinomy—for our purposes here, the antinomy of structural (over)determination vis-à-vis subjective experience of freedom—as the two beliefs are bracketed and unbracketed simultaneously. What remains in view at

this point of parallax? Nothing but the necessity of positing the other in her very absence as a means of guaranteeing the universal principle, 'be free!' Hence, the transcendental stance, and therefore freedom, is always "spurred on by the existence of the others" (2003: 119). In turn, this allows one to think through freedom as an ethical imperative, because it allows one to consider freedom as itself always a response and hence a *responsibility* to the other: "Responsibility appears only as a response to the other. The necessity to respond to others pushes us into the dimension of freedom" (2003: 124).

Putting it all together, then, for my purposes: in the movement between reading and writing, one is *free* insofar as one remains *responsible* to the other, and one is *responsible* only insofar as one maintains this transcendental stance between reading what has been acquired and writing, on an ostensibly blank page, in one's own words and in one's own proper name. One must *inherit* the missionary in reading him while also *dislocating* this inheritance as one's own postulate for writing. To attend to both simultaneously, in my view, is finally to face up to and take responsibility for the other. *This* is what I try to offer below: a response which holds the reading I inherited from missionaries in tension with a writing which would necessarily displace them. I attend to the violence of their practice, as I read it and as the silent condition of my own writing.

Institutions of writing

Figure 5.1: Original seal of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Makdisi 2008: 4).

To begin, the original seal of the American Board is already an extremely important depiction of *writing* as the emergent relationship between the American evangelical and his other in the early 19th-century (Figure 5.1). Of course, there is a very clear social hierarchy put on display here, an allusion to relations of cultural imperialism which position the upright, clothed, 'civilized' missionary standing above the kneeling, seminude native (Makdisi 2008: 3)—but I am speaking of a far subtler relation. Like in the previous chapter, it is not so much in the *content* of missionary practice illustrated—the two-thousand-year-old divine duty of Christians to spread the Gospel to every corner of the world—but in the *form* which this relationship increasingly and necessarily takes: depicted here as the transfer of a written Bible from the Christian to native.

That this form could be imagined as *the* missionary relation, that it is regarded with such high significance as to constitute the original seal of the American Board, is testament to the remarkable and completely modern form of missionary practice which I have been

investigating. That is to say, *writing* becomes paramount here to the exclusion of a very long, oral and performative history of proselytism among the 'ancient' Christians the missionaries found so helpless and destitute in Kurdistan. This is of course not to say that writing did not have a place in premodern religious practice—as the Nestorian Stele of Tang China in 781 clearly proves (Saeki 1916)—but the institution of writing, or, more accurately, the institutionalization of writing, was by no means what motivated the spread of early Christianity into Asia. As Foltz has shown, Nestorian missionaries to Central Asia sought to win converts via the performance of miracles and the practice of baptizing influential leaders—and, even then, under the Tang dynasty (618-907), and indeed in spite of their efforts to translate Christian religious texts into the local vernacular, the Nestorian community of China consisted mostly of foreigners from Persia engaging with locals not on the basis of spiritual teachings but for the purposes of trade and their knowledge of astrology and medicine (2010: 67-70).

In contrast, the imperative to bring to the Nestorians various institutions of writing—e.g. the instruction of literacy, the printing press, and the dissemination of published religious texts—is perhaps the most ubiquitous anxiety running throughout 19th-century missionary correspondences from Kurdistan. Indeed, not only was distribution of the Gospels mentioned as of urgent importance in the first reports coming back from Smith and Dwight's expedition (*MH* xxvi: 75-82), the very first correspondence sent to the Prudential Committee by the Nestorian mission upon its founding in Urmia was a joint letter which concluded with a request for the Board to send over a printing press as quickly as possible. The missionaries insisted that

> a Press is indispensable to the successful prosecution of our labors, among the Nestorians, you need not be informed. Where would Greece have been, had she remained until now, without any part of the Scriptures, or a syllable of literature, in her modern language? Just there, the Nestorians must remain, save the influence of the few school cards we may be able to prepare, by the slow motion of the pen, until we have a Press in operation. (Perkins & Grant 29 Dec. 1835)

The missionaries at Urmia will make this same request in the next four letters they send to the Board (Grant 10 May 1836; 9 Aug. 1836; 15 Sept. 1836; 25 Oct. 1836). Later, as Grant tours the mountains, he will write in distress not only at the sorry state of the

incoherent fragmentation of the mountain Nestorian's extant religious documents: "one man has the gospels, another the epistles, the psalms, the Pentateuch, or the prophets" (Grant 1844: 10). Grant inquires quite frequently on his tour across Nestorian villages in the mountains as to the extent of the local priest or deacon's possession of religious texts, which he found everywhere severely lacking, "though as usually they said they had 'all of the books'" (*MH* xxxviii[a]: 317). Hence, printing was not just about providing texts but also about consolidating, ordering, and organizing the faith of the native—put another way, it was also *archiving* the Nestorian, impressing him upon a new substrate, via a new technical apparatus which could discipline and bind him to the text. Writing is not merely an influence on the mission: as portrayed in Figure 5.1, the very materiality of the written word becomes the medium of contact which makes missionary practice possible.

The press was not the only institution of writing, however: there was also an immediate push for the advancement of literacy across the dominion of the Nestorian missionary station. Shortly after arrival, the missionaries established a "teachers' school" aimed at the instruction of literacy and basic arithmetic to Nestorian elites from the provinces around Lake Urmia, such that, "in due time…[he] will become a well educated teacher, for his native village" (Grant & Perkins 1835). In the pages of his first journals on the field, Perkins describes the lesson plans of the new school as such: two hours of reading off school cards in the "Nestorian language," i.e. Syriac, two hours reading the Bible in the "ancient language," i.e. Aramaic, two hours writing in Syriac with their fingers in sand boxes, and two hours learning arithmetic from the abacus (1836). Several dozen Assyrian students from across northwestern Persia are in attendance during the first sessions, with about a dozen more joining in the months following, including three deacons and one bishop. As is a common characteristic of the Nestorian Mission station's self-description of local reception of any of their labors, Perkins sees in the early days of the teachers' school nothing but resounding success and promise, with overflowing interest from the Nestorians in expanding the school system across the region (Perkins 1835, 1836). As Harris notes, retainment of educated natives became an increasing concern for the American Board, especially after English-language instruction, which natives requested as

a means of developing skills for their own economic survival, observing little loyalty to the missionaries after instruction and instead working for British colonists (1999: 75). Hence, in spite of these glowing endorsements from Perkins, education was a more contentious topic for 19th-century mission sites than he ever leads on: when the missionaries to the Armenians, for instance, wanted to include an industrial workshop at their seminary, the Prudential Committee of the American Board told them it could not support this effort, and its secretary Rufus Anderson finally concluding that extensive educational programs were "incompatible with developing the necessary spirit of self-denial in native agents" (Harris 1999: 132).

Rather than expressive of a strategy to develop tools necessary to take advantage of the increasing presence of European markets and British and Russian diplomats, Perkins rationalizes the development of literacy and distribution of the written word as the fruits of good evangelism, evidence not of secular modernization but of the providential revitalization of nominal Christians by the Holy Spirit. He writes at length of Nestorian clergy who in literacy were now finally beginning to understand the words they had previously only blindly recited in worship, and in turn finally beginning to throw off the veil of their backwards traditions and superstitions. Directly as a result of their new teaching, the "high ecclesiastics, in our families, and many others, manifest deep interest, in our religious instructions, and evident dissatisfaction, with their own senseless ceremonies" (Perkins 1836). Perkins is especially inspired by Mar Yohannan of Urmia, who during his education increasingly wanted to *preach like the missionaries* and not like his previous native instructors: "Instead of the many childish, mystic meanings, with which they formerly invested every passage of scripture, both he and Priest Abraham, now give, as their own, the same explanations which I incidentally suggested, as we read the new Testament together, from day to day, at Tabreez" (Perkins 1835). Against the old Nestorian priests who did not know the *meaning* of the words they spoke, bishops like Mar Yohannan now could *read* and *write* the corrected commentaries coming from the Western teachers themselves. It is the various institutions of writing, then, which would serve as the most important indications of progress in the missionary field.

A printing press with Syriac typeface arrived in Urmia would arrive a few years after the founding of the station. It was an event which Perkins reflected upon in his memoir ecstatically:

> Nothing could exceed the joy and wonder of the Nestorians, when the long-anticipated press finally reached them…The *Lord's Prayer* was the first matter printed, as it had been the first written, and another scene took place in this connection, As the cards, containing that prayer, dropped rapidly from that strange and magic engine from the New World, the gazing throng were soon unconsciously bowing their heads around it, and exclaiming: 'Glory to God—glory to God.' They were not worshipping the press, but were thus, in Oriental style, giving utterance to their profound admiration, and some of them, doubtless, their heartfelt gratitude to God… [over the past 21 years] Our press has given to the Nestorians more than eighty thousand volumes, comprising more than fifteen millions of pages, in a language never before printed nor reduced to writing. (1862: 12)

Shocked and amazed at the powers of the press, elated with their own dependency on "New World" machines, the Nestorian is read by Perkins as never anything but excessively grateful of the fruits of missionary labor. The printing press not only brings to the Nestorians the written word in their own tongue, but produces for it a new meaning—that is, a language which serves to translate particularly Protestant readings of scripture; a language, which is, again, revived from the original language of Christ, but repeated anew in light of the missionaries which have discovered it, bestowed upon it a typeface, and hence reanimated the Nestorian tongue to meet, be made intelligible to the New World. Needless to say, the printing press became an extremely powerful tool for the erection of a new relation of writing with the other.

Writing and its resistances

Of course, the native Christians were never simply beholden to the forms of relations imposed and intended by missionaries. As referenced previously, both Makdisi (2008) and Harris (1999) have already shown extensively how natives were able to exploit various aspects of American missionary practice to their own advantage, despite every attempt

from missionaries to keep them docile and unquestioningly serving the salvific economy they were preparing for the natives. In this section, I explore ways in which those others named Nestorians were able to either avoid the writing relation entirely or, when necessary, subvert it from within.

Despite his praise of the developmental progress being made among the native population through the teachers' school, Perkins also openly lamented the fact that old traditions still held a great deal of sway in Nestorian society. For instance, he was especially frustrated with a celebration called the "Fast of Jonah" which occurred every February. This three-day ceremony commemorates the Hebrew story of Jonah, who was swallowed by a fish as punishment by God and, after praying for repentance for three days, was hurled back out and onto shore. Not only is this celebration for Perkins unnecessarily excessive, but he also finds that, in truth, it is a purely nominal cover for hedonistic indulgence. He scoffs at the Nestorians' inability to adhere to sound ascetic principles: during their fasts, Nestorians would not fast from all food, but only from animal products, and they do not fast for the entirety of the three days but finish every night with a huge feast. Hence, for Perkins, this does not appear at all to be a religious observance but rather an all-too-human excuse for gluttony. Such rituals leave Perkins aghast at these indigenous representations of piety. Despite the Nestorians' description of such practices as profound testament to their Christianity, Perkins complains: "I do not know what more artful contrivance Satan could have invented as a substitute for the pure religion of the gospel than he has furnished in the fasts of these oriental churches" (1836). Equally bewildering for Perkins are the seemingly nonsensical rules which govern the ceremonies, particularly those which concern the definition of labor and when it is to be prohibited. During the days of fasting, performing one's daily tasks is not only acceptable but expected, but to labor during a feast was considered imprudently sinful. More to the point, what the Nestorians considered labor, had proven a problem for activities at the teachers' school: while no one considered reading or arithmetic to be labor, *writing* was deemed unacceptable by the native Christians. Exasperated at this idea, Perkins laments, "Wo to the boy, or the man, who takes his pen to write, during these festivals" (1836).

In the mind of Perkins, there is a clash between the institution of writing introduced by the missionary, against which the stubborn repetition of a false Nestorian practice of piety now butts its head. By virtue of the form of relation which proselytism here takes—again recall the upright Western missionary handing a written Bible to the kneeled, seminude native—the Nestorian prohibition on writing during their holiest hours comes into direct conflict not simply with 'writing' as an innocent, secular practice but, much more broadly, an entirely different relation between God and man than that which already existed in Urmia. The Nestorians, in other words, clearly did not feel they needed written texts to make them pious; that was was made possible instead by ceremonial communion and congregation. Perkins became frustrated by their prohibition on writing because he believed that without literacy—alongside the other institutions of writing the Western missionaries bring—salvation of the native Christian would be difficult if not completely impossible. For Perkins, then, the revitalization of the Holy Spirit in the Nestorian Church is contingent upon their acceptance and adherence to new forms of relation to God.

That the writing relation becomes necessary for the possibility of piety is again, I think, symptomatic of the importance of *production* in 19th-century missionary historical geography. It is not just, as explained in the previous chapter, that missionaries produced empirical objects, e.g. the Nestorian, as justification for their faith. In addition, the effect of production on the temporality and spatiality of missionary practice can be seen in the prioritization of the writing process over, for instance, preaching, baptism and the institutionalization of other ritual ceremonies, and especially the more singular performance of miracles. Perhaps unexpectedly, I think the sense of production which I am using here is best described by Foucault, who associates it intimately with History as an *episteme* which emerges, roughly speaking, in the middle of the 19th-century as it slowly disassociates from the "Order" which defined the Classical epoch:

> Just as Order in Classical thought was not the visible harmony of things, or their observed arrangement, regularity, or symmetry, but the particular space of their being, that which, prior to all effective knowledge established them in the field of knowledge, so History, from the nineteenth century, defines the birthplace of the empirical that from which, prior to all established chronology it derives its own being. (1989: 219)

For Foucault, the concept of production emerges first in the study of political economy in association with the concept of labor, particularly by Adam Smith. Here, Foucault draws out an important distinction: 'labor' had been used by the Physiocrats prior to Smith as a formal, representative variable which could express exchange value in terms of one's need (i.e. value measured as the labor needed to reproduce oneself during production), but something very different happens to labor in Smith's conceptualization. With Smith, 'labor' becomes not just a relational variable of exchange but "an irreducible absolute unit of measurement" (1989: 241). In turn, 'wealth,' as it had for the Physiocrats, could no longer maintain "internal order of its equivalence by a comparison of the objects to be exchanged by an appraisal of the power peculiar to each represent an object of need…it is broken down according to the units of labour that have in reality produced it" (1989: 241-242). In turn, political economy ceased to be a study of how wealth can be represented and exchanged through commodities, and instead became an analysis of how wealth is *produced* by something "radically heterogeneous" to either of the commodities in any given exchange: "if there is an order regulating the forms of wealth, if this can buy that, if gold is worth twice as much as silver…it is because [commodities] are all subject to time, to toil, to weariness, and, in the last resort, to death itself" (1989: 244). Put another way, if exchange is at all possible, it is only because of a third term, labor, which is not itself traded but serves as its silent, yet substantive, medium. Labor, in turn, can no longer simply be a useful convention to study trade, a variable representation of one's need in economic formula. Labor becomes a real, irreducible aspect of political economy which, through production, transforms itself into commodities.

Writing, insofar as it becomes for the missionaries *the* medium for the distribution of divine meaning, necessitates both a historical geography subordinate to the concept of production. As a fundamental condition of their salvation, writing always implies, one, a temporal delay which lengthens the time between a representation of meaning (the Word of God) and the labor-time of its production (whether the cumulative instruction of literacy to produce a reading/writing agent, the manufacture of a book), and, two, a spacing which

widens the gap between the where one can receive the revelation of God and the actual site of this production. As I have said about the missionaries before, for Perkins, God does not at all manifest on the surface of things; God does not reveal Himself in the voices of the Nestorians or in their holiest moments of ceremony, despite the fact they claim exactly this. God is a truth no longer readily apparent or received but something which must be *produced* through the written word.

Writing, considered as a labor, then, preconditions a when and where of production which is shrouded, hidden behind a curtain in a realm which is unrepresentable, but out of which the truth or essence of all representations emerge. It is in this way that missionary practice can adapt its form to institutions wrought by 'secular' modernity without ever losing its religious face: missionaries recognize the importance of writing precisely to the extent that they begin to see the revelation of God as not manifest any representation itself but necessarily *produced*—that is, drawn out over time, exhausted through their labor and the labor of literate natives. There is no doubt that this confirms "the interior time of an organic structure which grows in accordance with its own necessity and develops in accordance with autochthonous laws—the time of capital and production," but, for the missionaries, this does not make the education of literacy any less religious (Foucault 1989 [1966]: 245). Under capitalism, there is "no day that is not a feast day, in the terrible sense that all its sacred pomp is unfolded before us; each day commands the utter fealty of each worshipper" (Benjamin 1996 [1921]: 288). It is not, as Parsons lamented above, that the Sabbath is simply forsaken, but rather the Sabbath adapts to the form of the workday, such that they become indistinguishable: *holy* labor becomes *productive* labor. The missionaries do not see the practice of writing as profane labor (let alone one which would serve to 'modernize' native Christians, expanding their worldly capacities) precisely *because* they see it as *productive* of the divine. With this in mind, it becomes obvious why Perkins regards these feasts of the Nestorians as mortal vices: Ceremonies like the fast of Jonah are excessive and 'lazy' because *unproductive* of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, by consequence, irreligious and profane. Feasts become impediments to the process of evangelism and the production of evangelized bodies.

In the refusal of the Nestorian to forsake these ceremonies, what is truly at stake? It is clearly not adequate to simply note the failure of the missionary to completely enclose the native other into his own practices—as i.e. a result of the native's own stubborn ignorance. Rather, what this example shows is that by rejecting writing during ceremonies, recognizing it as a prohibited labor, the Nestorian refused to compromise his relation to God. Writing would seem to the Nestorians to be *writing over* and hence presuming a blankness or absenting of the sacred was for them already manifest—as that which manifests not in any production of new objects (i.e. of writing) but only in congregation and ceremony, a cyclical temporality which signifies holiness in a very different way than the time of production. With this in mind, I believe that this indigenous refusal to write during holy hours ought to be read not only as a critique of the regulative institution of writing as the exclusive meaningful relation between oneself and God, but also as a resistance against the introduction of the temporality under which it emerged—i.e. the time of production. If there is an obsessive compulsion of missionaries toward literacy, the printing press, and the written word, what the Nestorian does by maintaining ceremony, in spite of Perkins' objections, is hold out for a very different fidelity to divine truth.

The last thing I will say here is that the privileging of writing also highlights the specifically anthropological inflection of these early American missionary practices. As a relation which both divides and maintains the division between the Christian self and native other, writing becomes the practice by which others come to be produced as objects of knowledge and communicated back into the Western world. In this sense, missionaries, if not themselves anthropological, prepare the possibility for Western anthropologists to later penetrate into Kurdistan through the institutionalization of the writing relation as the only relation productive of meaning concerning the native population. Put inversely, without writing, there is no production of the anthropological other—and neither is there the production of history, nor geography—and missionaries to the Nestorians will obsessively advance the writing relation for the entirety of their tenure.

To be sure, indigenous resistance against these forms of pedagogy was neither clean nor coherent. I do not doubt, as the missionaries write, there had always been a keen interest

on behalf of at least some of the native Christians in the myriad of advantages in literacy for both spiritual and worldly purposes. My point is not that the Nestorians rejected writing outright, but that the Nestorians clearly exhibited the agency to set this relation of writing on their own terms and according to their own structures of meaning—at least for a while. Moreover, resistances were not only evident in the extension of institutions of writing to Urmia, but in addition, precisely in their reproduction by natives, their very repetition of difference at the mission station. That is to say, even within the formation of the native writing-subject disciplined by missionary practice, there had also been subversion to the production of Nestorian as a mute object of knowledge. I conclude this chapter with one of the most striking examples in the mission's archives.

Thomas Van Norden became resident physician at Urmia in the early 1870s, shortly after the transference of care for the mission from the American Board to the Foreign Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America. His tenure, however, would be quite brief: in a resolution dated December 12th, 1872, he was recommended by the station to the Foreign Missions Board to be relieved of his duties as physician for obstinate failure to attend mission meetings (Whipple 1872). In the explanation of his reasoning to not attend, the resolution claims only that Dr. Van Norden did so in protest of the station holding a previous meeting on September 3rd when another resident, Dr. Stocking, was away on tour of the surrounding areas. The report alleges that Dr. Van Norden himself gave no further explanation. Since missionaries toured relatively frequently, both on business and for pleasure, Dr. Stocking's absence would have been nothing extraordinary; hence, that Dr. Van Norden would have been so hostile at the thought of holding a meeting in his absence already seems odd. The resolution goes further, however, in characterizing Dr. Van Norden's actions as irrational and inexplicable, citing that the meeting in question was "only to provide helpers for Hamadan and Tehran," and therefore a relatively innocuous gathering (ibid). From there on out, the letter claims that Van Norden simply refused to attend any subsequent mission meeting which would "transact necessary and important business with the members of the mission, absenting himself also from our prayer meetings and persistently refusing to do the work which the

Mission had assigned to him, uniformly saying that all matters must wait till Mr. Stocking return from the Mountains" (ibid).

Dr. Van Norden's letters to the Board, written after his expulsion, tell a very different account of what happened. Writing from the Nestorian village of Gavilan, he begins his explanation not with this particular meeting but four months prior, at a time when

> information was brought to [Miss Cochran] by Deacon [Yonan] (one of the first of our helpers in intelligence and standing, he being the translator of the mission for the Syriac publications) and immediately afterward at her direction communicated to me which led to my seeking further information the result of which was that Mrs. Coan appeared as one endeavoring by prevacation to keep from the knowledge of the mission the fact that five hundred pounds had come for the poor Jews of Urumia from Sir M. Montefiore of London. Miss Dean and Miss Jewett were witnesses with myself of her denial of the fact that this many had come. Finally she was constrained to show the bills in her possession. After Mr. Coan return upon hearing of the matter from his wife and upon hearing further from myself at his own request he at once commended to accuse the Mission and especially myself of defamation of his wife's character and insisted on obtaining satisfaction. (Norden 1872)

From Van Norden's retelling, then, the animosity he faced had deeper roots than merely his absence at a few later meetings. As evident by this letter, under a release of information, a rumor, carried by Deacon Yonan (whether he was the author of these claims, we will never know), Van Norden had accused Mrs. Coan of laundering money sent on behalf of Moses Montefiore, a British philanthropist, for the Jewish population of Urumia and then covering up the paper trail.

As a result, her husband George Whitefield Coan, a very distinguished figure at the station, grew increasingly bitter toward Van Norden over the coming months, rallying to his side another missionary, James Basset. This, Van Norden explains, was why he began to avoid the mission meetings: "They both behaved so rudely and so offensively both in spirit and action towards me that I refused to attend [the] mission meeting until Mr. Stocking's return from the mountains" (ibid). In other words, feeling that there was too much political leverage against him within the mission, he was attempting to wait for a neutral party to arrive and help clear the air. In response to his absence, the Coan and Bassett motioned to freeze Van Norden's salary, putting on the record that Van Norden

was “not to be considered a member of the Mission while [he] maintained the attitude in which [he] stood” (ibid). This caused a very serious problem for Van Norden, who “by unanimous action of the mission’s five members [Labaree, Stocking, Basset, Coan, and Whipple]” he had already been authorized to travel to Tabriz in the fall of 1872 in order to commence a station there (ibid). Indeed, it appears Van Norden would have already left, as he claims, if not for the illness of his son. Either way, Coan and Bassett considered this resolution nullified by virtue of Van Norden’s disobedience and revoked his travel funds and outstanding salary payments until his final departure.

Both letters from Coan and the mission resolution confirm that treasury funds were withheld but provide a very different rationale than Van Norden. They cite his abrupt refusal to attend mission meetings as the root cause and conveniently neglect to mention any of the accusations Van Norden had made in his own letters. The only hint is a vaguely worded line in the middle of the letter: “I suppose [Van Norden] considers himself an injured man, but he has done an irreparable injury to this mission and to individuals and to the cause of Christ” (Coan 1873). With respect to his departure to Tabriz, Coan explains only that “whereas notwithstanding the action of the [Bassett], we learn that Dr. Van Norden has engaged his animals with the intention of leaving for Erzeroom and beyond at an early day, and this without leave of absence obtained…and without notifying us of his intentions” (ibid). Hence, according to Coan, it was not so much that his travel funds were revoked, but that he was never authorized to leave in the first place. Furthermore, as had been explained in the mission’s resolution on Van Norden, while the physician intended to set up a mission at Tabriz, the Urmia mission station claimed to have rejected this proposal from the beginning, saying Mr. Easton, the replacement physician was held up in Stamboul, and Stocking wasn’t back to convene a meeting for Norden’s departure. As a result, “many grave questions and matters of business remain to be decided before the mission disperses” (Whipple 1872).

This dispute would have ended there, if it were not for the glaring inclusion of two letters in the Presbyterian archives produced not by any missionary but by a handful of Nestorian elites. First, there is a letter dated months after the resolution, on June 28th, 1873,

penned by "Yohannan of Degalo," i.e. Mar Yohannan, residing bishop at Urmia (1873). Written in broken English, Yohannan informs that the Nestorian bishops of the local districts had been trying to send letters directly to David Irving, Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, in order to request that Dr. Van Norden stay at the mission. They had one of the mission's indigenous helpers write a letter which they intended to mail, but he soon tore it up "because he was afraid of Mr. Coan" (ibid). Two others wrote letters and sent them to a messenger to be delivered to the post, but "people frightened [this messenger] so much that he tore them up" (ibid). When Coan finally caught word of what was going on, Mar Yohannan claims he called this helper in and said "if you try to keep Dr. Van Norden here, your hands will be burned" (ibid). Mar Yohannan goes on to explain that there now exists a fourth letter which still remains with the Nestorians because the local district elders are too afraid to put their seals to it, fearing that "Mr. Coan will cut off our wages if we do this" (ibid). Mar Yohannan characterizes Coan as extremely paranoid about the matter, confronting anyone who had recently visited Van Norden around the time of his departure and asking them what Van Norden had said about him, allegedly assisting when they said Van Norden had said nothing: "Think—think what did [you] say. You must tel[l] me" (ibid). Moreover, Mar Yohannan writes that Van Norden is "a good and true man, and a very good physician, and we love him very much. We beg that you will think about this, and be willing that he should stay with us in Oroomiah" (ibid).

Evidently, the fourth letter managed to make it to the post and was received by Irving, as indicated by its stamps in the archives. This letter, dated Oct. 1st, 1873—the only other letter besides Mar Yohannan's letter which exists in the Presbyterian archives and had been written during the 1870s by the Nestorians themselves—does indeed carry the signatures and seals of several local deacons, priests and bishops, and it directly requests the return of Van Norden (see Figure 5.2). They liken Van Norden to Dr. Asahel Grant, whose memory for these religious elites was "very pleasant" (Yohannan et al 1873). They note his perseverance and commitment to battling endemic diseases, material or spiritual: "He was not only a physician for bodies but also for the soul" (Yohannan et al 1873). They confirm his importance to the project of the mission and to the wellbeing of their people.

Nevertheless, their plea would fall on deaf ears back at home, as Van Norden would never return to the Urmia mission station.

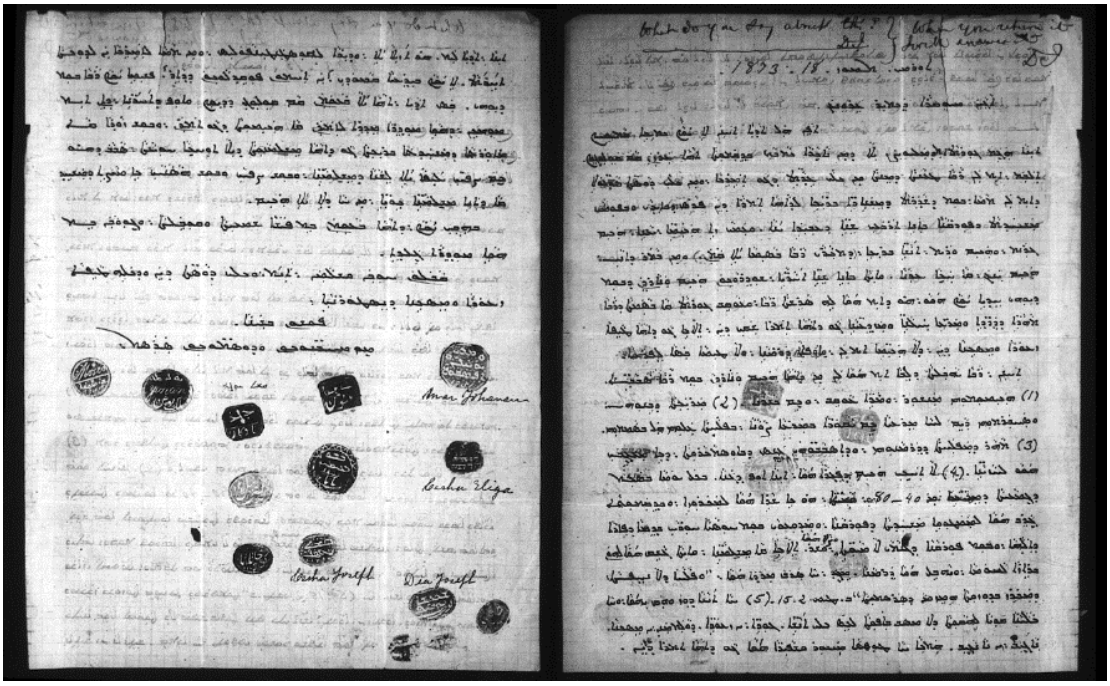


Figure 5.2: Letter to Dr. Irving, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, written in Aramaic by Assyrian elders at Urmia, signed and sealed by about a dozen bishops, as well as Patriarch Mar Yohannan (Yohannan et al 1873).

The case of Dr. Van Norden thus illuminates the persistent possibility of resistance to discursive conscription from directly *within* what was supposed to guarantee its completion, i.e. the writing relation. It is not merely that Nestorians here used literacy toward unintended ends, that they adapted these skills, as native students of missionary schools had elsewhere (see Harris 1999), toward obviously profane practice—industry, colonial administration, etc.—but instead, in their oscillation between reading (acquired rationalization) and writing (performance of meaning), they transformed the missionary cause *itself* into a moment decided on their own terms. In this specific sense, it makes no difference that Van Norden never returned—the letter was sent and voices were heard. And perhaps more importantly, at least for my purposes: not only heard but *archived*, the

movement of the other recorded in spite of its contemporaneous neglect, in spite of an inscription into history, geography, writing which sought only to silence it.

For me, this moment, as it has been reproduced in the archives, and as I reproduce it here, is one which therefore combines much of what I have been trying to say throughout this paper—the writing relation, the historical and geographical consolidation of the Nestorian as an object of Western knowledge, the movement of difference across scientific and religious epistemological fields, and the archive itself. The Nestorians had been conscript to, absorbed within a writing relation intended only to transform them into a language to be translated, and a body to be read. They had been placed historically, as ancient Christians, and geographically, as an anchor to Eastern proselytism which fulfilled apocalyptic prophecy. In writing, precisely in doing what they were told to do, being who they were told to be—literate subjects—they reaffirmed, upheld, lived up to this inheritance—but in doing so, in the very act of repetition, they necessarily displaced what they inherited in order to make room for and claim a place *within* this archive.

Put another way: yes, writing letters to a Corresponding Secretary they had never met was alienating, but in this very alienation, dogged by otherness, new objects of representation emerged which sublated their own subject position. It is of course true that they never ceased to be subjects—that they so passionately wanted Van Norden's return is obviously symptomatic of a structured, 'Western' medicological dependency. Nevertheless, what I insist is that their movement here, the sending of a letter to a Secretary of the Board, thousands of miles away in a New World they had never seen, could not have been anticipated or determined in advance. It was emergent: this oscillation between reading what had been given and writing on a blank surface; *this* is the play of practice, an unanticipatable freedom of movement, premised on the very existence of the other as its grounding possibility.

What might it mean to *live up to* not simply writing or the archive but its internal resistance, that which finds its strength in this parallax view between reading and writing, pedagogy and performance? How does one live freely enough so as to be able to bear

responsibility (to respond to the other) for one's own actions? As I have been trying to say, repeating Derrida again (p. 37 above), it is only by bearing witness to what we inherit:

> Inheritance is never a *given*, it is always a task…the *being* of what we are is first of all inheritance, whether we like it or know it or not…To bear witness would be to bear witness to what we *are* insofar as we *inherit*, and that—here is the circle, here is the chance, or the finitude—we inherit the very thing that allows us to bear witness to it. (1994a: 67-68)

Can we bear in mind the nudity of our own eyes when we read, the effacing labors of our practice when we write, and inherit this empirical world and its rationalizations—all in order to ask new questions? I have tried to demonstrate a possible means of rereading missionary texts which is neither exactly critical, nor apologetic, but treats the text with a fondness and uncanny familiarity I feel I cannot help but measure up to. We are not as far as we think from the archives which we study. We repeat and return to them constantly, Like the Nestorians who learn to read and write, we act on the veiled strength of an inheritance we are always already displacing.

Chapter 6

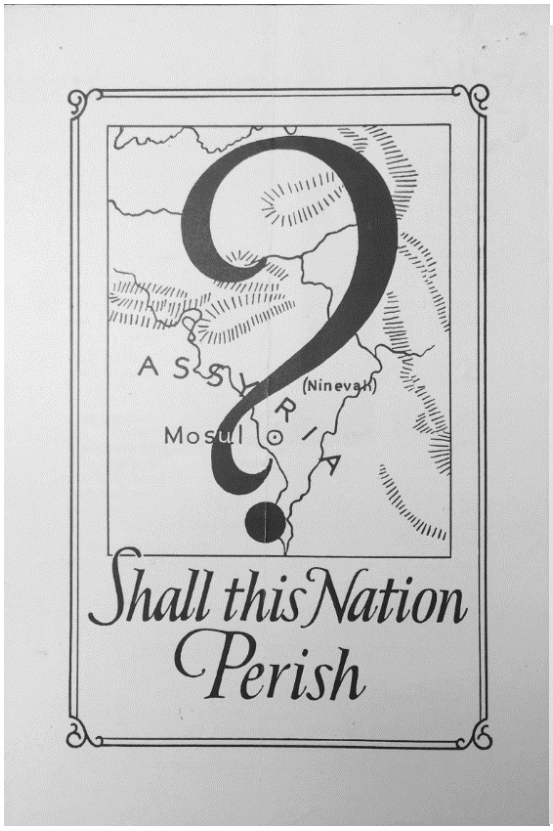
Conclusion: The Assyrian genocide and the Chaldean beggars

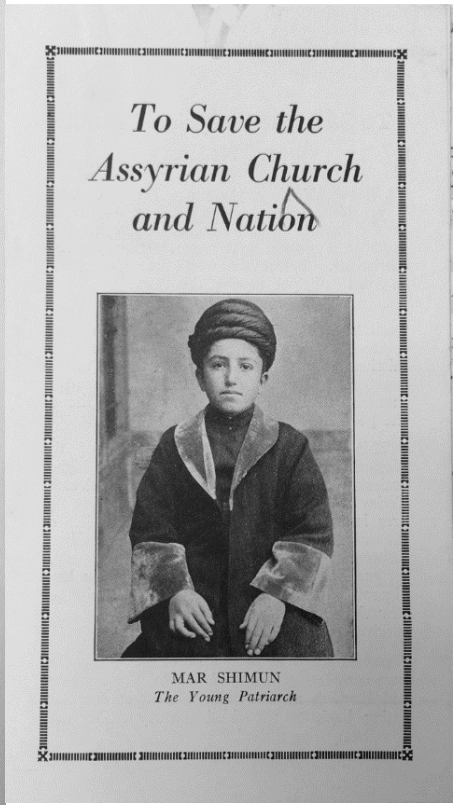
The Van Norden controversy would amount to only a very minor interlude in the vast missionary efforts at Urmia recorded and entombed at the Presbyterian Historical Society archives. George Coan would remain one of the most distinguished and admired members of the Persia mission for the next several decades. Moreover, the documents of his son, Frederick Coan, who eventually took his place at the station, would become especially valuable resources given his central importance to the missionary cause during World War I. His private journals contain extensive notes on the relief efforts organized by the Urmia mission station for displaced Armenians fleeing from the Ottoman Empire toward Persia beginning in 1915.

The worst of the tragedies against Christians at Urmia, however, would follow shortly after Coan's departure from the field in 1917. Over the next few years, missionaries became increasingly embroiled in the War, and in particular the regional geopolitics between the Ottoman, Persian, Russian, and British Empires. More than ever, they came to understand themselves as the lone protectors of the minority Christians in Urmia, hundreds of whom were being sheltered on the mission's complex (for reference, see Figure 4.3). Motivated by this imaginary, they began to align more closely with British imperialist interests, receiving money, aid, and opening diplomatic channels to help act for and abet Armenian-Assyrian brigands on behalf of the Allied war effort (Zirinsky 1998: 17-21). By extension, the American missionaries unwittingly reinforced religious divisions *qua* national divisions, and, in turn, regional Muslim forces began to recognize them and

by extension the native Christians as politicized Western agents serving to stir anti-Ottoman and anti-Persian resentment in the region.

To make matters worse, in 1919, Frances Packard, then the resident physician who had just returned to Urmia to assist in the relief effort, hired Kurdish guards from the mountains for the mission compound, intensifying local animosity between these foreign Kurds and the indigenous Muslim populations (Zirinsky 1998: 22). Tensions rose to a head on May 24th, 1919, when a failed Assyrian-led plot to assassinate Simko Shikak—a local Kurdish chieftain who was rapidly gaining influence in the region—backfired and led to a breach of the city of Urmia by a group of Kurdish fighters loyal to Simko. After the local residents successfully defended against this aggression, they turned back on the Kurdish-guarded Presbyterian mission and raided its compound, killing nearly three hundred refugees who had been sheltered there. In combination with a years-long famine which had resulted from the aforementioned dislocation of tens of thousands of Armenians and Assyrians onto the plains of West Persia, this bubbling up of ethnic tension became too much to bear for the extant Assyrian Christian population at Urmia. A few months later, accompanied by one of the few remaining missionaries at the mission station, William Ambrose Shedd (and his wife), Christian residents at Urmia fled *en masse* westward, establishing the Baqubah refugee camp in British-occupied Mesopotamia, about 50 kilometers northeast of Baghdad. By the end of 1919, after 85 years of service in northwestern Persia, no American missionaries were left at Urmia.





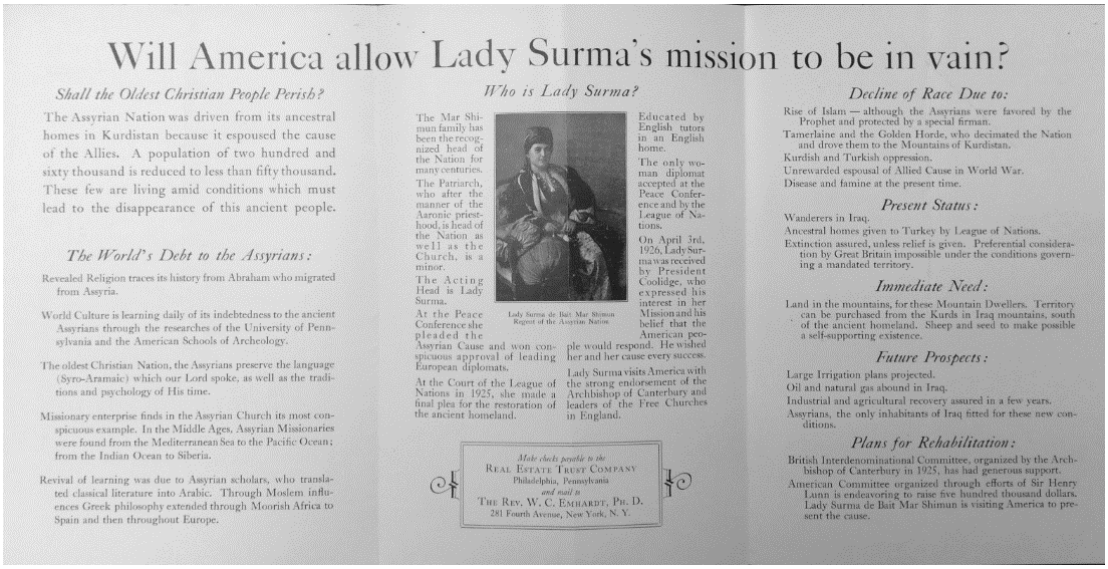


Figure 6.1: Pamphlets produced by the Assyrian Aid Committee (top-left and bottom) and the Near East Committee of the National Council of the Episcopal Church (top-right) imploring Americans to help save the Assyrian nation. ("Shall this Nation Perish?" c. 1926 and "To Save the Assyrian Church and Nation" c. 1926)

But by no means did the missionaries cease operations: in the name of defending these displaced Nestorians (now mostly identified as 'Assyrian,' in reference to their emergent national identity), the missionaries campaigned fervently for their resettlement. Now motivated by concerns far removed from either open preaching to native Christians, production of empirical observation about them, or the institutionalization of writing, missionaries fought vociferously, to save a "nation" (see Figure 6.1)—and, to be sure, reclamation of their mission site. Reports collected by the American missionary Hugo Muller were sent to the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board on July 26, 1921, detailing the dire conditions which had swept Urmia in the absence of missionary presence.

The entire city, he reported, was no longer in the Shah's control but instead under the reign of a

> slender man of athletic build, with a bright eye, a black mustache and a face capable of expressing many shades of emotion. He wears the picturesque Kurdish head-dress with its characteristic decoration of thin tassels. He can neither read nor write. His castle overlooks a precipice in the foothills of Kurdistan, and from there he issues his orders and from there his merry men sally forth, persecute his victims and bring back to him bags of gold. (Muller 26 July 1921)

Muller here is referring to Simko Shikak (mentioned above). In the desecuritization of northwestern Persia during World War I—a result of the mass displacement of Assyrians and Armenians coming from the eastern Anatolia and the political vacuum left from British, Russian, and Persian withdrawal—Simko had managed to gain territorial control of a good portion of the plains west of Lake Urmia from 1918 to 1922, including the towns of Salmas, Khoy, and Urmia. Additionally, it had been reportedly under Simko's order that Benjamin Mar Shimun, reigning Patriarch of the Assyrian Christians, was assassinated "by a Kurdish brigand in March, 1918" ("The Last Stand of an Ancient Race" 1918; see also Wigram 1929: 216). Simko more than anyone else or any other event would embody the destruction of the American mission. He became the bearer of so many qualities which had been for nearly a century considered by missionaries as the dangers which, through production of the Nestorian body, they were working to nullify: not only Islam but undisciplined, unintelligent barbarism, not simply spiritual decay but the backwardness of

traditional culture, both especially evident in Simko's illiteracy and his profane worldliness, i.e. a thirst for power motivated only by greed.

In the year following the massacres at Urmia, Muller visited Urmia twice, partially in order to assess the damages made to the missionary properties. During the first visit, Muller mentions that the trees around the mission compound had been cut, roofs had not been cared for, buildings vandalized, telephone lines stolen, balconies destroyed (Muller 1920: 1). Muller blames not simply lawlessness or wartime but Kurdish occupation, for not only had Simko's troops famished and desolated the Christian quarters, but as well, according to Muller, adversely affected the local Muslim population: "there is hardly anyone in the City who is not miserable, from the once wealthy landowners who are now bankrupt both for men and money, to the poor villagers who walk into the city poorhouses today and are carried out tomorrow" (ibid: 2). Indeed, the only thing Muller mentions in proper operation are the government schools, in contrast to the "aghas" in control of the city (i.e., Kurdish leaders) who do nothing but attempt to launder money in "Oriental style" from Tehran (ibid: 1-2). In connection, it is implied that their effect on the "political situation" has forced "the ordinary Oriental mind" to readily confuse missions with politics, "thus making it doubly difficult to avoid pitfalls as we go about among the people" (ibid: 3). Here, of course, we see the refusal, common among archived missionary accounts, to see any missionary practice as itself political, but rather that this association made by local Muslims was a fault and misinterpretation of their "Oriental minds"—despite the fact that the mission had received regular assistance (military protection, diplomatic privilege with the Shah and the Sublime Porte) from the regional British consulates, and that William Shedd, senior member at the Urmia site, had acted as unofficial US consular agent since before the war (Zirinsky 1998: 11-19).

Muller's second visit only strengthens his account of the specifically Kurdish degradation of Urmia: while the main city compound and Sardari, the mission-operated college, had been adequately cared for by a "faithful servant" and a Persian official (respectively), leaving them both with relatively little damage, the hospital compound had been devastatingly reoccupied by a Kurdish chief, Tahar Beg, within which he had also

squatted nearly thirty families which now abused the complex (Muller 9 Feb. 1921: 2). It was not that these new occupants had simply let the place deteriorate, but that these spaces, under Kurdish control, reached new heights of Orientalization: they were actively renovating "doors and windows" in "such a way as to protect the people in their own way and not intended for later use by civilized people" (ibid: 2). Muller also reported on the removal of trees from missionary premises, the symbolic significance here representing not only the physical but spiritual desertification which was a consequence of the flight of the Assyrians and the American missionaries from the region.

In all, then, Kurdish occupation has meant for Muller the harbinger of death, disease, abandonment, famine, corruption, moral decadence—all endemic crises which the missionaries had labored against for nearly a century. For Muller, rehabilitation of the Urmia mission therefore takes the highest priority: "as rapidly as conditions permit, regardless of the repatriation of the native Christian population" (Muller 1920: 4). As it turns out, while the missionaries would come to reoccupy the Urmia mission premises in 1925, the vast majority of Assyrians will never return. As late as 1921, there was a plan for repatriation, at least as reported by the current Corresponding Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, Robert Speer, and in coordination with the American organization the Near East Relief, the Archbishop of Canterbury (who had organized a mission in to Urmia in 1884), and the British Foreign Office. They intention was to slowly bring the tens of thousands of Assyrians back into Persian territory on foot through the Kurdish mountains (Speer 1921: 3-4). However, as the Near East Relief reported back to the Presbyterian missionaries on December 8th, 1921, this movement had "collapsed" as the result of dwindling British support for repatriation (ibid: 4, see also McDowell 1921), and the subsequent shelving of responsibility onto the missionaries and the Near East Relief, who lacked either the manpower or the financial resources to care for the transference of some 30,000 Assyrians (Speer 1921: 3-4). The rising reluctance on the part of the British Empire for repatriation was in part a result of their intentions to mend relations with the Iranian population vis-à-vis propping up the postwar government of Reza Khan. Either way, return to Urmia became increasingly out of the question for their missionary caretakers as well,

at least until a "stable government" could be guaranteed (McDowell 1921: 3). Finally, after the British mandated closure of the Baqubah refugee camp, they evacuated the Assyrians under the protection of hired Armenian troops and relocated them to Mosul (see Robson 2016).

The missionaries nevertheless continued to feel it their divine responsibility to find permanent and ideally Christian-governed safe-haven for the now-diasporic Assyrian population. A cable from Dr. McDowell, resident of the Urmia mission, sent to the Presbyterian board on December 6th, 1920 reads: "Urumians have special claim upon us. Deserting them this dark hour impossible. Shall Western Christendom be without mercy. From Ancient Eastern Church historian will condemn us" (Speer 1921: 5). Propaganda, as shown in Figure 6.1, was circulated widely by the Presbyterian Board throughout the United States as a means of requesting funds to support the Assyrian relief effort. Missionaries paraded Lady Surma, the "Princess Regent" of the Assyrian Church, across the United States and Western Europe as a means of spurring advocacy and generating donations to the cause ("Shall this Nation Perish?" c. 1926: 2). After repatriation efforts had collapsed, there was a brief, albeit concerted, effort among the missionaries to relocate Assyrian refugees to America, but this project was reckoned even costlier than the mass return to the Assyrian homeland (McDowell 1921: 1-3).

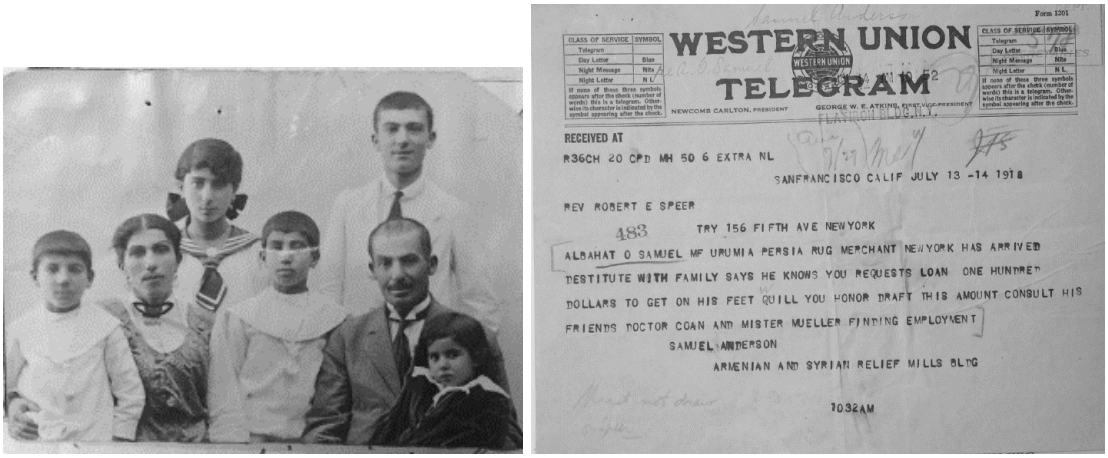
Despite the efforts of American missionaries and the Near East Relief in the 1920s to handle resettlement on their own terms, Assyrians would become increasingly reliant on the British for protection while they remained in Iraq—as well as, in coordination with the League of Nations, any hope of their emerging, rather utopian aspirations for an independent nation-state. This reliance would prove damning, as British advisers to Iraq would eventually hand over their authority to an Arab government at the end of the Mandate period. Ignored by both the British Empire and the League of Nations, and as a result of the rising animosity between Assyrians and Arabs in newly independent Iraq, particularly after the implementation of national assimilation policies, conflict broke out in 1933 between Assyrian and Iraqi forces. This amalgamated in the massacre at Simele waged against the Assyrians by the Iraqi national army (Angsusingha 2018: 124-163).

Afterwards, thousands of Assyrians fled to Syria, and the Patriarch Mar Shimun escaped to the United States, headquartering the Assyrian Church of the East in Chicago from 1949 until 2015, when the patriarchal seat was finally relocated back to northern Iraq.

The parallax of Christian sympathy

The question for me, as it has been since the beginning of this paper, is, in the wake of tragedies like this, how to determine and to bear responsibility—how to respond to others, to figures I will never know, and should never presume to know. Rather than treat justice as a matter of transforming their history into an empirical body of knowledge, placed into my history and geography—and, what's more, under the scope of definitive 'postcolonial' judgment against missionaries (as if this could ever relieve the Assyrians of their silence)—I have been trying to think through the ways that such a question can be asked differently. I have been trying to repeat their texts with a difference, to stir the oscillation between their practices of reading and writing, the same practices which I here repeat, in such a way as to allow me a freedom of movement about the text. This could only work insofar as this movement is a response premised upon the existence of the other as utter exteriority, as something which cannot be known but which necessarily exists—indeed which my own existence always already implies; and which, by consequence, I inherit. It seems to be no more difficult yet no more necessary to repeat the same movement here, in a return to the fleeting origin archived (and anarchived) in this paper. I return, which would, perhaps parodically, pose the question, 'what ever became of those Nestorians?' And, to be clear, by asking this, I do not mean the self-determining Assyrian subjects who, today, assume that historical geography of Assyrians *over there*; rather I mean those others named Chaldean/Nestorian/Assyrian which were absented doubly: once already in the missionary texts, twice in thinking, at least from the perspective a Western anthropologist, a Kurdish

nation-state. Are *they* still absent? If so, what would it mean to bear witness to their absence?



WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT — GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

RECEIVED AT

R36CH 20 CPD MH 50 G EXTRA NL

SANFRANCISCO CALIF JULY 13 -14 1918

REV ROBERT E SPEER

483 TRY 156 FIFTH AVE NEWYORK

ALBAHAT O SAMUEL MF URUMIA PERSIA RUG MERCHANT NEWYORK HAS ARRIVED DESTITUTE WITH FAMILY SAYS HE KNOWS YOU REQUESTS LOAN ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS TO GET ON HIS FEET QUILL YOU HONOR DRAFT THIS AMOUNT CONSULT HIS FRIENDS DOCTOR COAN AND MISTER MUELLER FINDING EMPLOYMENT

SAMUEL ANDERSON

ARMENIAN AND SYRIAN RELIEF MILLS BLDG

1032AM

Figure 6.2. Albahat O. Samuel and his family (right), and the initial telegram sent to Speer, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, by the Armenian and Syrian Relief Committee, upon his arrival (left). (Anderson 1918)

In at least one sense, they returned: back to the place where the alleged 'truths' about them had for a century been spoken, to the other end of that divide (the oceanic or geographical divide as much as the historical divide) which the colonists, missionaries, and scientists tried so hard to exclude them from and maintain their separation. I am speaking here of those Assyrians who arrived on the shores of the United States, only in order to be radically excluded from the same Christian philanthropy which, *over there*, reckoned them as a 'nation' worth saving, and as objects of their utmost responsibility. As they washed up on American shores, a new figure surfaced which did not relay the same sympathy: they were called not "Assyrians" or "Assyrian refugees" but predominantly "Chaldean beggars" (and, from Chapter 3, the naming of members of the Assyrian nation as "Chaldean" should stir in the mind of the reader the signification of their impiety, specifically as a profane marker of their conscription into the Catholic Church). These beggars did not just defy, as in the previous chapter, their subject formation—that is, they did not move against their interpellation into structures of writing, or, even more, as muted objects within historical geographies of missionaries—but they, in fact, opened from *within* the interiority of

ostensibly universal Christian sympathy a direct revelation of the otherness it excluded. That is to say, Assyrians were undoubtedly phenomena which the Christians had clearly seen and written about, but were now forced to confront face to face. Their empiricity could no longer be reduced to superstitions or vestigial traditions, neither could they read their unexpected arrival in the United States as apocalyptical prophecy, and neither were they simply dismissed as devious writing subjects. The Chaldean beggars, I argue, were unequivocally *new* phenomena from the perspective of the American Christians, ones which radically disrupted all of the relations I had spent the majority of this paper schematizing. In becoming, they brought upon missionary practice a deep, unsettling anxiety which one can still feel lingering in the Presbyterian archives.

One of these phenomena (among a few dozen documented in the Presbyterian archives) took the form of Mr. Ablahat O. Samuel of Urmia (Figure 6.2). Previously a wealthy rug salesman in Persia, he arrived in the United States, according to the missionary archives, penniless and completely unannounced. In a letter written to Speer, dated July 8th, 1918, from San Francisco, Samuel describes his past three years since leaving Urmia and becoming a refugee (Samuel 1918). He tells how he and his family had left all of his belongings in Tabriz before joining the American missionaries in the region back to the American consulate at Tiflis. From there, they sailed to America: "We are very thankful [to] God, American flag and our [American missionaries in the travel party]…Now we are here but we don't know any body and we have no expences [sic] to come to east" (ibid). He informs Speer that after his arrival he traveled to the local Presbyterian church and notified the church of his association with the Presbyterian mission at Urmia. He now requests for further help from Speer to support him and his family find their footing in America.

Another letter to Speer, written by a member of the American-Persian Relief Commission in route to Persia from the American Embassy at Tokyo, corroborates Samuel's story, but also notes that he had loaned some money to Samuel, to be collected "at the earliest possible time," once Samuel reaches Speer (Robinson 1918). Less than amused at becoming Samuel's personal charity fund, Speer writes to Coan expressing deep

anxiety about the situation. Speer notes that he in fact knows Samuel, having been suspicious of his character after a previous rug deal in New York some years ago. Speer writes further that he is not "enthusiastic at the idea of him as a preacher who would appear to have come to preaching because the rug business was no longer open to him" (Speer 23 Oct. 1918—NB: in Samuel's previous letter to Speer, he does not request to become a preacher, but instead asks for "starting capital" to help support his family).

Samuel had also visited the YMCA in San Francisco requesting assistance. As a means of conducting a background check, officials likewise wrote to Speer, informing him that there "has been a number of impostors here lately and they most have been Assyrians, so that we have considerable hesitation about committing ourselves before making complete investigations" (Blosser 1918). The Associate Secretary of the BFM, on Speer's behalf, stated that "Mr. Samuels should be treated as any other American in his condition. He has certainly had an unfortunate time, but is a clever, aggressive man, and should be able to make his way in this country" (Barton 27 Jul. 1918). In another letter sent from the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions to Samuel Anderson, representative of the Armenian and Syrian Relief Committee in San Francisco, the secretary writes: "Mr. Samuel…should not draw upon Mr. Speer or any of us here in the office. He has no particular claim upon any of us that I know of, but I do know that a great deal of assistance of one kind or another has in time past been given to him by persons connected with this Board" (Barton 29 Jul. 1918). Even Muller, who had known him on the field for years, "hardly [knows] what to advise" with respect to assisting Samuel in America (Muller 1918).

In the Presbyterian archives, one can thus surmise that there is hardly the same degree of sympathy for Samuel as there was saved for the Assyrian refugees. Those others who had been constituted out of sight, unable to be experienced in themselves but rather only as objects of knowledge within missionary discourse, were hence represented radically different—again, even down to their very name, "Assyrian" against "Chaldean." To be sure, these refugees were mostly the former male elites disillusioned from the missionary cause, but they were not necessarily men of bad record. Yet, public allegations

were consistently made against these "Chaldeans" for gathering money in order to assist in the Assyrian relief, but who were in reality "Oriental frauds getting rich on the charity of American, largely church people" (Barton 26 Jan. 1918). A 1921 newspaper clipping from *The New York Herald* goes so far as to describe one instance as the corruption of a "priest gang" ("Two Members of Bogus Priest Gang…").

Speer wrote to another missionary at home in the US, Macfarland, in order to inform him of an even more fraudulent case on this "terrible abuse of American philanthropy":

> I mention this faker who came to you so well recommended merely because he is typical of many hundreds of similar Oriental frauds getting rich on the charity of American, largely church people…I have suggested to John D. Pasha, a young Chaldean who, although no saint himself, has helped the federal authorities to round up and deport a number of these rascals…several hundred men from Eastern Turkey and Western Persia who make this their lucrative and well organized business. (Speer 26 Jan. 1921)

The abuse of the sympathy of American "church people" was evidently felt to be an alarming problem for the missionaries at home, something which directly threatened their own operating procedures. Indeed, the "Chaldean beggars" came to become quite precisely the *parody* of proper Christian fundraising. They performatively mocked the very same practices the missionaries were using for the very same ostensible purposes: to raise awareness and pool money to 'save' the Assyrian nation. As I stated previously, this missionary project failed resoundingly, and its funds, just as much as those sent to the "Chaldean beggars," vanished into thin air. Despite more or less equivalent effects, then, the signification of each effort was completely different for the Americans: the earnest attempts of well-meaning Christian missionaries against the self-interested, deceptive Chaldean beggars.

The "Chaldean beggar" as a figure in post-war American evangelical discourse was thus roundly despised. Even Samuel, who had fostered long-time relationships with several of the missionaries at the Urmia station such as Muller, could not forge the sympathy which the American reserved for the *object* of Assyrian relief abroad—that is, not any 'real' other, but the phenomena of genocide, rendered intelligible to the West, which had replaced them. The Assyrian, the total object of their devotion, was *begging to be experienced and*

sympathized, but he could not be perceived as such. He was to be treated as, at best, "any American," and, at worst, an absolute fraud, to the point of being a "Chaldean," entirely incapable of bearing the national identity which the American Christians claimed to be saving.

To be clear, I am not at all interested in defending some childlike purity of intentions in Samuel (an earnestness which, moreover, I could never know) or any other "Chaldean beggar." Neither am I concerned with verifying the accuracy of the statements of character made by the American Christians, who appear in their letters at best nonchalant and at worst absolutely unsympathetic to their requests. What I am interested in is merely how such a signification of the "Chaldean beggar" becomes possible, given, on the one hand, the resounding duty the missionaries had felt to 'save' the Assyrians, and, on the other, more or less comparable methods of approach toward this goal utilized by the "Chaldean beggars" with more or less comparable results.

It seems only possible to understand what is going on when one considers the sense of parallax provoked by the possibility of the "Chaldean beggar," directly within the subjective vision of the American Christians. In the first place, Christian sympathy toward the Assyrians had been predicated upon the maintenance of a certain temporal and spatial distance between themselves as subjects, writers, readers, and the Assyrians (before that Nestorians, before that, as raw material, Chaldeans) which they had produced as their objects of knowledge. But this distancing was breached by the Chaldean beggar who emerges on the American shore: insofar as the Assyrian could present himself as an utter alterity *interior to* the sympathetic paradigm constructed of missionary practice, what can be recognized is *another* subject who is utterly unreasonable, a subject who sets the limit of the 'universality' of Christian sympathy. Put another way, it is the very advent of the Chaldean beggar which translates universality from a predetermined solution into an open question dogged by otherness.

* * *

If I, like Samuel, could also make a return to the disciplinary knowledge which originally framed this paper, it would be to say that the recapitulation of modern Kurdish identity, as conditioned by the Armenian and Assyrian genocides, can no longer be read or written solely on the order of the empirical—though absent, invisibilized, there are others there, which provoke rather than lead to the resolve of questions for research. To *hold out* for the other, to seek justice for her, will never be the same as the retroactive recognition of her prior absence from the commons. It can only be in rendering unstable and delirious the claims made *in the present*, in the order of one's own self-scrutiny. It is this which I have tried to do, to render both the American missionaries and the discipline in which I have been trained delirious to themselves—and both as measure, precisely, of my own 'inheritance.' Out of delusion comes not resolve but an open to make space for the others which will never have anything in common, who stand lost behind names of, e.g., "Chaldean beggar." Moreover, the question of inheritance is a question of justice: one must first be able to acknowledge an inheritance through which one speaks and one acts freely, one must bear witness to it so as to repeat it with a difference—and, in so doing, maintain this transcritical space which confirms that within the interstices which constitute a community the existence of others who do not and cannot follow its rules. Justice is to hold out for this space from the *interior*, to "let space take place" (Doel 1999: 10), as a necessarily subjective practice of spacing *within* the community—which could, perhaps, move the text, and hence the world, elsewhere.

Endnotes

Chapter 1

1 And, to be completely fair, neither does van Bruinessen *per se*. While identifying the necessity of genocide, i.e. a negation of difference, in the construction of nationalism, van Bruinessen larger frame of reference is the period of political volatility during and immediately following World War I. Hence, van Bruinessen references Kurdish political organizations like Azadi and the revolt of Shaikh Said in 1925 as also being foundational for the development of Kurdish nationalism. The chapter in which van Bruinessen mentions the Armenian genocide is in fact dedicated to an analysis of this latter revolt (1992: 269-299).

2 I should note here Foucault, from whom the term "empiricity" is borrowed. He describes this concept in *The Order of Things* as something like the worldly, temporally enduring quality of things which allows them to be perceived, in particular as that which stands in contrast to the "transcendental foundation of knowledge" (2002: 269). By extension, the modern *episteme* is that which arranges these empiricities, orders them as History, defined as the "fundamental mode of being of empiricities, upon the basis of which they are affirmed, posited, arranged, and distributed in the space of knowledge for the use of such disciplines or sciences as may arise" (2002: 237).

3 And there should not be confusion about my stance here: it is not, cannot be about outright rejection of all sensory experience; it is rather about how "we conceptualize [empirical facts], live with them" (Wainwright 2013: xiii).

4 And, to note, there is much to be said about recent developments in the field of quantum physics which would radically complicate this over-simplified view of science—suffice it to say that, by and large, such insights have not yet made it to the social sciences, for which the paradigm is still overwhelmingly empiricist.

5 This is not to neglect the crucial work of, e.g., Viveiros de Castro (2014) and the development of the concept of 'multinaturalism' in the so-called 'ontological turn.' My intention is not to sweep work like this under the rug, but unfortunately I do not have time to visit it here. Nevertheless, the questions posed there are no doubt within proximity to my own. In passing, however, I still wonder to what extent an empiricist imperative inevitably determines the ultimate viability of the social sciences, both pragmatically and theoretically, even after an 'ontological turn,' insofar as e.g., in de Castro's case, the 'representability' of the metaphysics of cannibals must still be presupposed, axiomatic.

6 It should be said that two recent works by Indigenous scholars (Simpson 2014 & Coulthard 2014), responding to the 'colonial politics of recognition,' strive absolutely toward that horizon. In in a regrettably unannounced way, both authors haunt these pages. While producing equally remarkable yet astoundingly different works, it is my opinion that neither of them should be considered appropriate guidelines, at least without much reservation, for how the colonist ought to address his own colonial positionality—an effort which I am seeking, implicitly, to address in this paper. Indigenous scholarship is of the utmost importance today to think through and engage with, but it is absolutely not mine to parrot.

7 Here, I am alluding to Derrida's essay "*Ousia* and *Gramme*: Note ons a Note from *Being and Time*" (1985: 29-67), in which he demonstrates through a reading of Heidegger, among other things, that "nonpresence is always thought in the form of presence—form—or as a modalization of presence" (1982: 34). My point is that any relation which demands a uniformity of meaning, such as the relation between the nation and its citizens vis-à-vis difference, falls prey to this much more serious problem of thinking through or beyond the meaning of Being as that which is circumscribed by presence. As I will try to explain in Chapter 2, part of our task must be how to think the utter exteriority of the other without assimilating her into the same—to maintain a stance which Karatani will call transcritique (2003).

8 Here, of course, the irony of rejecting the long duration of the 'West' after just defending its use in the form of political protest against oppression of Kurdish identity, should not be overlooked.

9 As I will further explain in Chapter 2, the archive cannot be reduced to any historicity, precisely because it is that which makes possible historicity. Hence, I am not at all attempting to say that the archive is a specifically 'Western' problem, neither does it solicit an historical solution. Here I again agree with Derrida: archivization is a *general* problem of thought—not necessarily an *absolute* problem, circumscribing all epistemological possibility, but that it presents an aporia which cannot be reduced to 'the West' and whatever this entity has contaminated through history. The archive is that which makes it possible (among other things) for the West to be West; it is not in itself 'Western.'

10 As explained below, the only known Western scientist to visit Kurdistan contemporaneous to the earliest American missionaries was Friedrich Schultz, a German archaeologist, who visited the Kurdish mountains in the early 1830s but never returned. He is said to have been killed by the order of the Kurdish Emir of Hakkari, Nurullah Beg (Perkins 1843: 25).

11 To note: Americans also established missions to the Armenians in northern Kurdistan. I chose to investigate the Assyrian Christians as opposed to the Armenians for two main reasons. First, in the eyes of American missionaries, the 'ancient' Assyrian Christians held far greater importance in Christian historiography and geography, given their historical role as the 'first' evangelicals, as well as their historical geographical reach deep into East Asia. Second, Assyrian Christians receive even more neglect in scholarly writings on Kurdistan than Armenians, hence bearing witness to this absence fell more closely aligned to the general themes of this paper.

1 Note that the inquiry also presumes I know what an archive is. I will later show this to be a mistaken presumption, but, nevertheless, in the inquiry as it is currently posed, 'what is an archive?' is not an active dimension of the question but rather, that which constitutes its underlying problematic.

2 The confusion between spatiality and temporality in the terms 'presence' or 'present' is here very deliberate. I am in part refusing both the 'temporocentrism' which Lefebvre famously remarks of 20th-century philosophy, but I am likewise refusing a clear distinction between space and time. There is no making sense of temporality without the presumption of a present, hence no re-presentation of time possible without space (see also Agamben 2005).

3 The conflation of religious and secular terminology is of course also absolutely deliberate. As the paper progresses, the reader will see that one of my intentions here is to quietly bring to bear the specter of religion onto modern scientific practice.

4 This insight is specifically drawn from Agamben (2009: 17-18), but it is a common theme elsewhere (e.g., Nancy 1991: 110-150; see also Nancy 2016: 46-50). The sacred is precisely that which has been removed from presence, or, in Agamben's study of Roman law, removed from "free use and trade among humans:

[sacred objects] could neither be sold nor given as security, neither relinquished for the enjoyment of others nor subjected to servitude" (2006: 18). To consecrate (*sacrare*), then, is the "exit of things from the sphere of human law" (2006: 18)—which, of course, is the basis of the link Agamben forges between the sacred and worldly power in, among other places, *The Kingdom and the Glory* (2011).

5 This is then of course not to say that either temporality or the archive are concerns exclusive to the modern era. A comparative analysis of the relation between History and Providence before and after the event of modernity would require further elaboration than I am able to give here.

6 See also Burton 2005—and to note, whose very cursory reading of Derrida I am seeking in this chapter to move well beyond. (Cursory as is the case with many critics of archival method internal to the disciplines of history and geography [those who I charge with the greatest negligence being Kurtz 2001 and Ogborn 2003, two essays which read Derrida for no other purpose than their own exergue, not to actually engage the arguments he is making but to seal their own with the authority of a big name in social theory—precisely the sense of *anarchivization* in the act of archivization which I am trying to articulate in this chapter]).

7 Interestingly, Gaillet (2012) indeed arrives somewhere in proximity to this point—albeit far more literally—with reference to an article by Brereton and Gannet (2011) and their concept of "archivist-researcher." What is meant here is the deliberate conflation of the practice of archivization with that of archival research, such that researchers do not just 'find' artifacts but reproduce and extend archives. There is an important point of distinction, however, from what I am trying to do here: not only does her implication of the researcher in archivization arrive as *supplemental* to the research project, her point in drawing awareness to what the researcher *adds* to the archive is in the effort to find better ways in which we might render more accessible the archive for future use. This inquiry is hence significantly removed from my own, which, one, does not distinguish between research and archivization whatsoever, and is also more concerned with how we devise a relationship with that which *cannot* be rendered iterable, that which is *anarchived* in the reproduction of the archive, in the very act of entering (researching/archiving) the archive. This is also where other contributions which Gaillet mentions fail, such as those from Kirsch and Rohan (2008, see Gaillet 2012: 41-44), because they are content to see rectification of the archive's partiality or the researcher's "positionality" only through the incessant expansion of the archive, without consideration of what is anarchived. This is not to say I deny positionality, but in the spirit of the opening lines of an essay which I still find haunting (Spivak 1988: 271), any objective knowledge of this position I unwittingly assume ought to always be subject to the most radical doubt.

8 In this precise sense, consciousness becomes both the "deceptive mask and operative trace of events that organize the present" (Certeau 1986:3).

9 "History moves together with the historian. It follows the flow of time. It is never sure" (Certeau 2000: 7).

10 But it is of course not without reason that Derrida will later return to Freud when he revisits (without revisiting) this same critique from Foucault in a lecture given at the Ninth Colloquium of the International Society for the History of Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis as tribute to the 30-year anniversary of the publication of *Historie de la folie* (see Derrida 1994b). Interestingly, Derrida admonishes himself at the beginning of this essay for focusing on Descartes, at a moment when he should have been more committed toward the "situation of psychiatry," as it can no longer be, for Derrida, a question today of the epoch taken as the book's object, inaugurated by Descartes, but instead a "question of the age that is *describing*," i.e. the age of the still-active psychoanalytical subject, the "age of psychoanalysis" from which, without admitting to it, Foucault (the subject) speaks (Derrida 1978: 232).

11 Foucault's famous work for decades appeared only in English for decades as the greatly abridged 1964 publication. I have preserved the original French title only to keep Derrida's reference point distinct from this English abridgement. All subsequent quotes in this paper, however, from Foucault's famous work come from the abridged English translation published by Random House (Foucault 1965).

12 Foucault the *text*, never Foucault the *author*. I use the name "Foucault" (and Descartes or Derrida, for that matter) in the same manner as, later, Karatani will use Kant (and, I believe, already implied, hauntingly, in Derrida's early essay studied here): as "not the author; neither is it the philosopher who has been appropriated by Germany or the West. The text of Kant is public to the world-civil-society. And it is this *possibility* that transcritique calls 'Kant'" (2003: 112). In much the same way, and as reverberated in the Introduction, Foucault is not simply a subjective claim (i.e. a critique of discourse) but a singular *effect*: Foucault is, I believe, a text public to world-civil-society. The text cannot be reduced to the author Foucault, in spite of the fact we have no option but to give this "excess of signification" a proper name (Karatani 2003: 112). If I could quietly repeat a public appeal provoked earlier, here in the margins of this paper: we must not cede to Western chauvinism all the power of proper names; the singularity of the other deserves its own name in excess to the general structure of the world or text.

13 See also Agamben's conceptualization of "destituent potential" (2015: 263).

14 Yet this is not the same as saying transcendental freedom is therefore impossible. Freedom arises, but it arises only on condition of one's relation to the Nothing, i.e. the Absolute, which is itself not an intelligible relation nor a relation to the real, has nothing to do with the production of knowledge. And this is my point: such a relation, constitutive of freedom, stands completely outside of any disciplinary discourse, and *especially* that of historiography, which can only relate itself to what it constitutes as real, true, and which renders the relation which makes freedom possible fictional or fabulous.

15 Perhaps a minor grievance: Barnett's use of 'deconstruction.' His use implies that the one doing the deconstructing is the researcher subject, or that deconstruction is a 'method' akin to any other research method in the social sciences, neither point being what Derrida actually attempted to do. There is to my mind no such thing as a "deconstructive analysis" in Derrida's work, but instead a way of reading which remains attentive to the ways in which the text is always already deconstructing itself. However slight it seems, this distinction is to me extremely important, as Barnett's use leads one to believe that deconstruction is an action taken by the researching subject, whereas Derrida's use implies deconstruction is an act or movement precisely at the point of failure of the subject-object relation at work within every text.

16 Cf. Nancy: "There is no meaning if meaning is not shared, and not because there would be an ultimate or first signification that all beings have in common, but because *meaning is itself the sharing of Being*. Meaning begins where presence is not pure presence but where presence comes apart [*se disjoint*] in order to be itself *as* such. This 'as' presupposes the distancing, spacing, and division of presence. Only the concept of 'presence' contains the necessity of this division. Pure unshared presence—presence to nothing, of nothing, for nothing—is neither present nor absent. It is the simple implosion of a being that could never have *been*—an implosion without any trace" (2000: 2)

17 What we learned in the previous chapter was that the "archival technique" overflows the singularity of an event, such that the event is always overdetermined in Freud's sense. This results in what Derrida likens to the effect of an answering machine, "whose voice outlives its moment of recording: you call, the other person is dead, now, whether you know it or not, in a very precise fashion, sometimes cheerfully, it instructs you, it can even give you instructions, make declarations to you, address your requests, prayers, promises, injunctions" (1995: 62). The event is gone and the dead are lost, we are told; they do not "answer questionnaires" (Baker 1997: 21). Yet, Derrida insisted, there is always the possibility that the response of

the living, even the most "well-adjusted…without the least automatism" is indeed spectral, that it harbors the trace of an event (1995: 62). This possibility is guaranteed *because of* the archive, because the archive in a sense does not only record but is also constitutive of the event, without which neither history nor culture would be possible (Derrida 1995: 62-63).

18 To note, I do not mean to flippantly dismiss such a project, nor do I believe it to be at all fruitless. There are several examples of historiographies (Harris 1999, Makdisi 2008, McLaughlan 2012, Tejirian & Simon 2002, 2014) which, under brilliantly sharp postcolonial scrutiny, are able to teach a great deal about the relationship between missionaries, Western imperialism, and colonized subjects. Nevertheless, I am trying to do something else by positioning myself in a very different way with respect to both the texts I am reading and the nature and consequences of my own writing practice. I will never presume a 'critical' stance which pretends flight from my own subjective self-scrutiny. I do not believe it to be responsible for me to do so. It is of my opinion that only by bearing witness to what I inherit and what I am already archiving might I be able to experience the pronounced parallax detailed in the previous chapter, and that only at this moment might the other pose me, once again, with the problem of the universal. This is my ultimate desire: to establish an absolute relation to the other as a matter of ethical imperative, but never in such a way which would be appropriative or assimilating against her inherent differences.

19 Alongside Doel (and, by extension, Deleuze and Derrida), this sentence is also strongly influenced by a brilliant passage from the novelist Samuel R. Delany, in his work *About Writing*: "Fiction is an intellectually imaginative act committed on the materials of memory that tries for the form of history…However much, as readers, we lose ourselves in a novel or a story, fiction itself is an experience on the order of memory—not on the order of actual occurrence. (History is an even higher level of abstraction.) It looks like the writer is telling you a story. What the writer is actually doing, however, is using words to evoke a series of micromemories from your own experience that inmix, join, and connect in your mind in an order the writer controls, so that, in effect, you have a sustained memory of something that never happened to you. That false memory is what a story is" (2006: 42). History is not only fiction imbued at a higher level of abstraction, but a fiction which bears the force of the real, sanctioned as it is by structures of power.

20 This is akin to the question Derrida asks in *Acts of Religion* concerning how the thought of religion might, in some way or sense, afford us the means to think a freedom "*without autonomy*. Whether it is a question of sacredness, sacrificiality or of faith, the other makes the law, the law is other: to give ourselves back, and up, to the other. To every other and to the utterly other" (2002: 71)

Chapter 3

1 And, as explain in Chapter 5, writing will become the most important technology to accomplish this appearance of facelessness between the missionary/scientist and his other.

2 But I do hope to be also producing a different kind of knowledge than either 19th-century missionary or social scientist, one which would cease to work on the order of the empirical entirely. Put another way, I am throughout this paper searching for an answer to the question: how might one go about producing knowledge of missionaries which forbids the empiricist distinction, common to both missionary and social scientist, between subject and object? This question is, I hope, felt as the unwritten trajectory of this present chapter, with a tentative, incomplete answer to be suggested in the conclusion of the paper.

3 This is a claim which is deeply problematized in Makdisi, who instead highlights the profound failure of missionary work in the Middle East, such that it hardly constituted cultural imperialism. No better example of this for Makdisi is the Syrian Protestant College, which, by 1886, had been so transformed by the Arab environment that it necessarily took on reconciliatory and markedly secular dimensions which "would have been unimaginable to the founders of the American mission" (2008: 217). I also point here to McLaughlan's compelling critique of the rather presumptuous and monolithic characterization of missionary work by postcolonial studies: "Given the frequency of squabbling between members of the same church, it is seems illogical that the first generation of postcolonial studies continued to understand nineteenth century evangelical societies as mere appendages of a larger imperial machine, when evidence exists that highlights the peculiarly problematic relationship between church and state…The missionary enterprise was not synonymous with a form of political imperialism, and, as such, should not be misconstrued in such terms" (2012: 6). See also Harris (1999: 112-113) for an affirmative but critical defense of the American missionary's "structural" and "functional" relation to imperialism.

4 This shift, to be sure, had been gaining since the discovery of the New World (see Certeau 1988: 209-243), but it is the particularities of the return to the Old World, as felt from the vantage point of American missionaries, which I will focus on below. As an American in a social science field who considers it necessary to reclaim American missionary practice as my own inheritance, it is to their texts which I have felt most compelled to bear my face.

5 "But what historical research does not set out from a *legend*? In providing itself with sources or criteria of information and interpretation, it defines in advance *what is to be read* in a given past. From this point of view, history moves together with the historian. It follows the flow of time. It is never sure" (Certeau 2000: 6).

"What we initially call history is nothing more than a narrative. Everything begins with the shop window of a legend that arranges 'curiosities' in an order in which they *must be read*. The legend provides the imaginary dimension that we need so that elsewhere can reiterate the very here and now. A received meaning is imposed, in a tautological organization expressive only of the present time." (Certeau 1988: 287).

6 One should also think here of the legends which repeated themselves in that most epochal periphery, the New World: cities of gold, fountains of youth. Such legends, I believe, were absolutely critical to the early consolidation of Western identity.

7 I should be clearer: there is always an author, but the author of the rumor here is by no means coterminous to the speaker. Moving forward, when I speak of an 'author' I mean one in correlation to Karatani's use: "In the context of textual theory, it is argued that a text is appropriated by an author with a proper name, or is authorized by the name of the author. To take a seminal example, Roland Barthes insisted on denying authorship and on giving the text back to its imagined intertextual heterogeneity. But this move cannot be achieved by reducing a text to the world where there are no proper names, or a general structure. Rather, this entire argument should remind one of the fact that, when a text cannot be reduced to the being of an author due to the excess of signification, one has no option but to call the singularity of the excess by a certain proper name" (2003: 112). This 'excess' is what the missionaries will first call Chaldean, but it is an excess which will be deemed raw material and plundered by missionary discourse as Nestorian.

8 "Alphonse Dupront has said, 'The sole historical quest for 'meaning' remains indeed a quest for the Other,' but, however contradictory it may be, this project aims at 'understanding' and, through 'meaning,' at hiding the alterity of this foreigner; or, in what amounts to the same thing, it aims at calming the dead who still haunt the present, and at offering them scriptural tombs" (Certeau 1988: 2)

9 “American Board missions might act quite independently of the Western powers, might even act to wean their converts from dependence and promote their autonomy, and yet they still acted like colonialists. For all their hostility to foreign intrusion, the Sandwich Islands Mission never entirely shed the original hope that the ‘right kind’ of Westerners might show the way for indigenous people whose own capacity for self-governance they profoundly doubted. As a consequence, the missionaries slowly merged into the Western presence they had once despised” (Harris 1999: 111)

10 This is to say, “informed by a *techne*” (Derrida 1995: 62), i.e. marked with a much more apparent degree of automatism, the recollection of memories becoming ever-increasingly dependent on socio-cognitive apparatuses. This is especially prevalent, for instance, in Grant (1841), with his conviction that the Nestorians were the “lost tribes” of Israel, explained further in detail below.

11 This is the direct result of archivization: the archive engorges itself, not in the amassing of some archival ‘substance’ but as an endless distention which leaves the archive more and more hollow. The more the archive grows, the more vacuous it becomes. Archivization, or archive fever, is a buildup of internal pressure leading to a kind of “semantic incontinence” (Doel 1993: 384), such that the archive cannot help but fall further and further from its truth: a vanishing point, an ‘origin,’ and a primeval authority which it can only labor to exclude.

12 Makdisi does not seem to fully appreciate the significance of this passage he is pulling. He is too focused on the American Board’s conscious revitalization of the romanticized legacy of the Puritans, in particular Brainerd, to notice the immense challenge to Christian epistemology which Parsons is also responding to here. Makdisi draws this account of Parsons only to build his argument that the foreign mission as a means of reformulating the “narrative of an American benevolence unsullied by the violence and cruelty that had marked and continued to mark, white depredations against Indians” (2008: 57). I do not doubt this, but I am insisting that something else is going on here: namely, that American missionaries are facing a radical epistemic crisis as a result of the encroachment of an increasingly secular world—a world they will deem, just like the Oriental Christians, *nominal*. To be sure, again, the missionaries are never slow to maintain their status as embattled soldiers of Christ, and they will seek to repeat the old narrative of the Puritans and Indians in Muslim lands, but the form of this narrative is unwittingly changing: in the Near East, the missionaries can only repeat this narrative with a profound difference. They must use it to seek an ancient truth to their own identity which could not be revealed by the Indian savage—one which will require, ironically, adaptation of their own religious practices to the forms of relations between subject and object developing in empiricist human sciences. The distinction of “nominalism” is *in itself* informed by an empiricist epistemology—that is to say, one which separates, in Althusser’s words, the “dross” of the nominal from the “essence of the real” which “exists as a real essence *in* the real which contains it” (1970: 36). It is this form of relation, adapted as it will be in the religious discourse on ‘nominalism,’ which the modern production of knowledge will use to inform the religious practices which claim to resist it.

13 Of course, for the pious reader—as would be the audience for whom these will be published—Grant’s lines are clearly an allusion to Nahum 3:7 (NIV): “All who see you will from you and say, ‘Nineveh is in ruins—who will mourn for her?’ Where can I find anyone to comfort you?” This is a rather ironic reference, however, since in the book of Nahum, Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, is destroyed by Yahweh precisely because of the Assyrians’ disregard for Him and their subsequent captivity of the northern Jewish tribes. Grant’s reference is more directed to the Muslims as culprit of the more contemporary degradation of Nineveh, and not the Christians now called Assyrians. We see this explicitly when Grant bemoans the Muslim village of “Nebbi Junes, or the Prophet Jonah,” the remains of whom, Grant collects from the villagers, are interred in “his mausoleum, a temple of Islam” (1838: 2).

14 Grant's only Western predecessor to the Kurdish mountains was Friedrich Schultz, a German archaeologist who was himself swallowed whole by the legend—that is, said to be killed on the order of the Kurdish Emir of Hakkari, Nurullah (Laurie 1853: 93, 147, Perkins 1843: 25, Smith & Dwight 1834: 402).

15 To be clear, I repeat the term "Nestorian" throughout this paper not as a pejorative against the contemporary Assyrian Church of the East but as a recognition that what I am talking about here is not them-in-themselves but the development of an object of knowledge within Western missionary discourse, i.e. the Nestorian. To say something like "what the missionaries *really* meant by Nestorian was Assyrian" or that "the Nestorians of missionary discourse were *really* Assyrians" directly contradicts my point regarding 'context' in the previous chapter. 'Assyrian' was not what American missionaries 'really' meant: they really meant Nestorian, which includes all of the historical representations and silences which the meaning of this term constituted within that discourse.

16 The reader should here recall my previous comments concerning the transformation of missionary purpose from a conviction of faith to the consolidation of a body. My point here is that such a distinction was clearly not meaningful for the Franciscan monks, for whom the articulation of faith *was* its truth. Indeed, what was meaningful would be considered by the later American missionaries the precisely meaningless, formalistic, and nominal aspects of Nestorian 'tradition,' i.e. not only their ritualistic confessions of faith, but, as explained in this section, their convoluted history of patriarchal lineages.

17 I am alluding to the Ring of Gyges from Plato's *Republic* (2008), but with a significant renovation: the ring does not make you invisible but instead it gives you the appearance of someone else, and it is not something you chose to wear but something you found yourself one day already wearing. The question is no longer whether a rational person would continue to be moral in the absence of social restraint—and of course, contrasting to Socrates, and in light of the previous chapter, I do not presume the "I" which speaks from within his own social context, on the basis of his own empirical perspective, is anything like the "I" we contemplate to be radically dislocated from it. That is to say, Socrates's question carries the presumption of a willed subject coterminous with the universal subject, whereas, under these new conditions, the universal subject exists not as radically separated from society but as an absence *within* society, an absence made apparent only by a radical doubt made interior to thought. In my renovation, the revelation of the willed subject, when he notices he is wearing the Ring, can only be that he is not who he thought he was. The question becomes: if you wake up one day realizing you are someone you are not, does this experience of parallax open you to a new modality of choice not previously available? Is there anything simultaneously more liberating and more terrifying than experiencing a radical instability in one's own identity?

Chapter 4

1 A complete copy of Assemani's work was also housed at the Anderson Theological Seminary (Taylor 1838: 33), where the American Board was founded in 1810 by Mills, Judson, Newell, and Nott (Harris 1999: 25), and where many Protestants afterward had studied and became initiated into the missionary cause, including Perkins.

2 A previous question echoes: what makes Franciscan monks *Western*?

3 As de Certeau writes: "A sociology of religious knowledge has developed in proportion to the withdrawal inward of meaning. The same break is thus found in the apparently opposed field of research dedicated to ideology. Furthermore, in our relation as historians to the seventeenth century, we cannot dissociate the

knowledge we have of its nature from the influence it still exercises over our methods of inquiry. The sociological view of ideologies and the conceptual tools which organize our cultural analysis (for example, the distinction between the elite and the mass, the use of knowledge versus 'ignorance' as criteria for evaluating dechristianization, etc.) are still proof of the social function that knowledge was acquiring in the course of the seventeenth century...These social divisions are not as new as the fact that it was a shape of knowledge or a doctrine that established the means of putting them into place, of maintaining or changing them." (1988: 26)

4 That is, a relation between the present-here and present-there is only with respect to the missionary. With respect to me, this relation appears in a different temporal dimension, i.e. a relation between past-here and past-there itself in relation to and inflected by my present-here as I approach a present-there, i.e. the archive.

5 This is to say, the urgency of concerted prayer did not, at least according to the revivalists, arise out of any 'modern' sense of temporal simultaneity emboldened by print capitalism, cf. Anderson 2016. Whether Anderson's argument itself suffers from a degree of presentism is a claim I cannot sufficiently take up here, but suffice it to say that the sense of Christian unity evoked by revivalists in the 18th-century is, at the very least, straining elsewhere, if ultimately provoked and therefore overdetermined by globalizing structures of capitalist development.

6 Map reproduced with permission from Barry Ruderman, Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps, Inc., 7463 Girard Avenue, La Jolla, CA 92037.

7 Used by permission, United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries.

8 In concurrence, one should also note a building Grant which had erected in the mountains, in the ultimately futile anticipation of a permanent station there, which to the frustration of Grant was commonly referred to as a *qal'ah*, or fortress, by Kurdish and Turkish accounts (Joseph 2000: 79).

9 Used by permission, United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries.

10 Note as well I distinguish this approach radically from so-called "Critical Discourse Analysis" (CDA). From two well-known proponents of the method, Jäger and Maier (2009), discourse "can be defined as an institutionalized way of talking that regulates and reinforces action and thereby exerts power" (35). First, this a dramatic reduction of Foucault's understanding—for whom, to his full credit, discourse was neither reducible to language or speech, nor simply a regulatory practice, but simultaneously productive of the objects of which these practices are speaking (1989: 54)—but as well CDA is antithetical to the main thrust of Althusser's insight detailed above: in Marx's method of analysis, we do not approach the 'same' discourse from a more 'critical' stance. When we read like Marx, we discover that these old discourses were productive of questions they didn't know they were asking, that this is precisely what Althusser (or Marx) means when he calls knowledge a production, and that, at particular moments in the production of knowledge, when the composition of the relations of production and productive forces changes, the problems themselves "unwittingly change terrain," toward a new site of production the discourse itself necessarily remained blind to (1970: 24).

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