INTRODUCTION

Mimetic Governmentality, Colonialism, and the State

Patrice Ladwig and Ricardo Roque

When Claude Lévi-Strauss undertook fieldwork in Brazil among the Nambik-wara in 1938, his ethnographic writing became an object of imitation by his ethnographic subjects. Especially the chief of the non-literate Nambikwara mimicked the ethnographer's act of writing by drawing wavy horizontal lines on papers that Lévi-Strauss had distributed. Then the chief pulled out another piece of paper, inspected a series of objects he received from his people, and with a grand gesture checked each item on his imaginary list by pretending to read it. When Lévi-Strauss's (1961: 290) description and interpretation of this event was published as a chapter in *Tristes Tropiques*, the anthropologist concluded that the Nambikwara chief had made a crucial discovery:

> So the Nambikwara had learnt what it meant to write! But not at all, as one might have supposed, as the result of a laborious apprenticeship. The symbol had been borrowed, but the reality remained quite foreign to them. Even the borrowing had had a sociological, rather than an intellectual object: for it was not a question of knowing specific things, or understanding them, or keeping them in mind, but merely of enhancing the prestige and authority of one individual or one function at the expense of the rest of the party.

Lévi-Strauss's account can be seen as part of a broader historical sequence of colonial contact situations in which mimetic exchanges between European

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and indigenous peoples become the preferred object of writing and reflection (cf. Taussig 1993: 70–79). Moreover, this ethnographic scene—thereafter highly debated (see Doja 2006; Geertz 1989)—encapsulates critical themes in wider discussions on mimesis and imitation: the appropriation of the power of the other; the tensions between original and copy, as well as between similarity and difference; the relationship between form and content, bias and verisimilitude, and so on. Lévi-Strauss's reading of this scene, however, emphasizes one further theme that is of particular relevance for the current collection. Lévi-Strauss interpreted the Nambikwara event within his wider reflections on writing as a tool of power and domination, urbanization and state building. Writing, Lévi-Strauss (1961: 293) concluded, "seems to favour rather the exploitation than the enlightenment of mankind … the primary function of writing, as a means of communication, is to facilitate the enslavement of other human beings." In this sense more than just an epistemic gesture, mimetic practices can have a productive 'political' significance. Imitative gestures in cross-cultural (including colonial) encounters, such as those of the Nambikwara chief, bear the potential to enhance authority, establish hierarchies, and articulate power with regard to specific forms of political and social organization. Without doubt, many themes in Lévi-Strauss's rendering of this encounter resonate with numerous reflections on mimesis and imitation as a concept and as practice in human history. Yet the latter theme, we believe, indicates a zone of mimesis in theory and history that particularly requires further reflection. The current book endeavors to shed light on this historical and conceptual zone by drawing attention to three connected topics: colonialism, the state, and their entanglements with mimetic processes.

Main Themes

Although we acknowledge and address the resistance aspects of mimesis and imitation on the part of the colonized, our main aim is to investigate, on the one hand, how the colonial state sought to manage, control, and incorporate its indigenous subjects through mimetic strategies of governance and, conversely, how indigenous polities resorted to imitative practices in order to either engage with or oppose the presence of the colonial state. Each chapter in this collection elaborates on the conceptual insights of mimesis differently and independently; each work adopts distinct approaches to state and government in colonial settings. Yet all of them share a similar trajectory of encountering the conceptual insights of mimetic theory with issues of colonial governmentality, its forms of rule and statehood. The chapters draw on archival data and ethnographic research concerning the colonial expansion of Europe from the 1800s to the mid-twentieth century and principally cover the history of French

and Portuguese colonization in West Africa and in Southeast Asia. However, rather than trying to offer a comprehensive geographical coverage of European imperialism in these regions, this volume presents a set of case studies that demonstrate the potential for addressing issues of mimesis, colonial rule, and state formation together in the context of broader historical and anthropological research on colonial histories in the modern world. In colonial studies, the intersections between anthropology and history have become well established in the last decades (Axel 2002b; Cohn 1987; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Dirks 1992; Stoler and Cooper 1997). Building on this scholarship, this book focuses on three general themes for exploring the complex (and at times concealed) web of relations connecting mimesis and colonial rule.

The first theme considers the potentials and dangers of mimesis as a practice and as a strategy of colonial government. It addresses the ways in which the agents of the colonial state may govern through imitation and how this can become part of the techniques, theories, and materialities through which the colonizers have attempted to control the lives of indigenous peoples. We claim that in certain specific contexts the imitation of indigenous cultural, social, and political patterns by colonial regimes became an essential part of the workings of colonial statecraft and governmentality. These mimetic processes were open to change, manipulation, and distortion, and several contributions also emphasize the partial and fragmentary nature of such processes. We propose that these forms of mimetic governmentality contributed to the development and stabilization of colonial states and regimes of governance, while, conversely, often producing 'states'—both as situational configurations and collective political and social assemblages—that were temporary and inherently fragile. Picking up on the interplay of fragility and stabilization, the second theme revisits the trope of colonial mimicry by indigenous actors, this time as an object of colonial anxiety and state regulation. It considers how the copying and reproduction of colonial authorities' behaviors, costumes, and ideas by indigenous people could become the object of state anxiety and organized forms of control. Mimetic connections by Europeans with indigenous customs and social practices are further positioned in relation to wider discussions concerned with assessing their legitimating and practical value in terms of political organization and state formation in the colonies. The third theme explored here deals with the ways in which indigenous communities and minorities themselves have related to the colonial state through practices of imitation. In particular, we aim not only to highlight the antagonistic and subversive aspects of these imitative practices—as much previous research has already tackled—but also to explicitly draw out how such gestures can become modes of productive appropriation, and how these imitations become meaningful with regard to indigenous peoples' attempts at recreating their own identities and even enhance some forms of relatively autonomous 'indigenous' political power in colonial situations.

Overview of the Chapters

Each of these themes—resistance, governmentality, and appropriation—is explored in one or more of the chapters included in this collection. Looking at the case of a colonial governor accused of being complicit in 'headhunting barbarities' in East Timor, Ricardo Roque explores colonial government as a set of problematic—yet politically productive—mimetic and parasitic transits with indigenous traditions of violence in East Timor. Patrice Ladwig investigates how the French colonial regime in Indochina attempted to recreate and re-enact indigenous traditions of Buddhist statecraft and kingship, by affectively 'rematerializing' ancient Buddhist architecture, temples, and relic shrines. Cristiana Bastos explores the strategic, and inventive, use of African architectural forms in Portuguese colonial hospitals, showing how a vision of the creation of 'hut-hospitals' in twentieth-century colonial medical practice revealed an emerging mimetic form of biopower for managing and intervening in the population's health. Oliver Tappe's chapter brings out the double-sided political productivity of mimesis in colonial encounters in the Lao-Vietnamese frontier region. He discusses the mimetic relationships that the French colonial state maintained with local forms of authority in the frontier highlands, while also describing how the same hill peoples established reciprocal ties of mimesis with the colonial state. Tiago Saraiva explores the significance of colonial mimesis within the entangled histories of science, animal breeding, and settler violence associated with the establishment of the Karakul Experimental Station by the Portuguese colonial state in Angola, in the 1940s. Saraiva approaches the Station as a 'laboratory' of colonial 'mimetic operations'. There, the colonizers' desire to imitate the supposed 'modernity' of other European empires was accompanied by a mimesis of indigenous social life and the reproduction of idealized forms of Portuguese sociability. Christoph Kohl's chapter re-examines the significance of imitation as a multi-dimensional form of opposition to the colonial state in carnival rites in colonial Guinea-Bissau, bringing into light the ways through which the Portuguese authorities tried to cope with the perceived subversive nature of indigenous mimicry by exerting control and issuing prohibitions. The final piece by Patrice Ladwig investigates the themes of mimesis and imitation from a more theoretical and genealogical perspective. By placing theories of mimesis and imitation into the historical context of the Enlightenment (Kant and Hegel), early anthropology (Frazer and Lévy-Bruhl), and the works of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, he outlines a conceptual, transcultural history of mimesis that oscillates between civilizational hegemony and critiques of modernity.

In the following, we seek to outline two main contexts within which to read the contributions in this book. First, we will draw attention to the significance of looking at mimesis, primitivism, and colonialism together in the context of the latest anthropological and historical research on the topics. We then revisit

the theme of resistance. Pointing to its critiques, we contextualize these as part of a larger skepticism that followed the resistance boom in anthropology in the 1990s. Beyond resistance, we point to the relevance of studies that have explored issues of identity building via mimetic processes and the associated integration of foreign elements into local cosmologies and political organizations. We then review anthropological research on state formation and its potential for the analysis of colonial contexts. A significant proportion of these approaches employ Foucauldian themes such as governmentality and biopower, while others reveal an interest in the imaginary dimensions of the state. Here, we propose that an additional focus on mimesis and imitation can open up new avenues for understanding colonial state formations and their regimes of governmentality, especially as regards the vulnerable, partial, and contested nature of state imaginaries and governance practices.

Mimesis, Colonialism, and 'the Primitive'

From Plato's and Aristotle's original formulations to contemporary developments in literary theory, psychology, social theory, evolutionary biology, social anthropology, and so forth, many have fed on the prolific literature and intellectual debates regarding mimesis since the classical age.[1] Beyond the classical applications of the mimesis concept in the arts and aesthetics, this extensive scholarship has signaled the wide-ranging applicability of mimetic theorizing in contemporary thought, drawing attention to the social, cultural, and political implications of mimesis as a human activity. The ideas of mimesis, mimicry, and imitation share a common genealogy and an overlapping problematic. Although Patrice Ladwig's final contribution examines the at times diverging genealogies of these concepts, and each term has evolved at times distinctly over time, we believe that it is most productive to conceptualize these terms in a Wittgensteinian sense as being marked by a 'family resemblance' beyond hierarchical taxonomies (see Wittgenstein [1953] 2001: §66–§71); or, as Gebauer and Wulf (1995: 309) influentially suggest, they can be treated as a connected whole—as a "thematic complex."[2] Over time, this 'thematic complex' has accumulated a historical and conceptual depth that leaves one gasping for breath. It first enters central philosophical discussions in Greek antiquity, then penetrates Roman models of rhetoric. During the Renaissance it becomes revitalized and transformed as *imitatio*—to remain dominant in studies of art and literature for centuries. Mimesis also took on an unprecedented importance in the critical theory of modernity (Horkheimer and Adorno [1944] 2002) and later on in approaches to media and simulacra (Baudrillard 1994). Together with the imitation and the copy, it remains a reference in contemporary discussions surrounding digital copies, copyright, and

authenticity (Ribeiro 2013). Even if according to Lempert (2014: 380) mimesis and imitation are rarely addressed explicitly within anthropological theory, the universe of meanings and applications surrounding them attests that as concepts they continue to spur innovative approaches (see Walker 2010; Willerslev 2007: 9–27).[3] We can here merely allude to the long trajectory of mimesis within Western intellectual traditions, but we nevertheless think that this brief account speaks to its intellectually variable, sometimes subterraneous, yet rich condition as a conceptual and thematic complex.

Theories of Mimesis in Colonial History

In examining the distinct conceptual histories and changing historical semantics behind the terms that compose this thematic complex, we consider it important to emphasize the imprint of colonial history on the contents of theories of mimesis themselves. Both as human phenomena and as analytical categories, mimesis and colonialism share a long common history inscribed into the asymmetric power relationships of colonial encounters. Since the Renaissance, but especially since the Enlightenment, European intellectual traditions have come to devalue existing notions of imitation as socially and epistemologically uncreative.[4] Renaissance writers saw imitation as a central concept, but not as original and creative behavior. Instead, as in Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, imitation became a topic for parodies of outdated mechanical behavior (Foucault [1966] 1994: 46–48). In colonial discourse, we believe that a similar procedure was at work and that the Enlightenment, with its self-proclaimed rationality, intensified this semantic shift. Accordingly, colonial reports, travel accounts, and early ethnographies often described the mechanical, non-innovative, and fake character of imitative acts among 'primitives' and colonial subjects. Imitation thus gained negative connotations and became associated, for example, with the behavior of 'uncivilized' and 'primitive' colonial subjects. In that way, the presence of allegedly irrational imitative practices also legitimized the exercise of colonial rule by agents coming from (Western) societies that proclaimed to have freed themselves from imitation, societies that with the coming of the Enlightenment saw themselves leaving imitation behind, progressing toward innovation and rationality (Ladwig 2017). Therefore, although not always acknowledged, the development of Western theories of mimesis has also been intertwined with colonialism and with the new cross-cultural connections brought into being by the overseas expansion of European influence since the sixteenth century.

Intensified contact with distinct cultures confronted Europeans with alternative forms of mimesis as practice and as concept. A clear example is the meeting of European self-professed rationality and materialism with the 'primitivism' of

indigenous magical systems. James Frazer's famous classical theory of 'sympathetic magic' set out in the last decades of the nineteenth century is exemplary of this point. Frazer's viewpoint was grounded on a pejorative evolutionary imagery of 'primitive imitation'. "Magic is a spurious system of natural law," Frazer (1894: 39) concluded, "as well as a fallacious guide of conduct; it is a false science as well as an abortive art." Later anthropological accounts written during the colonial period were at times more balanced, but nevertheless exposed a tendency to exoticize imitation and magic as properties of the 'primitive'. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's (1935) concepts of 'primitive mentality' and 'mystical participation' assumed that imitation was at the heart of cognitive and cultural differences between scientific rationality and pre-logical systems of thinking. He reasoned that, in 'primitive societies', "the reality of the similitude is of the same kind as the original—that is, essentially mystic" (ibid.: 52). European theories of mimesis also came to incorporate these imageries of primitive magic. Walter Benjamin's (1935) writings on mimesis, for example, were partially inspired by his readings of Lévy-Bruhl. In primitive ritual, madness, drug-induced states of mind, and surrealist art, Benjamin ([1933] 1986) saw creative possibilities for the return of mimetic capacities that, in his view, were already lost in modern society. The ambivalence of 'primitive mimesis', located between rejection and redemption, is also present in Lévi-Strauss's (1961) encounter with the Nambikwaras' appropriation of writing. His description is a good example of the sense of uncanniness that 'primitive' mimetic behavior could invoke among Europeans. The Nambikwaras' imitative behavior irritated and haunted him, making him feel "tormented by th[e] absurd incident" and giving him a bad night of sleep (ibid.: 290).

Anthropology's entanglement with colonialism and its forms of power, government, and knowledge has been a subject of constant critical reflection within the discipline since the 1970s (e.g., Asad 1973, 1991; Cohn 1996; Dirks 1993; Pels and Salemink 1994, 1999; Stocking 1991; Stoler 2002; Thomas 1994). The notions of 'discourse' and 'representation' have figured importantly in this literature, notably increasing in the wake of Edward Said's (1978) classic study *Orientalism*. Said's arguments and subsequent post-colonial literary approaches to colonial discourse have been criticized for reductionist overemphasis on text and representation.[5] Anthropological approaches to colonialism, in contrast, call for a thicker ethnographic understanding of both the textual and material aspects of colonialism and its inner fractures, struggles, contradictions, resistances, and negotiations (e.g., Pels and Salemink 1999; Stoler and Cooper 1997). Literary understandings of mimesis—including that of Said (2003), an admirer of Auerbach's (1953) classic work *Mimesis*—see it straightforwardly as little more than a synonym for image and representation. However, it should be clear at this point that our heuristic focus on mimesis encompasses a broad range of social, cultural, and political practices, material as well as textual. The very notion of

mimesis, as Gebauer and Wulf (1995) rightly observe, is not limited to issues of representation. Hence, to reduce the study of colonial mimesis to mental or literary imageries would but repeat the pitfalls of colonial discourse analysis. In contrast, we suggest that the anthropology of colonialism's embroilment with mimetic action and ideas requires a flexible heuristics, with a view to capturing the manifold modes of mimesis making in practice.

Following this sustained wave of critical studies, various themes related to mimesis, mimicry, and imitation have also been approached from the perspective of their inscription into colonial processes. However, rarely have these studies articulated reflections on mimesis with consideration of the colonial state and its forms of governmentality. In the context of an anthropology of colonial rule, the chapters collected herein point toward the significance of studying colonialism as a political field of cross-cultural mimetic relations. To lay focus on mimesis allows one to further explore the hypothesis that colonialism is not equal to 'Western culture'—that it is not merely a case of the imposition of external (Western) models on (indigenous) local realities, but rather a complex relational process of mutual exchanges and struggles from which "alternative governmentalities," in Peter Pels's (1997: 177) suggestive words, can come into being. The current collection builds on these insights, challenging anthropologists of colonialism to think beyond 'Western governmentality' itself. It illuminates the fact that, in several circumstances, colonialism's 'alternative governmentalities' resulted from generative engagements with indigenous rather than European models. Colonial state building could rest on mimetic interactions with autochthonous cultures that did not flow simply from the colonizer to the colonized; often they could take a reverse direction. Moreover, indigenous agents could turn the imitation of European government structures to their own political purposes, thereby transforming and sometimes even subverting colonial intentions. Looking at the colonial state from the angle of mimesis requires one to discard descriptions of colonial governmentality under the category of 'Western' alone. For governmentality, we hypothesize, became colonial to the extent that it surrendered itself to, or was appropriated by, what was local and indigenous—to the extent that self-referential ideas of 'Western' and 'European' were partially or even integrally abandoned.

As Roque (2014, 2015a) has argued more extensively elsewhere, anthropological and historical literature on mimesis and colonialism has explored the insights of mimetic theory principally within and across three related themes: indigenous resistance and anti-colonialism; the making of identity and alterity in colonial encounters and post-colonial relationships; and, finally (although secondarily), theories and practices of colonization and cross-imperial relations. By and large, however, debates about colonial power and forms of government during the last decades have theorized imitative practices as expressions of anti-colonial resistance and subversion. Although acknowledging the

importance of these approaches, the present volume intends to take a step further. In particular, we propose to reassess the potentials of mimesis with regard to the most cherished topics in anthropologically informed studies of colonialism: the colonial state, its forms of governmentality, and its practices for ruling *other* peoples overseas.

Beyond Mimesis as Resistance and Subversion

The concepts of mimicry and imitation have been central to post-colonial studies and the study of anti-colonial resistance. Frantz Fanon's (1965) critique of the desire for the imitation of Europe in his concluding remarks of *The Wretched of the Earth* is an early instance of the centrality of the imitation trope in anti-colonial thought. Later, the concept of 'colonial mimicry' took one of its most distinctive turns in the work of literary critic Homi Bhabha. In a widely cited article, Bhabha (1984) conceptualized colonial mimicry as an ambivalent process through which colonial authority can be subverted and resisted. Although Bhabha's emphasis on subversive mimicry was widely criticized due to its crude textual reductionism, it resonated strongly with a growing interest in social and cultural anthropology in the counter-hegemonic nature of imitation as a form of 'cultural resistance' to colonialism. In the wake of Jean Rouch's (1955) fascinating and controversial ethnographic film *Les maîtres fous* (The Mad Masters), anthropologist Paul Stoller (1984) influentially interpreted the Hauka movement in West Africa as a 'horrific comedy' (see also Henley 2006; Taussig 1993). Later, Stoller (1995: 90) rearticulated and refined his interpretation: "The Hauka spirit possession is very much an embodied opposition to colonial rule; it was an exercise in mastery through mime."

The equation 'mimesis as resistance' became a dominant interpretive framework based on two presuppositions (see Roque 2015a): first, that mimesis and mimicry in colonial and post-colonial contexts were principally indigenous (re)actions oriented toward European models; second, that these (re)actions were meaningful—principally and almost exclusively—in the context of an emancipatory politics of cultural resistance, opposition, and criticism of colonialism. Despite this rather narrow focus, these works call attention to the subversive potentials of mimicry with regard to colonial authority. The fact that indigenous mimicries of Europeans in rituals and masquerades could be the object of special laws and prohibitions issued by state authorities not only stands as historical evidence of the disruptive and unruly nature of mimicry, but moreover allows us to shed light on the workings of the colonial state. Countermeasures such as control, regulation, prohibition, punishment, and general state surveillance procedures are important occasions for the manifestation of colonial governmentalities and the expression of (at times paranoiac) state imaginaries (but see

Dias 2005: 9; Saada 2005: 30). In this book, Kohl's chapter on carnival in colonial Guinea-Bissau offers a further example of state anxieties surrounding indigenous masquerades. Kohl observes how, throughout the twentieth century, the Portuguese colonial government showed discomfort with African parodies of colonial authorities, to the point of occasionally issuing legal instructions to regulate the (mis)use of Portuguese costumes and state uniforms in local carnivals. Interestingly, such accounts of the colonial regulation of mimesis seem to echo Plato's (1992) early call for the policing of mimesis by the state. In his *Republic*, uncontrolled and 'chaotic' mimesis is seen critically and is subject to control by the guardians of the *polis* (ibid.: books 2, 3; see also Gebauer and Wulf 1995: 25–30).

Later critiques of resistance studies led to shifts in favor of more nuanced and ethnographically informed readings (see Ortner 1995, 2016). Concerning imitation in particular, these critiques call attention to the wider complexity of cultural meanings behind mimetic ritual performances and other appropriations. Indeed, indigenous imitations of Europeans can be seen as productive and positive modes of incorporation, which are meaningful in relatively autonomous cultural terms, beyond political opposition (see Trajano Filho 2006). In the wake of these critiques, emerging work at the juncture of anthropology and history has explored mimesis as a concept that illuminates dynamics of identity and alterity in colonial and post-colonial contexts (e.g., Ferguson 2002).

Looking beyond mimesis as merely a form of resistance, anthropologist Michael Taussig (1987, 1993) opened up new paths for an alternative conceptualization of mimesis as a constitutive aspect of colonial power.[6] Seeking inspiration in Benjamin ([1933] 1986), Horkheimer and Adorno ([1944] 2002), and Frazer (1894), Taussig sees colonial mimesis as associated with a reciprocal magical mastery of the powers of alterity. His insights on mimesis as a forceful instance of colonial terror and violence reveal that, rather than serving merely to resist, counter, or disrupt colonial power, mimesis is also a European activity that can act productively on the workings of colonialism. "In the colonial mode of production of reality, as in the Putumayo," Taussig (1987: 134) observes, "such mimesis occurs by a colonial mirroring of otherness that reflects back onto the colonists the barbarity of their own social relations, but as imputed to the savagery they yearn to colonize." As a recent study argues (Roque 2015b), and as Ladwig's, Roque's and Saraiva's chapters in this book further explore, Taussig's work can be used for developing new readings of the history and anthropology of mimesis and the colonial state.

Indigenous Appropriations of the Outsider State

As much as they call for an (always incomplete) quest for similarity, mimetic processes involve a dynamic of differentiation and individuation. As an indigenous

praxis, the imitation of colonial outsiders can express a transformative desire for difference and individuation. Consequently, more than simply being a gauge of anti-colonial resistance, mimesis can be approached as modes of performing identities through appropriation of the foreign Otherness of colonizing Europeans (Walker 2010; see also Harrison 2006: 38–64). These insights can be usefully explored in the context of indigenous forms of political authority. The necessary reference to an initial 'outside' and its subsequent incorporation through processes of imitation plays a crucial role in larger political arenas, their imaginaries and foundation mythologies. A focus on the sources of political authority and state formation in indigenous polities—in pre-colonial, but also in colonial and post-colonial periods—is thus crucial. In parts of Asia, the Pacific, and Africa, the creation of political authority was often based on modes of incorporation and usurpation of outsider or foreign models and resources. The 'stranger-king' theme exemplarily postulates that order, vitality, and indeed the establishment of political units need an impetus from the outside. The imitation of colonial intruders (and other foreigners) played a central role in the formation of political authority. As Marshall Sahlins (2008: 189) puts it: "During the early colonial period in Polynesia, local ruling chiefs became stranger-kings—by assuming foreign identities. This tactic of taking on the personae of European greats was practiced particularly by ambitious chiefs who could not claim by ancestry the authority to which they now aspired by power and wealth—through means largely acquired in trade with the foreigners they were pleased to imitate" (see also Candea and da Col 2012: S7; Hocart 1953: 82–86).

This emphasis on the significance of mimesis in the formation of Asian, Pacific, and African indigenous polities has rarely been extended to an analysis of indigenous polities under European colonial rule. Some studies are just beginning to examine the roles of mimesis and mimicry as analytical concepts in the context of indigenous state formation, political organization, and national identity in Africa and Asia after decolonization (see, e.g., Hoehne 2009: 259). In the context of mainland Southeast Asia, Oliver Tappe's chapter in this collection serves as an example of the movement of scholarship in this direction (see also Jonsson 2010). Tappe reflects on the historical role of mimetic interactions with colonial rulers in shaping indigenous minorities' political formations in the peripheral Lao-Vietnamese highlands of colonial Indochina. Importantly, Tappe moves beyond a simplistic reading within the resistance idiom. Subtly using the notion of 'mimesis', he formulates a critique of James Scott's (2009) sweeping argument that Southeast Asian highland societies are fleeing the state. The highland societies discussed in Tappe's chapter can be seen to expose features of what Pierre Clastres (1987) has labeled 'societies against the state'. Yet the mimesis of outsider states explored by Tappe also points to the diversity of outcomes of mimetic processes, far beyond a mere tendency to avoid the state (see also Tappe 2015).

The shift from resistance to identity has led to more nuanced and sophisticated interpretations of indigenous imitative appropriations of modernity, outsider states, and colonial rule more broadly. Still, many of these approaches tend to follow a definition of colonial mimicry as indigenous actions of repetition (or representation) of European (or other) foreign models. Conceptual developments of mimesis, identity, and alterity should also be extended beyond 'native' mimicries in order to explore European imitative practices in imperial and colonial settings. Through this orientation, imitation can also be approached as a faculty of the European colonizer—as a meaningful dimension of the praxis of colonization. Several studies, including Saraiva's contribution to this volume, have already proposed that European colonialisms and forms of state rule have developed over time through the imitation of each other (cf. Adelman 2015; Eskildsen 2002; Fuchs 2001). Complementarily, Europeans in the colonies can become mimetic agents, active subjects of imitative behavior, rather than just objects of and models for indigenous reproduction. Imitating indigenous worlds was a practical possibility that, in spite of its risks, could in certain circumstances result in political benefits. In reshaping the authority and administration of the colonial regime, indigenous societies—their states and forms of rule—could become models for colonizing strategies.[7]

Mimesis and the Colonial State

By the mid-nineteenth century, 'modern' statehood and the nation-state had already become a 'naturalized' characteristic of most European powers at home. However, these forms and features of the state were largely absent in the colonies. At the same time, this absence or partialness of statehood also served to legitimate the expansive drive of colonial rule, especially beyond coastal areas. Fueled by eighteenth-century ideologies, statehood was considered a crucial marker of civilization. As Hegel ([1837] 1956: 39) expressed it: "The Universal is to be found in the State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements." Following from this axiom, Hegel proposed that "the State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth" (ibid.). From this viewpoint, societies that had weak centralized structures, or were organized around acephalous principles (like segmentary societies) (Sigrist 1994), were understood to be entrapped in a state of nature. As victims of a sort of 'Hobbesian war', they had to be pacified and integrated into the state. In the words of historian Eric Hobsbawm (1994: 46), this type of alleged socio-political barbarism was conceptualized as "the reversal of what we may call the project of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, namely the establishment of a universal system of such rules and standards of moral behaviour, embodied in the institutions of states dedicated to the rational progress of humanity." Hence, established on these

visions, the colonial *mission civilisatrice* was also a mission toward state for-mation—and specifically toward the creation of states that, in principle, were primarily to become replicas (or extensions) of Western states.

However, these ideals and discourses could be seen to contribute little to the practical management of colonial subjects. A regular 'problem' many colonial authorities encountered was the lack of functional, centralized institutions and of bureaucratic staff capable of implementing in the colonies forms of ruling deemed to be equivalent to European or metropolitan administrations. Informed by visions of modern bureaucratic states, colonial administrators were frequently unable to simply replicate these European models. In practice, in fact, European states in their colonies often had to turn to the resources at hand. Already existent and functioning indigenous forms of power, intelligence gathering, and authority were crucial resources that could be imitated or appropriated (see Bayly 1996). Early modern imperial formations give evidence that these entanglements were intentionally procured. In many cases, when late-colonial European states actually sought to extend territorial control, such pragmatism came to the fore.

In addition to these practical considerations, it is crucial to mention that imitation as an interpretive framework occupied an important place in colonial epistemologies. Imitation was an essential tool for thinking through norms of social and intercultural behavior in the colonies, but it was also relevant in wider debates on colonial policy and sciences, especially from the nineteenth century onward (see Bastos, this volume; Grandmaison 2009; Roque 2015b; Saada 2005; Singaravélou 2011). Whether or not they were consciously making use of notions of imitation, colonial administrators could pragmatically and parasitically look to local structures and indigenous realities as examples and models for establishing their own peculiar forms of rule—especially in backwater settings, where reliance on local resources became critical for the survival of the usually fragile and isolated 'white' colonial communities (Roque 2010a, 2010b). It should come as no surprise, therefore, that colonial states—especially but not exclusively in these circumstances—often built their effective power mimetically on indigenous foundations and might therefore take the character of what we designate as states of imitation.

Contributions in this volume attest to the fact that the fragility of colonial states in general lends itself to intersections between mimesis and government. This focus is particularly present in the chapters by Bastos, Kohl, and Roque, all of which emphasize the significance of colonial vulnerability in prompting a productive endorsement of mimesis either as an object of control and regulation or as a calculated political strategy of government. In such contexts, the colonial state at times shifted to locations in cultural and social space that were very far from expected European referents. Like the stranger-kings mentioned before, colonial rule could seek its foundations beyond the replication of European

statecraft and norms, in realms that pertained to the perceived Otherness of local and indigenous structures. Mimesis, in other words, was integral to the decentered location of the colonial state—an issue that the anthropology of the state has only recently begun to tackle.

Locating the (Colonial) State

The elusiveness of the presence of the 'state' in much anthropological research reveals the difficulties of addressing it as an analytical entity, especially outside Western societies. *A priori* Western imageries of modern statehood, as mentioned above, possibly hindered recognition of the 'state' as an effective empirical object in colonial contexts and in societies outside Europe (cf. Abrams 1988; Asad 1973: 105–106; Radcliffe-Brown 1940: xxiii). Yet since the 1990s, the anthropology of the state has undergone an unprecedented and ongoing renaissance, from which the study of the colonial state has also been benefiting (see Reeves 2014; Sharma and Gupta 2006; Thelen et al. 2015). Recent approaches in anthropology describe the state as more than simply a rational centralized entity that is limited to taxing and conscripting populations and monopolizing legitimate violence within a given territory—as, for example, in Max Weber's (1978) classical account. In addition, recent perspectives also emphasize the state's multiple, competing, and contradictory features (Comaroff 1998; Ferguson and Gupta 2002). The state is constantly created through practices and discourses, performed in institutions and bureaucracies, that end up impinging on the everyday lives of its subjects and their perceptions of it (Gupta 2012; Hull 2012). Although dispersed into diversified fields and actors, the state can often appear as if it were a single entity. Following Foucault's plea for exploring the micro-politics of rule, Timothy Mitchell (1991: 94) proposes that the state "should be examined not as an actual structure, but as the powerful, metaphysical effect of practices that make such structures appear to exist." Other approaches point to the significance of state imaginaries (Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Kapferer 2005) and to the fantasies and emotions of state subjects (Aretxaga 2003; Navaro-Yashin 2002) that can find their expression in narratives and rumors (Gupta 2005; Ladwig 2013). Despite their heterogeneity, these recent approaches have in common an emphasis on state formation as an ongoing, never complete process marked by conflict, power negotiations, and efforts to establish order in a more or less clearly defined territory (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005a: 4).

These points have been developed in dialogue with colonial history. Hansen and Stepputat (2001), for instance, actually argue that only a dialogue with colonial history can shed light on contemporary and post-colonial processes, while also alluding to the relevance of imitation in this context. "Instead of

seeing state formation in the postcolonial world as a flawed imitation of a mature Western form," they write, "we need to disaggregate and historicize how the idea of the modern state became universalized and how modern forms of governance have proliferated throughout the world" (ibid.: 6; cf. Stoler and Cooper 1997: 32). This calls attention to the fact that the 'diffusion' of Western values and state models in colonial contexts drew not so much on mechanical and dualistic ideas of imitation but instead on more complex mimetic processes. The material of mimetic processes, as Lempert (2014: 386) notes, does not "come from just two things called original and copy, but rather from a highly distributed assemblage of signs." Be it in the domain of a citizen's subjectivity or of larger state institutions, reproductions are not simple copies of one pre-existing 'whole', but an assemblage of fragments that become appropriated and translated into different contexts. Mimetic strategies can emerge in a variety of places, but they are likely to have very different and unpremeditated outcomes. Therefore, one way of tackling the challenge of the 'diffusion' of Western states might be to explore the fragmented nature of imitation by looking at the bits and pieces that are extracted from a 'model' and seeing how they are again transformed through a variety of local practices and state imaginaries. Such kinds of evocative states of imitation—in the double sense of the word as a situation and as a form of political rule and collective social organization—are therefore always changing and inherently unstable. Oliver Tappe's chapter in this collection provides an excellent example of this point. By taking a perspective that resonates with the recent emphasis on the fragility and contested sovereignty of the state, Tappe shows how the multiplicity of starkly differing and competing state models (French, Lao, Vietnamese, and those of state-building ethnic minorities) can also imply a creative and unexpected cross-fertilization of imitative processes of state making in peripheral areas.

The chapters on mimesis, colonialism, and the state contained in this volume work through, and disturb, these recent streams of scholarship on the state from two main directions. On the one hand, they articulate a growing and solid focus on issues of state governmentality and biopolitics. On the other hand, they express an emerging concern with the relationships between the state and forms of imagination and affect. In both instances, we propose to employ mimesis as a crucial conceptual supplement in order to enhance discussions on the state and its colonial manifestations.

Governmentality, Biopolitics, and State Imaginaries

Much of the literature on state formation and rule has taken its inspiration from Michel Foucault's (2007) notion of governmentality. In general, the concept can on a simple level be described as the 'art of government' (ibid.:

87–114). However, throughout his career Foucault developed an increasingly complex notion of governmentality that encompasses the institutions, the (micro-)processes, and the strategies and forms of analysis that are employed for the management of the state, its population, and the economy (ibid.: 108–110; see also Dean 2004: 9–39; Lemke 2011). Foucault virtually ignored colonialism in his entire oeuvre. Yet as Stoler (1995: 1) observes: "No single analytic framework has saturated the field of colonial studies so completely over the last decade as that of Foucault." In fact, the impact of Foucault's approaches seems to have been more prominent in the historical study of colonial states than in the study of their coeval 'non-colonial' counterparts (see Pels 1997).[8] Despite the rich mass of studies already produced, the topic continues to attract scholars of colonialism, and innovative ideas continue to emerge. Nevertheless, the lack of an explicit combination of mimetic theory with notions of governmentality represents a gap that the chapters assembled in this collection aim to address.

Inspired by Foucault's work, Paul Rabinow (1989: 289) has argued that colonies often constituted laboratories "of experimentation for new arts of government capable of bringing a modern and healthy society into being." New policies could first be tested in the colonies and later applied, in modified form, 'at home', for example, in relation to surveys and population censuses (Cohn 1987; Hacking 1990). The travel of technologies and concepts from the colonies to the metropole points to another striking connection between imitation, colonialism, and state formation. European colonies could themselves become experimental hubs in their own right: they could be the origin for the development of new power technologies and the creation of new forms of state governance. The results could later be reused and replicated back in metropolitan settings. In this vein, in an article that gained from exchanges with authors in this collection, Roque (2015b) merges perspectives from governmentality studies and imitation to propose the notion of 'mimetic governmentality' as a broader conceptual framework for the combined study of mimesis and government (see also Ladwig 2011). Roque (2015b: 69) suggests that we have to take into account "the theories, techniques, and tactics concerned with the 'government of others' whose underlying principle of action is the incorporation and reproduction of the perceived Otherness of so-called 'native' or 'primitive' populations, with a view to rule and conduct their existence." This point is developed further in Roque's contribution to this book, calling attention to mimesis as regards also the government of the colonial self. In this sense, colonial mimetic governmentality not only could engineer societies but also could enter the private lives of its subjects—including the very lives of colonial agents of the state. Roque argues that imitative interactions with indigenous social forms entailed a dangerous potential for disarranging European boundaries of identity and selfhood. However, they also represented an advantageous

point for the colonial state, one from which colonial rulers could exert a sort of parasitic colonial command of indigenous worlds.

This volume offers further original and productive engagements with the significance of mimesis for colonial governmentality, exploring, for example, its comparative dimensions. Research on colonial governmentality has signaled its heterogeneous and localized features (cf. Pels 1997: 176, see also D. Scott 1995: 193). We certainly recognize the validity of this argument, but we also think that one should consider comparatively the circulatory and cross-colonial nature of governmentality.[9] In this context, a focus on mimesis can become one way of conceptually approaching how in different places colonial state regimes could produce (or aim at producing) similar, and therefore comparable, outcomes. In his contribution, Tiago Saraiva makes clear that, in order to understand the violent histories of colonial mimesis in the Angolan backland, one needs to consider the Portuguese and German white settler colonialisms as a connected ensemble. In a similar vein, Patrice Ladwig's chapter makes use of the comparative potential of imitation in colonial government, alluding to the translocal character of French colonial politics. Ladwig shows how architects working for the École française d'Extrême-Orient actually implemented very similar architectural policies in the colonies of Indochina and North Africa. Several of the architects working on the renovation of Buddhist monuments in Laos had been posted to Morocco before then. In both countries, their work contributed to the material revitalization of indigenous forms of governance within the colonial state and the French 'politics of association'. Although the places and results differed, the French colonial regime was able to use these building works as an affective strategy that aimed at pacifying colonial subjects.

Like Ladwig's contribution, Tiago Saraiva's analysis of the model 'native neighborhood' for African shepherds and Cristiana Bastos's study of hut-hospitals in Mozambique in Angola signal a similar drive toward the affective dimension of colonial governmentality, occurring at a cross-colonial level in Portuguese Africa. In the early twentieth century, the architectural design of colonial hospitals in the Portuguese African colonies revealed—similarly to the colonial 'indigenous neighborhoods' that mimicked 'native' housing, as examined by Saraiva—a sort of predatory mimicry within biopolitics, a mode of state rationality oriented toward enrolling and seducing 'native populations' into colonial health networks through the creation of replicas of indigenous housing. Employing Foucault's notion of biopolitics, Bastos argues that special hut hospitals "were designed as fenced compounds with a main building and a variable number of smaller, hut-like constructions." As such, they have to be understood as "an exercise of power in the governance of life, or, in other words, as a technique of colonial biopower." Imitation is here aimed at integrating the population step by step into a health system that is at the same time part of a larger biopolitical colonial order created to keep the body politic and its workforce

effective—a point that can be usefully articulated with Mitchell's (2006) readings of the state as emerging via repetition in closed social spaces, or with David Arnold's (1993) approach to colonial medicine as a form of power knowledge within institutional enclaves.

Tiago Saraiva's contribution to this volume expands the notion of a colonial biopolitical order further into the realm of human-animal relations. Saraiva persuasively argues that the colonial governmentality of human populations (both of 'white settlers' and 'natives') in Angola implied the government of non-human animals. As the author writes, "The breeding of the Karakul sheep was meant to reproduce Portuguese settlers." Karakul sheep were inextricably interconnected with settlers' lives. This colonial society of people and animals thus mirrored the social worlds formed by African nomad shepherds attached to their herds of oxen. "The life of the white settlers in the colonial reservation of Karakul," Saraiva observes, "was no less organized in the function of animal breeding than the life of the Kuvale tribe with their herds of oxen."

Beyond Foucauldian-oriented approaches, an emphasis on state imaginaries has also been a characteristic of recent literature on the state. For instance, anthropologist Bruce Kapferer (2005: ix) has stated that the "reality of the state is to be grasped ethnographically both in its imaginary and in the concreteness of practices that have a state relation or reference" (see also Thelen et al. 2015). The imaginary, far from just being a fantasy, is here conceptualized as a kind of horizon, a matrix for decisions and expectations that is therefore socially effective (see Castoriadis [1975] 2005: 160–165 ; Taylor 2002: 106).[10] In Ladwig's chapter we find a good example of how a political imaginary produced by imitation that mainly works with the 'symbolic' and its underpinnings in Buddhist cosmology can become an effective means of colonial statecraft and create a temporary, yet powerful, state imaginary representing the French as sponsors of Buddhism. French Orientalists were thus probably aware that imitation also figured prominently in Southeast Asian indigenous polities (cf. Tambiah 1985: 266).

Conclusion

Mimesis and colonialism, as both human phenomena and analytical categories, share a long history. Nonetheless, the reciprocal significance of the concepts of mimesis and colonialism has only recently been addressed. Both as a theory and as a practice, mimesis was constitutive of colonial history during the five centuries of European imperial expansionism. It became one relevant mode of relating between Europeans and non-Europeans in colonial encounters, while after decolonization it continued to be constitutive of the transits between Africa, Asia, Europe, America, and Oceania. The concrete processes and practices through which indigenous people could appropriate and imitate

(and potentially subvert) the colonial foreigners have become a fertile area of anthropological study. Yet, this volume argues, it is time for anthropologists, historians, and students of colonialism in general to turn the concept away from the colonized and back onto the colonizers themselves. The mimetic faculty, for long ascribed crudely to the 'primitive', we suggest, is in reality constitutive of modern forms of colonial state government.

Mimesis and imitation are discussed here in relation to several specific scenarios of colonialism and the state. But state building, rule, and governmentality are not limited to colonial contexts. They refer to historical and social phenomena of wider relevance. As such, the studies herein may also help the analysis of forms of state rule and power relations that are beyond the scope of modern Western colonialism. Of course, contemporary aspects of governance relating to neo-liberalism, security apparatuses, law, risk, and new technological forms of biopower, for example, are not the same as the ones discussed in this volume. However, we believe that these are scenarios where the complicities between mimesis and state rule can also be put to analytical test. It is therefore our hope that the essays in this volume will inspire further research, not only on the manifold dimensions of colonialism and its states of imitation, but on the general mimetic character of power and governance as well.

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Notes

1. For literary theory, see Auerbach (1953); for a more synthetic approach, see Spariosu (1984). In philosophy and the human sciences more widely, Wulf (2014), Gebauer and Wulf (1995), Melberg (1995), and especially Potolsky (2006) explore the genesis and application of the concept through different historical periods. For approaches in anthropology, see Dias (2005), Taussig (1993), and Walker (2010: chap. 1). For theories of imitation and mimesis in psychology and the natural sciences, Donald (2005) and Garrels (2011) provide good overviews.

2. For approaches that differentiate between these terms and concepts mainly according to grades of intentionality and reflexivity, see, for example, Spariosu (1984: 33) and Donald (2005: 286).

3. For a classical approach to these concepts, see Tarde (1903); for new developments, see Candea (2010).

4. The translation of mimesis into the Latin *imitatio* emphasizes the mechanical and 'fake' character of mimesis that, according to Halliwell (2002: 13), has become a dominant connotation.

5. See Roque and Wagner (2012) for an analysis of Said's positions.

6. For critiques of Taussig's works, see Baud (1997) and Huggan (1997).

7. For a discussion on the differences between strategy (based on structures of power, institutions, and knowledge) and tactics as potential subversion in the sense of Michel de Certeau (1984), see Tappe's chapter in this volume.

8. For studies on colonial governmentality, see Bennett et al. (2014), Kalpagam (2014), Legg (2007), and Lemke (2001).

9. This also resonates with Gabriel Tarde's (1903) application of imitation to empire making and colonialism. Tarde understood colonization as the product of repetition transplanted into a variety of locations (ibid.: 217–224; see also Toscano 2007: 603–604).

10. Strauss (2006) has unpacked various concepts and ideas surrounding the use of the term 'imaginary' in anthropology. See also Axel (2002a: 248–253; 2002b: 25) for a novel account of the imaginary in historical anthropology.

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