Methodologies of Alternative Photographies : The Siamese case

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Introduction

In 1855, ten years after a camera was brought to Siam upon the orders of the French Bishop, Pallegoix, who was at that time stationed in Bangkok, the first photograph of a Siamese Monarch, King Mongkut (Rama IV r.1851-1868) was taken. There were two significant aspects of this decision, first is King Mongkut's violation of the previously held taboo against producing representations of the Siamese monarch, which even extended to looking at the monarch's body directly. The second is the importance of the ten-year gap between the introduction of the camera to Siam and the King's decision to have himself photographed. It is apparent that relevance of both these aspects of King

Mongkut's decision are occluded if one views them, as previous studies have done, as either part of the monarch's intelligent adoption of technological modernity in the face of European colonial aggression, or as an indication of Euramerican cultural imperialism which transformed Siam into a semi-colony.[1] While studies of the first type seem to confirm Thai nationalist histories that posit the importance and centrality of the royal institution, the second fails to take into account the agency of the local elite population in their selective adoption of photographic technology.

In an effort to overcome both of these partial perspectives, and in response to Chakrabarthy's calls to decenter Europe as the source of understandings about cultural production in non-Euramerican contexts,[2] in this paper I will discuss the possibilities of developing methodologies for the study of 'alternative photographies.' As the example of King Mongkut's decision to have his photograph taken will illuminate, these 'alternative photographies' cannot be grasped utilizing a framework that views Asian modernities as branches of a grand modernity that has its totalizing roots in Euramerica.[3] Overcoming this binary poses many challenges, perhaps the most significant of which derive from the technological nature of the camera, the transfer of which to an Asian context is, in the majority of cases, reliant on some contact with Euramerica, often in the guise of colonization.

Photography both produces and results from the two dimensions of modernity, defined generally by Delanty, as a technological and institutional transformation, and a philosophical and cultural project based primarily in the notion of self-reflexivity.[4] Giving primacy to either of these dimensions in studies of 'alternative photographies' is necessarily ideological. In the first instance, photographic technology is seen only in terms of its relationship to Euramerican technological modernity and scientific rationalism. In this case, photography is viewed as a tool of aggression by colonizing nations, as a means of categorizing and subjecting local populations to the colonial gaze.[5] From this perspective, the adoption of photographic technology by local peoples is a heroic quest to develop mastery over the tools of their colonial oppressors.[6] This emphasis also has links to Bhabha's notion of hybridity as a means of subaltern resistance to colonial oppression.[7]

In the second instance the tendency is towards what Dirlik has termed a fetishization of difference in alternative modernities.[8] Here, photography is viewed as a neutral or cultureless discourse that is easily absorbed into pre-photographic modes of visual production, allowing for their persistence in response to colonial cultural impositions. Studies of this type,[9] demonstrate the ideological importance of notions of 'tradition' in the configuration of alternative modernities more generally. In the context of post-colonial, nationalist studies of visual culture this defining of timeless tradition or to borrow Clark's term the "endogenous" is inevitably embedded in political renderings of legitimate and non-legitimate national identities by state institutions.[10]

In both instances, attempts to challenge the centrality of Euramerican discourse in studies of Asian photographies are thwarted by the creation of binaries which then obscure the function of photography in an Asian context as a technology which is both the result of and productive of radical conceptual shifts. In the first case I have described, Asian modernities are seen as 'imitative' and belated terms of their cultural, economic and political development and when compared with grand Euramerican modernities. In the second instance, discourses of the endogenous, the 'traditional,' are given coherence through an oppositional relationship with the exogenous, the Euramerican or more recently, the global, in a process Clark has referred to as "worlding."[11] In both these conceptual structures, the 'alternative' in 'alternative photographies' places photographic practice in non-Euramerican contexts in a binary between 'East and West' or 'the West and the Rest,' existing as either symbolic of Euramerican technological dominance or as indicative of essentialised local cultural identities. As suggested by Griselda Pollock, the creation of these binaries through term 'alternative' simultaneously creates hierarchies between these categories through reifying non-alternative modernity's hegemony at the center of these discourses.[12]

My argument for a different understanding of alternative photographies beyond these binary forms is derived significantly from the work undertaken by Clark in his search for genealogies of the modern[13] and by Hay's notion of the doubly modern.[14] The key in both these academics' work is the recognition that

'modernity' is a larger phenomenon than indicated by its Euramerican manifestations. As Hay argues,

> The basic point, to give it a more systematic formulation, is first that modernity is a larger phenomenon, if that seems possible, than we normally consider it to be; second, that this larger phenomenon should not be confused with its Euro-American formulation; third, that its full description requires the creation of a differentiated typology of modernities to account for its internal complexity; and fourth, that the structure of contemporary modernity lies in the relations among its particular forms and their respective histories (and the relations among these relations.)[15]

Thus, by unhitching the term modernity from these Euramerican manifestations, we are also able to decenter views of modernity as first produced in Euramerica, transplanted to the rest of the world and then filtered through the specificities of the pre-modern to produce alternative modernities. Instead, we are able to view modernity as a phenomenon that, as a condition of its existence, is produced as well as articulated through relationships, both within the vast diversity of groups that comprise of Euramerica, but also through Euramerica's relationship with its Others.[16] This perspective has the benefit of neither consummately denying the significance of Euramerica in the development of modernity in non-Euramerican contexts, nor does it place Euramerica at the center of such studies.

Given this theoretical positioning, I would like to now turn to the situation of Siam as, to borrow Hertzfeld's term, a "crypto-colonial" country.[17] In this way, Siam provides a useful test for a methodology of alternative photographies, as it complicates binaries between colonised and coloniser, while being capable of illuminating the limitations of both.[18] As a crypto-colony, Siam was able to maintain its political independence, while suffering economic dependence on Euramerican countries through uneven trade agreements and the conceding of extra-territorial rights to foreign subjects.[19] In addition, Siam's crypto-colonial status allowed King Mongkut, and his successor King Chulalongkorn (r. 1868-1910) to signal their power within the region and relative equality to Euramerican powers through developing colonial style bureaucratic institutions and through pursuing

their own colonial aims in what were previously the kingdom's vassal states, including the Muslim Malay in the country's south and the Laotian Hill-tribes in the country's north.[20] Despite this inheritance, Thai historiography has tended to focus on what are thought to be intelligent reforms of the country's monarchs that allowed the country to escape the colonial fate that befell other countries within the Southeast Asian region. This historical discourse continues to play into official nationalist visions of the Thai state, as most evidenced by the country's name *prathet Thai,* 'Land of the Free.'

The complex crypto-colonial relationship between Euramerica and Siam had a significant influence on the production and articulation of modern identity through the self-reflexive medium of photography. It is certainly likely that the gap between the arrival of the camera and the first photograph of a Thai King was at least partly likely due to King Mongkut's predecessor, King Jessadabodindra's (Rama III, r. 1824-1851) distrust of Euramerican colonial advances,[21] and the isolationist policy that characterized the latter years of his reign. However, such reductionist understandings would appear to confirm a Euramercian-centric understanding of modernity as a 'wave' sweeping up non-Euramerican countries.[22] In order to complicate this understanding, the significance of the King's decision must be viewed in terms of the Siamese taboo surrounding the public representation of the royal personage. H. G. Wales, writing in the 1930s, linked the previous taboo of looking at the body of the monarch to the Indian Vedic text Laws of Manu, quoting, "Because a king has been formed of particles of those lords of the gods, he therefore surpasses all created beings in luster; and *like the sun,* he burns eyes and hearts; *nor can anybody on earth even gaze on him."*[23] It is no surprise, then, that until King Mongkut's reign, no notable tradition of portraiture existed beyond standardized figures in murals and perhaps the existence tabooed royal-ancestor images produced only for the eyes of the monarch.[24]

For this taboo to be overcome, a conceptual and ontological shift had to occur through which the "desire" to photograph emerged. Speaking in regards to the invention of photography in the European context, Batchen has argued that the

mere ability to photograph or the presence of photographic technology was not enough to impel the "desire" to photograph.[25] In other words, the adoption of photography in Europe should not be understood in terms of the medium's invention, but rather as reliant on certain conceptual shifts from which the desire to photograph emerged.[26] In the context of Siam, this points away from a simplistic technological determination of the photographic medium as easily absorbed into pre-photographic visual discourses and towards Pinney's contention that photography is "a technical practice that disturbs culture."[27]

There were several aspects to the conceptual shift leading to King Mongkut's decision to have himself photographed. These corresponded with the King's own interest in technology and science developed through his personal relationships with Euramericans residing in Bangkok, namely Bishop Pallegoix and the American Protestant missionary Jesse Caswell.[28] However, it would be a mistake here to view these relationships as one sided, with the Euramerican inhabitants of Bangkok simply enlightening the future King about scientific rationalism. Even prior to the arrival of American missionaries, many elite Siamese individuals had an intimate knowledge of Euramerican civilization and languages, as result of prolonged relations since at least the 17th Century, when many European traders and missionaries had lived and worked in Ayutthaya, and when diplomatic missions were exchanged between King Narai's kingdom and King Louis XIV's court in Paris.[29] Diaries from American missionaries posted in Bangkok also detail the the projects which were worked on collaboratively by these individuals and the future King Mongkut, as well as the relatively equal exchanges of information between the two in the discussion of religious philosophy, linguistics and science.[30]

However beyond King Mongkut's personal relationships was a wider change in the Siamese elite's conception of itself in relation to the rest of the world, as a result of what Pratt has termed a shift in "planetary consciousness" in the early years of Mongkut's reign.[31] In the Ayutthaya and early Bangkok periods, the Siamese recognition of China as a greater economic and political power in the region was signalled by the practice of sending tributes from the Siamese to the Chinese Emperor. Culturally this was reflected in the fashion for Chinese furniture

and luxury goods, as well as in the only two known pre-photographic images of the King Mongkut and his son, the future King Chulalongkorn, which were painted in a Chinese style around 1853.

Observing China's gradual loss of political and economic power after Britain's defeat of the country in 1842, in 1855 King Mongkut stopped the practice of sending tributary missions to the Chinese emperor and recalibrated the Siamese understanding of economic and political power as well as cultural civilization *(siwilai)* as located in Euramerica.[32] This was indicated by King Mongkut's address to Queen Victoria in his letters as "…the Sovereign of Superior Kingdom, not to the equal or inferior always."[33] In the context of a dramatic downturn in Siam's economy in the early 1850s, the country began opening itself up to trade, initiating negotiations with Britain that resulted in the Bowring treaty in 1855, which was soon followed by the signing of trade agreements with other Euramerican countries. Together with the increasing colonial presence in Southeast Asia, these factors signalled the Siamese elite's recognition of a radically new global configuration of political and economic power. Implicit in this recognition was the Siamese elite's efforts to position themselves as a world power in this system, as indicated by letters from King Mongkut to Queen Victoria which expressed his desire for the Bowring treaty with Siam to be treated with the same regard as treaties between Britain and the Chinese Empire.[34]

In this context, the King's own legitimacy in the eyes of not only Euramerican leaders,[35] but also factions within his own court who had secured his path to the throne, was directly related to his ability to articulate his power in terms of this new world system.[36] Within the Siamese court, competency within this system of power was signalled both internally and externally through the acquisition of Euramerican accoutrements of siwilai including hats, cigarettes and cameras which by the beginning of King Chulalongkorn's reign in 1868, came to supplant the previous fashion of collecting of Chinese luxury goods. From this perspective, we can understand the Siamese elite's desire to attain siwilai as, to quote Thongchai Winichaikul "not simply a reaction to the colonial threat…(but) an attempt originated by various groups among the elite...to attain and confirm the relative superiority of Siam."[37]

It follows that the most important function of photographic images of the Thai King, was their operation in networks of diplomatic gift exchange between heads of state, as a means developing friendly relationships with 'civilized' nations and establishing the Siamese monarchy as members of an elite class of modern leaders.[38] King Mongkut may have become aware of this practice through his receipt of many photographs and photographic apparatus from various world leaders as diplomatic gifts, the first of which, in 1856, were two photographs and a daguerreotype camera presented to him by Henry S. Parkes on behalf of Queen Victoria.[39]

While images of European monarchs had been present within the Ayutthaya and early Bangkok courts, there was no attempt by the Siamese elite to adopt European-style dress or mannerisms until the mid 19th century.[40] Like the camera, the adoption of European-style dress in photographs occurred through particular relationships that resulted in a distinctly modern type of self-reflexivity on the part of the Siamese elite in relation to the perceived expectations of the photograph's recipient. The first daguerreotype of King Mongkut, sitting stiffly and uncomfortably in Siamese dress,[41] taken in the same year as the Bowring treaty, indicates that the King had yet to gain complete competency in the language of visual diplomatic exchange based on a Euramerican model. However, in the following years, as the monarch was photographed numerous times and the photographs distributed to Euramerican leaders, among them Queen Victoria in 1857, and the Pope in 1861, he gradually began to adopt Euramerican signifiers associated with the representation of persons with power.

By 1865, when the King was photographed by John Thomson, he was evidently well aware of the way in which he appeared to foreign leaders, and made efforts to control his image in ways that would appeal to Euramerican tastes while signifying his membership to this "civilized" class. As Thomson recalled,

> His dress was of a spotless white, which reached right down to his feet: his head was bare. I was admiring the simplicity and purity of this attire, when his majesty beckoned me to approach him, and informed me that he wished to have his portrait taken as he knelt in an attitude of prayer . . . All

was prepared beneath a space in the court, which had been canopied and carpeted for this special purpose; when, just as I was about to take the photograph, his majesty changed his mind, and without a word to anyone passed suddenly out of sight . . . at length the King reappeared, dressed this time in a sort of French field marshal's uniform.[42]

John Thomson's photograph of King Mongkut utilizes several Euramerican conventions for the representation individuals with power: the king's French-style military uniform, his cane, and the covered table on which was placed his royal regalia, all well established in European oil portraiture traditions.[43] Here the monarch's ability to deploy several identities, including that of a Buddhist monk and a European-style head of state, as well his self-reflexivity concerning his sartorial choices in relation to the intended recipient of the photograph are indicative of a conceptual shift towards modernity that was, as we have seen produced as well as articulated through the medium of photography.

King Mongkut's understanding of his own image was linked to his formulation of a distinctly modern understanding of 'self' which developed *through* his relationship with Euramerica but was not indistinct with it. As Foucault argues,

Photographic practice involves not only the articulation but also the construction of identities for the camera's lens. The self-conscious aesthetic construction of identity, which Foucault identifies as central to the project of modernity is inherently linked both to the physical act of producing photographic images and the view of the photograph as an indexical sign. In this way, as Barthes suggests, the desire to 'transform' one's self as the 'target' of the camera is a desire to picture one's profound 'self' as object.[44] Posing in front of a camera becomes a way of constructing and performing what an individual conceives of as their 'ideal' identity, in relation to a future viewer of the image, in this case the Euramerican leaders who received King Mongkut's photographs. Taken from this perspective, King Mongkut's adoption of photography and the accoutrements of Euramerican power structures are not indications of his passive reception of a Euramerican cultural and technological modernity, but are rather his conceptual shift towards an understanding himself as image in relation to a community of

viewers, which, as Foucault and Barthes indicate is a conceptual shift towards a modern notion of the self as forged through the photographic image.

Utilizing a theory of 'alternative photographies' that allows for an understanding modernity as developing through relationships, King Mongkut's choice to have himself photographed appears less like the imposition of Euramerican culture under the threat of colonization, or a careful strategy undertaken by the Siamese monarch to avoid this threat. Rather, it becomes clear that the 'desire' to photograph emerged through a particular conceptual and ontological shift within the Siamese elite that occurred in relation to a new configuration of global political and economic power. The Siamese elite's conception of itself in relation to the rest of the world, was in this way relativised through the transfer and adoption of photographic technology.[45] In particular, photography allowed for the development of a genre of royal portraiture, which while operating internationally as symbolic of the monarch's membership to a global class of leaders, was viewed locally as a transference of the iconic power of the tabooed body of the monarch to the indexical form of the photograph. In the reign of King Mongkut, this was indicated through the treatment of photographs of the monarch as religious icons through the application of gold leaf, a practice that continues today with photographs of the country's current monarch, King Bhumibol (Rama IX r.1959-present).

figure 1

Anonymous Chinese Artist
King Mongkut (Rama IV).
Pigment on silk
ca.1853
100 x 61 cm.
Ambara Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok

figure 2

Anonymous Chinese Artist
Prince Chulalongkorn (later Rama V)
Pigment on silk
ca.1853
96 x 61.5 cm.
Wehart Charun Mansion,
Bang Pa-in Palace, Ayutthaya copy

figure 3

John Thomson
HM King Mongkut (Rama IV) attired in the uniform of a French field marshal
1865
Welcome Library, London

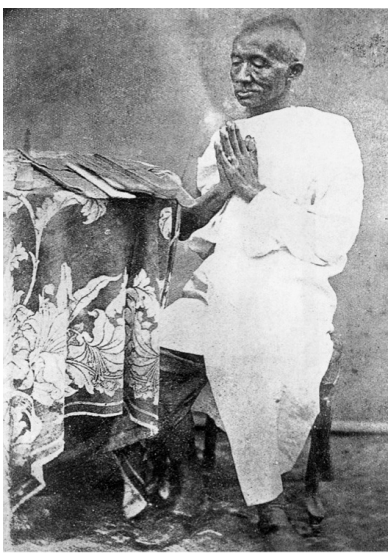

figure 4

John Thomson
HM King Mongkut dressed in a white rope
1867
Welcome Library, London

figure 5

Clare Veal
King Bhumibol (Rama IX) treated with gold leaf
2012
Wat Mahathat, Ayutthaya

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1 See for example, Siripant Sakda, **Kasat & Klong: Wiwatthanakan Kanthaiphap Nai Prathet Thai, Pho. So. 2388-2535 (King and Camera: Evolution of Photography in Thailand 1845-1992).** Krung Thep (Bangkok): Darnsutha Press, 2535 (1992).

2 Dipesh Chakrabarty, **Provincializing Europe.** Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000.

3 For this type of criticism see Okwui Enwezor, **"Modernity and Postcolonial Ambivalence."** In Nicolas Bourriaud, ed. **Altermodern.** London: Tate Publishing, 2009. For examples of studies that have viewed alternative modernities in this way, see S.N Eisenstadt, **"Multiple Modernities."** In *Daedalus,* Vol. 129, No. 1, Winter 2000; and Charles Taylor, **"Two Theories of Modernity."** In Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, ed., **Alternative Modernities.** Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001. p. 172-196.

4 Gerard Delanty, **Social Theory in a Changing World: Conceptions of Modernity.** Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999. p. 2.

5 See for example, Régine Thiriez, **Barbarian Lens: Western Photographers of the Qianlong Emporer's European Palaces.** Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1998.

6 See for example, Naoyuki Kinoshita, **"The Early Years of Japanese Photography."** In John Junkerman, ed. **The History of Japanese Photography** Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts, 2003. p. 14-22.

7 Homi Bhabha, **The Location of Culture.** London: Routledge Classics, 2004.

8 Arif Dirlik, **"Thinking Modernity Historically: Is 'Alternative Modernity' the Answer?"** Paper presented at Asian Association of World Historians Congress, Seoul 2012. p. 68.

9 See for example Luke Gartlan, **"Samuel Cocking and the Rise of Japanese Photography."** *In History of Photography,* Vol. 33, No. 2, 2009.

10 See John Clark, **Asian Modernities: Chinese and Thai Art Compared, 1980s to 1999.** Sydney: Power Publications, 2010; John Clark, **"The Southeast Asian Modern: Three Artists."** In Nora A. Taylor and Boreth Ly, eds., **Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art.** Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2012. p. 15-32; and John Clark, **"The Worlding of the Asian Modern."** Paper presented at Power Institute Lecture Series, University of Sydney, 2011.

11 Clark, **"The Worlding of the Asian Modern."**

12 As discussed in Griselda Pollock, **"The Return of the Repressed: Feminism and Failure in Re-Gendering International Modernisms in the Visual Arts."** Paper presented at Alternative Modernisms Conference, Cardiff, United Kingdom, May 2013. Pollock's discussion of the creation of "violent hierarchies" in the creation of binaries is a reference to, Jacques Derrida, **Positions.** Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. p. 41.

13 Clark, Clark, **Asian Modernities: Chinese and Thai Art Compared, 1980s to 1999.**

14 Jonathan Hay, **"Double Modernity, Para-Modernity."** In Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee, eds **Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity.** Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

15 **Ibid.**

16 As Dirlik states, **"Modernity is not a thing but a relationship, and being part of the relationship is the ultimate marker of the modern."** Arif Dirlik, "Global Modernity? Modernity in an Age of Global Capitalism." In *European Journal of Social Theory,* Vol. 6, No. 3, 2003. p. 279.

17 Herzfeld defines 'crypto-colonialism' as "the curious alchemy whereby certain counties, buffer zones between the colonized lands and those as yet untamed, were compelled to acquire their political independence at the expense of massive economic dependence, this relationship being articulated in the iconic guise of aggressively national culture fashioned to suit foreign models. Such countries were and

are living paradoxes: they are nominally independent, but that independence comes at the price of a sometimes humiliating form of effective dependence." Michael Herzfeld, "The Absence Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism." In *The South Atlantic Quarterly,* Vol. 101, No. 4, 2002. p. 900-901.

18 Tamara Loos, **Subject Siam: Family, Law and Colonial Modernity in Thailand.** Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2006. p. 3.

19 Hong Lysa, "Extraterritoriality in Bangkok in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn." In *Itinerario,* Vol. 27, No. 2, July 2003; and Hong Lysa, "'Stranger in the Gates': Knowing Semi-Colonial Siam as Extraterritorials." In *Modern Asian Studies,* Vol. 38, No. 2, May 2004.

20 See, Thongchai Winichakul, **Siam Mapped: The Geo-Body of a Nation.** Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994; and Loos, **Subject Siam: Family, Law and Colonial Modernity in Thailand.**

21 As King Rama III stated, "There will be no more wars with the Burmese and the Vietnamese. There will be troubles only with the *farang* (Europeans). Take good care; do not fall into their traps. Whatever they have invented, or done, which we should know of and do, we can imitate and learn from them, but do not wholeheartedly believe in them." As quoted in, Akin Rabibhadana, **The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period 1782-1873.** Ithaca, New York: Data paper, No. 74, Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, July 1969. p. 125. According to Thanet Aphornsuvan, the King's negative view of Europeans was spurred by his interactions with James Brooke, who acted as the British official charged with securing treaty changes from Siam: "He was intolerant and failing to get the Siamese response to his wishes, before leaving empty-handed he threatened to invade Siam by force." Thanet Aphornsuvan, "The West and Siam's Quest for Modernity: Siamese Responses to Nineteenth Century American Missionaries." In *South East Asia Research,* Vol. 17, No. 3, 2009. p. 422.

22 "Mongkut's predecessor (Rama III) showed little interest in the device, purportedly due to a suspicion that to be captured in a photograph was to invite death, but also probably the result of a general rejection of the European overtures which had marked the earlier phase of his reign." Caverlee Cary, "In the Image of the King: Two Photographs from Nineteenth-Century Siam." In Nora A. Taylor, ed. *Studies in Southeast Asian Art: Essays in Honor of Stanley J. O'Connor.* Ithaca: Cornell University, 2000.

23 In H. G. Quaritch Wales, **Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function.** London: Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., 1931. p. 35. Also cited in, John Clark, "Icon and Image in Modern Thai Art: A Preliminary Exploration." In *Contemporary Aesthetics,* Vol. 3, 2011. Vandergeest also refers to the Laws of Manu as having influence on the Thai cosmological and social systems. See, Peter Vandergeest, "Constructing Thailand: Regulation, Everyday Resistance, and Citizenship." In *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* Vol. 35, No. 1, January 1993. p. 138.

24 Clark has suggested that a scroll of king portraits or images of kings in the guise of Hindu deities may have existed before this time. John Clark, **Presenting the Self: Pictorial and Photographic Discourses in 19 th Century Duch Indies and Siam.** Unpublished paper. Sydney, University of Sydney, 2013.

25 Geoffrey Batchen, **Burning with Desire.** Cambridge: MIT, 1997. p. 36. Clark makes a similar point in relation to an Asian context: "This simple reiteration of a few facts for Japan reinforces how the early history of photography in Asia tends to be constructed around the availability of photographic chemicals and equipment to non-Europeans, the date of local distribution and manufacture, and the appearance of local taste or sensibility in the discourse of images beyond these positions adumbrated by Europeans. Clearly these are all ways of noting the extent and structure of local assimilation, but I think they tend to overlook the sheer cultural effort required in technical understanding." In John Clark, **Modern Asian Art.** Sydney: Craftsman House, 1998. p. 146.

26 Batchen, **Burning with Desire.** p. 52.

27 Christopher Pinney, "Camerawork as Technical Practice in Colonial India," in Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce, eds., **Material Studies: Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn.** Oxon: Routledge, 2010. p. 145.

28 Craig J. Reynolds, "Buddhist Cosmology in Thai History with Special Reference to Nineteenth-Century Culture Change." In *The Journal of Asian Studies,* Vol. 35, No. 2, 1976. p. 212-13. See also William L Bradley, "Prince Mongkut and Jesse Caswell." In *Journal of the Siam Society,* Vol. LIV, No. 1, 1966. p. 36-37; Maurizio Peleggi, Lords of Things: Fashioning the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002; Maurizio Peleggi, Thailand: The Worldly Kingdom. London: Reaktion Books, 2007, especially chapter 5; Lysa, "'Stranger in the Gates': Knowing Semi-Colonial Siam as Extraterritorials." p. 330—32; and Winichakul, Siam Mapped: The Geo-Body of a Nation. p. 37-40.

29 Maurizio Peleggi, "The Turbaned and the Hatted: Figures of Alterity in Early Modern Thai Visual Culture." In Lieselotte E Saurma-Jeltsch and Anja Eisenbeiß, eds Images of Otherness in Medieval and Early Modern Times: Exclusion, Inclusion, Assimilation. Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2012.

30 See for example, the diary of Jesse Caswell, which is extensively quoted in Bradley, "Prince Mongkut and Jesse Caswell.". The collaborative projects between the King and American missionaries included King Mongkut and Dr Dan Beach Bradley's development of a satisfactory Siamese script for printing technology as well as King Mongkut's work with Jesse Caswell translating children's books into Thai.

31 Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation. London & New York: Routledge, 1992; and Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilisational Thinking in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam." In *The Journal of Asian Studies,* Vol. 59, No. 3, August 2000.

32 Winichakul, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilisational Thinking in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam." p. 537; and Junko Koizumi, "Siamese Inter-State Relations in the Late Nineteenth Century: From an Asian Regional Perspective." In *Taiwan Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,* Vol. 5, No. 1, 2008. p. 75.

33 "List of presents sent with a letter to Queen Victoria from King Mongkut." As quoted in, Koizumi, "Siamese Inter-State Relations in the Late Nineteenth Century: From an Asian Regional Perspective." p. 77-8.

34 As King Mongkut wrote, "I have declared also that this mission is higher than ever came from the Governor General of India and that if we have audience to this mission until negotiation of treaty ended by conclusion with this mission, the new treaty be higher & and (*sic*) more honoured for honour of our country than the former treaty which had been done with only Governor General of India as will be equal with the treaty of English and Chinese Empire as this might be approved & ratified by Your Majesty herself with Royal Manual & Stamping Sign like the treaty at China which we have heard of on the year 1843 & 4." Ibid. p. 77.

35 As expressed by Bowring, King Mongkut "expressed great anxiety to be thought well of among the nations of the West— he asked whether there was any Eastern Sovereign who knew as much of English as he did— hoped that Her Britannic Majesty would write to him that he might say he was a correspondent of the Queen of England." From Bowring's unpublished journal. As quoted in Nicholas Tarling, "The Mission of Sir John Bowring to Siam." In *Journal of the Siam Society,* Vol. 50, No. 2, 1962. p. 109.

36 As Bowring stated in 1855, "It appears there are two parties— one wishing to maintain the ancient restrictive system, the other willing to liberalize Siamese policy. I wish to proceed to the Bangkok in the Rattler: if I obtain permission, it will be evidence that the more enlightened ministers have the ascendency." From, John Bowring, The Kingdom and People of Siam; with a Narrative of the Mission to that Country in 1855, London, John W. Parker and Son, 1857. As quoted in, Ibid. p. 94. The 'enlightened ministers' to which Bowring refers are likely members of the elite Bunnag family, who had secured King Mongkut's position as King.

37 Winichakul, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilisational Thinking in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam." p. 529.

38 Peleggi, Lords of Things: Fashioning the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image p. 16.

39 This exchange between Queen Victoria and King Mongkut is documented in M.L. Manich Jumsai, **King Mongkut and Sir John Bowring: From Sir John Bowring's Personal Files, Kept at the Royal Thai Embassy in London.** Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970. p. 100. I am grateful also to John Clark, who has shared with me his compilation of gifts sent between the king and other world leaders.

40 Among the gifts sent to King Phra Narai of Ayutthaya with the French Chaumont mission in 1865 was a large equestrian portrait of King Louis XIV and two miniatures painted on enamel and garnished with diamonds. As documented in Ronald S. Love, **"The Making of an Oriental Despot: Louis XIV and the Siamese Embassy of 1686."** In *Journal of the Siam Society,* Vol. 82, No. 1, 1994. p. 72, note 72. Peleggi makes reference to the appearance of figures in European dress the mural paintings of Ayutthaya and the early Bangkok period. In Peleggi, **"The Turbaned and the Hatted: Figures of Alterity in Early Modern Thai Visual Culture."** p. 64.

41 As Clark has suggested, "The rigid poses demanded of the sitter in King Mongut's 1855 photograph with his Queen which were sent to the US President do not fully indicate the radical change involved in representing the person of the King in a quasi-public circulation of an image to a foreign social peer." In Clark, **Presenting the Self: Pictorial and Photographic Discourses in 19th Century Duch Indies and Siam.** Cary compares this image and later images of King Mongkut in, Cary, **"In the Image of the King: Two Photographs from Nineteenth-Century Siam."**

42 John Thomson, **The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China or Ten Years Travels, Adventures and Residence Abroad.** London: Sampson Low, Marston Low & Searle, 1875 p. 93-94

43 Woodall describes many of these as being features of European oil portraits of nobility from the sixteenth century on. In Joanna Woodall, **"Sovereign Bodies: The Reality of Status in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture."** In Joanna Woodall, ed., **Portraiture: Facing the Subject.** Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. p. 79.

44 Roland Barthes, **Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography.** Translated by Richard Howard. London: Johnathan Cape Pty. Ltd., 1982. p. 12-13.

45 Clark, **Modern Asian Art.**