What Travels with an Image?

Historical republication, printed fragments and the boundaries of comparison.



Andreas Vesalius (left) 1543
Thomas Geminus (right) 1545

A Figure Persists. Its Relations Change.



Andreas Vesalius, Fabrica, 1543
p. 163 / scan 183



Thomas Geminus, 1545
Prima ossium tabula / NYPL 1157692

Heading and surrounding space





Distant landscape and immediate ground



Vesalius



Geminus



Edinburgh University Library

What Survives a Translation?



Vesalius, 1543, p. 211
Fabrica / Basel, e-rara



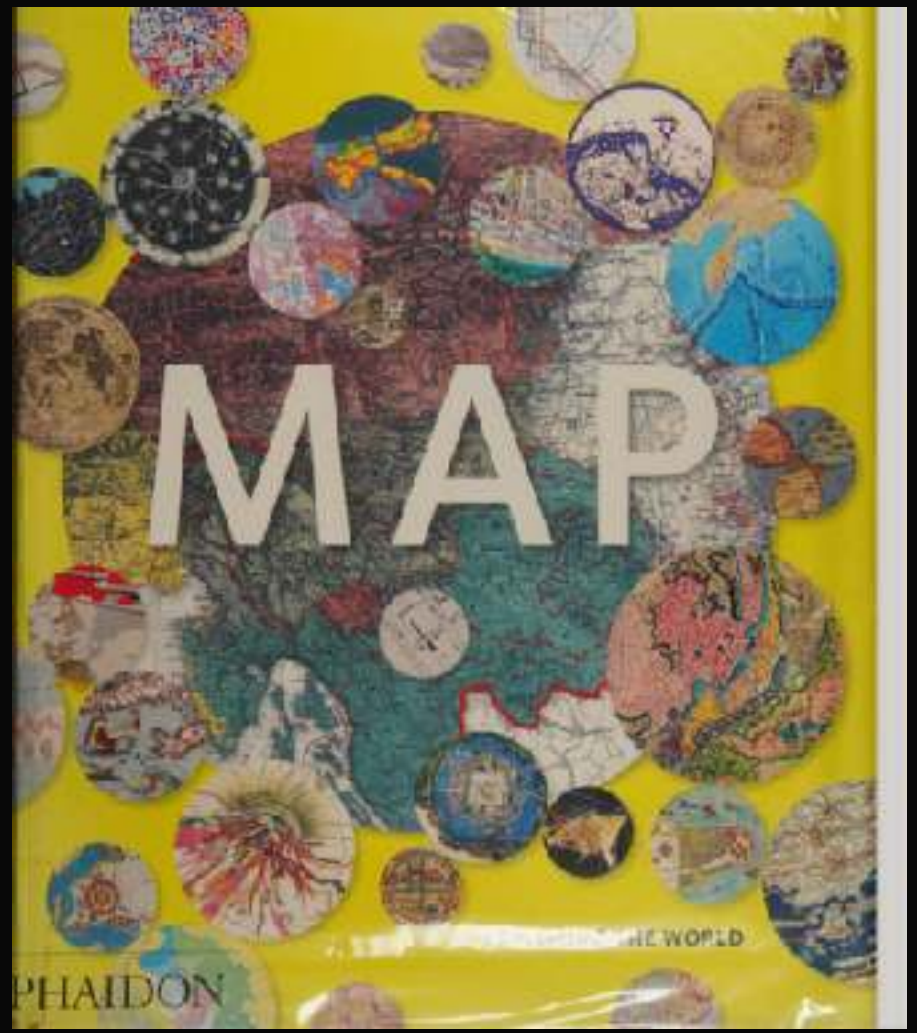
Geminus, 1545, composite plate
Wellcome Collection / scan 95

Which relationships survive a translation, and which are changed in exchange?

Recognisable form
Surrounding relationships

Source text and neighbouring figures establish different reading conditions.

Phaidon Editors (2015), Map: Exploring the World

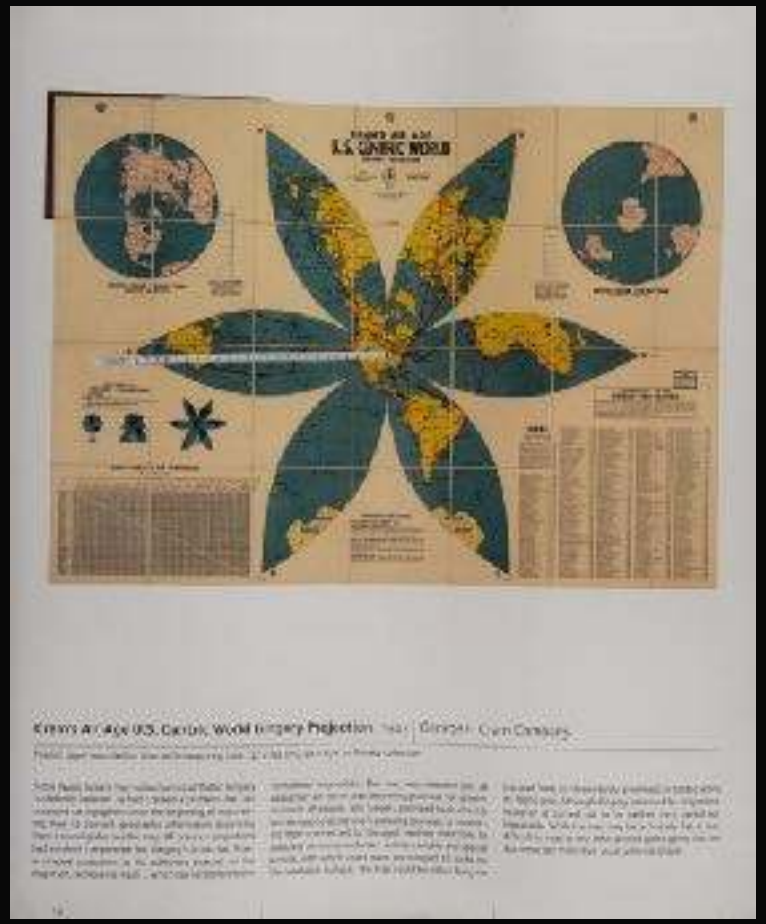


Rather than arranging this vast array of the world's cartographic knowledge chronologically or thematically, however, contrasting or complementary images have been paired in a way that not only highlights the uniqueness of individual maps and map-makers but also reinforces some of the common structures that many maps employ. Linking the dramatic image of the many layers of historic lava flows from Mount Vesuvius (see p.168) with one showing the flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina as it came ashore in New Orleans in 2005 (see p.169), for example, leaves the viewer with the impression both of how the timelessness of human experience can be captured on a two-dimensional map, and of the vast canyon of difference in the technology needed to make these compelling and very different images of natural disasters.

Phaidon Editors (2015), Map: Exploring the World

Phaidon: Comparison as an Editorial Act









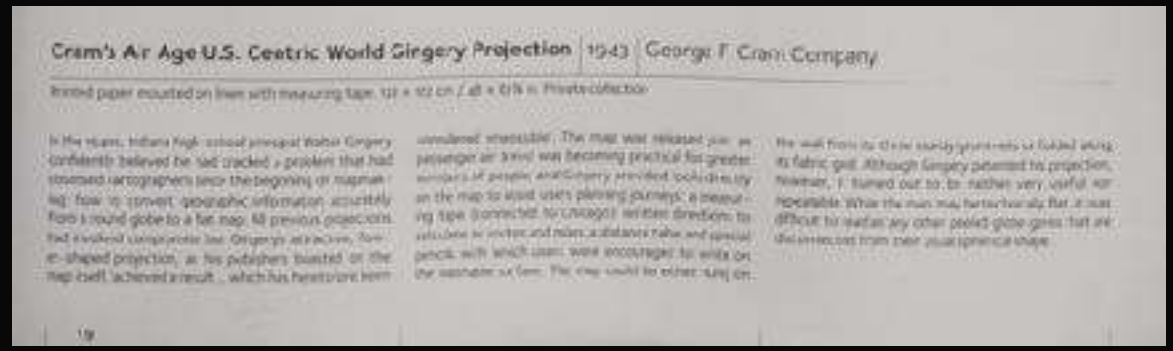
Phaidon Editors (2015), Map: Exploring the World, pp. 18–19.

Resemblance Is Not Equivalence


The Whole World in a Cloverleaf 1581 Heinrich Bünting

Bünting / 1581

Religious symbolism
Jerusalem at the centre


Cram's Air Age U.S. Centric World Gingery Projection 1943 George F. Cram Company

George F. Cram Company / 1943

Air travel and projection
A map that could be folded

Phaidon is doing two things at the same time: the layout brings the maps together, while the text helps us understand their differences.

Why Collage? / Frida Orupabo



Frida Orupabo, Weather Girl, 2021



Detail / paper pins and fragment boundaries

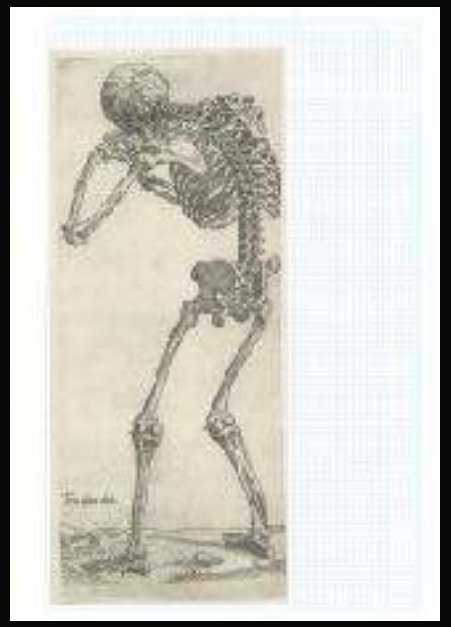
Selection and assembly participate in what an image communicates.

A recognisable figure coexists with visible edges, tonal shifts and discontinuities.

Collage lets the inquiry develop through material decisions.

Printing Is Already a Translation

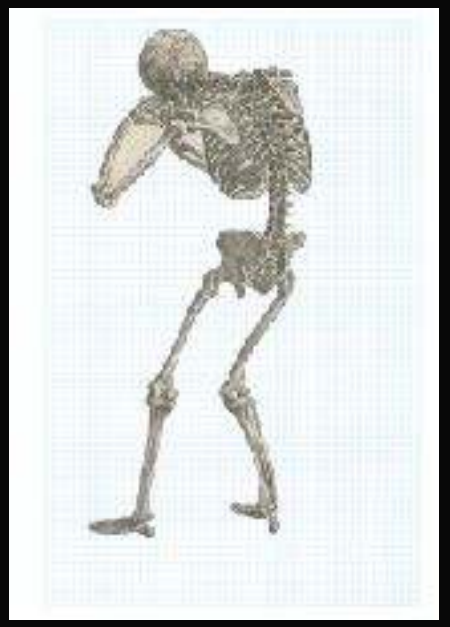
Reproduction as Material Translation



Printed reproduction

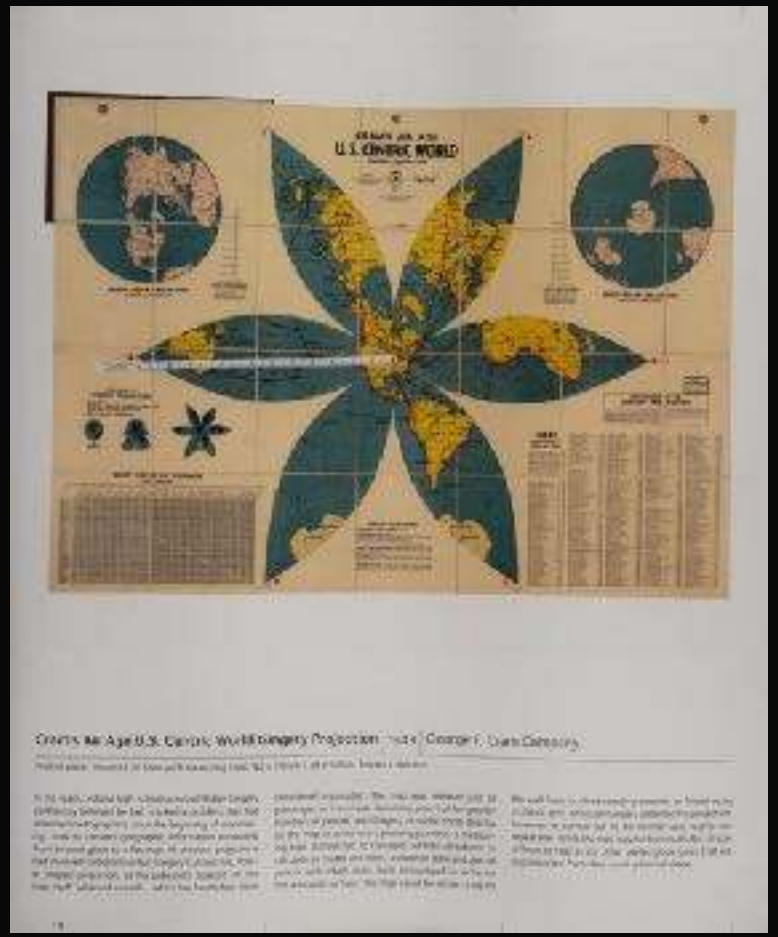


Remaining sheet



Movable fragment

Printing makes a new sheet available to cut, lift, separate and rearrange.



Phaidon Editors (2015), Map: Exploring the World, pp. 19.

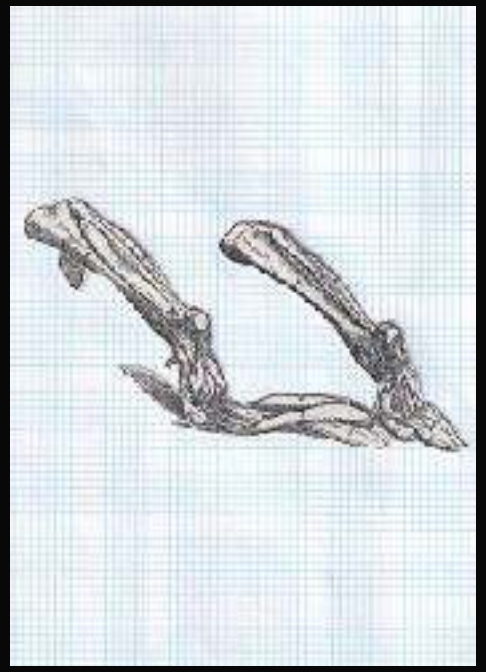
From Depicted Contour to Physical Edge



Vesalius, 1543, p. 211
Fabrica / Basel, e-rara



Geminus, 1545, composite plate
Wellcome Collection / scan 95



Physical edge / detail



Remaining sheet / detail

On an uncut sheet, a contour is a depicted boundary.
After cutting, it becomes the physical edge
of a movable fragment.

What Defines a Unit?

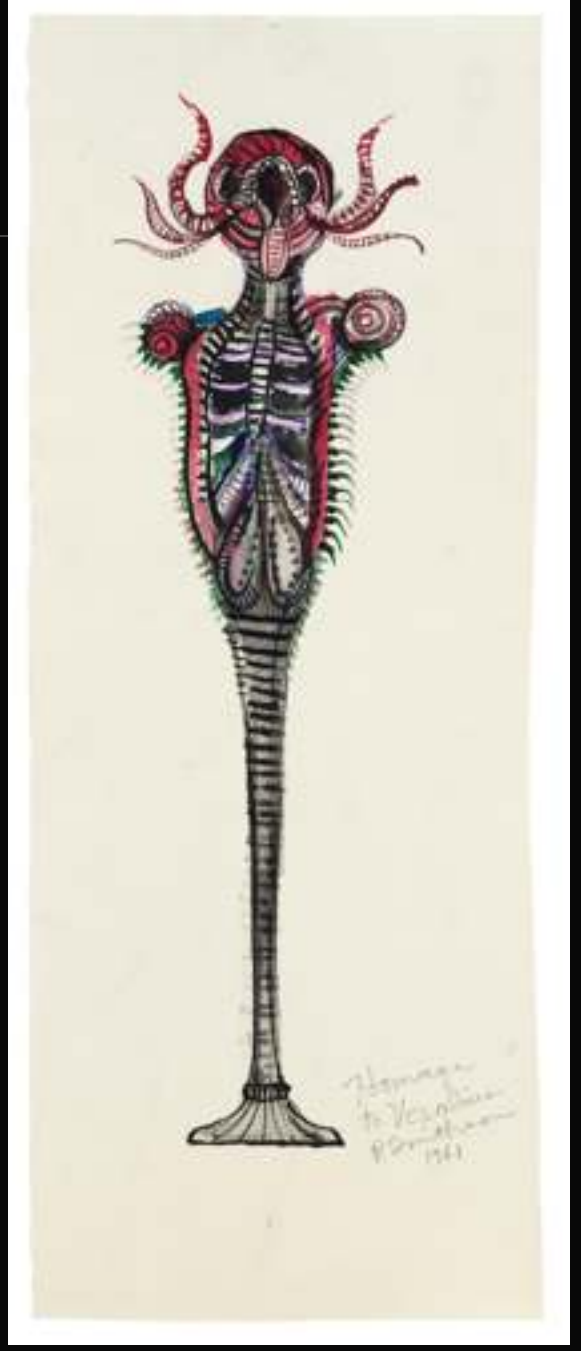
"a definition of the segments by which the resemblances and differences can be shown"

Michel Foucault (2001), "Preface", p. xxi





Vesalius, 1543



Robert Smithson, Homage to Vesalius (1961)

What Changes Through Circulation?

"Pure sign, no longer compass to the world."

Benedict Anderson (2006), ch. 10, "The Map"

A recognisable shape can acquire new functions on new surfaces.

Retaining a form does not establish that its earlier function or surrounding relations have also survived.



Andreas Vesalius, Fabrica, 1543
p. 163 / scan 183



Thomas Geminus, 1545
Prima ossium tabula / NYPL 1157692







Robert Smithson, Homage to Vesalius (1961)

Draft

This project began with my interest in how anatomical images survive being redrawn and republished. Comparing Andreas Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (1543) with Thomas Geminus's *Compendiosa totius anatomie delineatio* (1545), I noticed recognisable figures within changed surroundings. Geminus translated woodcuts into copperplate engravings, omitted selected landscapes and assembled illustrations from separate pages into composite plates (Edinburgh University Library and Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 2007). These changes made me distinguish the persistence of a figure from the persistence of its relationships. My enquiry asks what is retained through visual translation, and how changing arrangements and uses make other readings possible.



Andreas Vesalius



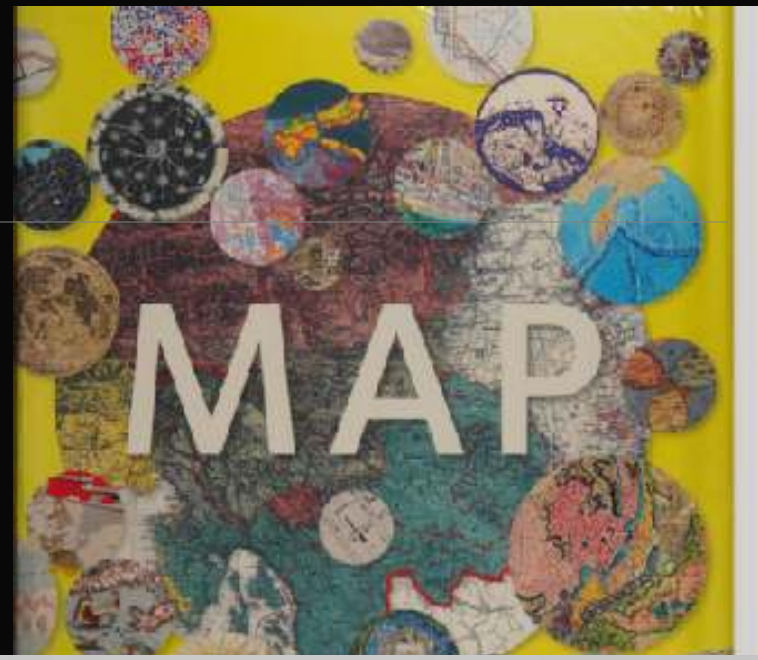
Thomas Geminus



Edinburgh University Library

Draft

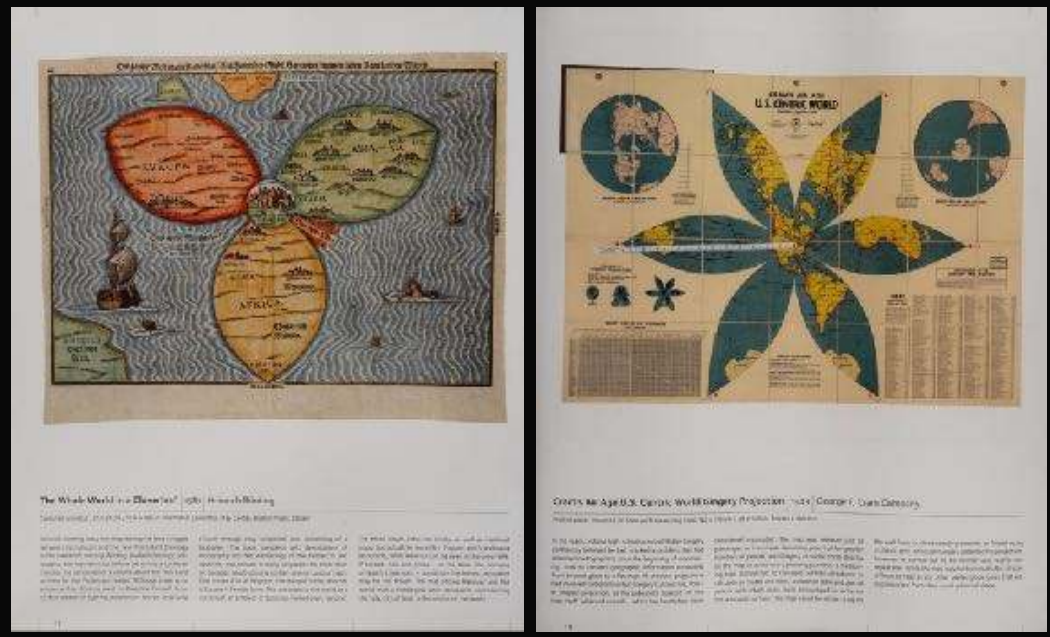
My main reference is Phaidon's *Map: Exploring the World*. John Hessler explains that maps are paired through contrast or complementarity rather than chronological order (Hessler, 2015, p. 6). This challenges an account of image history organised only as successive improvements or losses. The book brings representations from different contexts into a shared space while retaining information about their differences. I am interested in how its editorial decisions establish what can be compared.



Rather than arranging this vast array of the world's cartographic knowledge chronologically or thematically, however, contrasting or complementary images have been paired in a way that not only highlights the uniqueness of individual maps and map-makers but also reinforces some of the common structures that many maps employ. Linking the dramatic image of the many layers of historic lava flows from Mount Vesuvius (see p.168) with one showing the flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina as it came ashore in New Orleans in 2005 (see p.169), for example, leaves the viewer with the impression both of how the timelessness of human experience can be captured on a two-dimensional map, and of the vast canyon of difference in the technology needed to make these compelling and very different images of natural disasters.

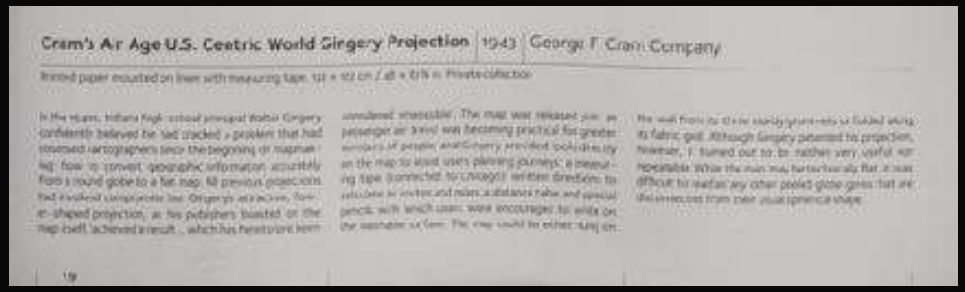
Draft

On pages 18–19, Heinrich Bünting's *The Whole World in a Cloverleaf* (1581) faces the George F. Cram Company's *Cram's Air Age U.S. Centric World Gingery Projection* (1943). Their radiating forms invite comparison, reinforced by the facing pages and consistent caption format. The captions, however, distinguish Bünting's religious symbolism and Jerusalem-centred world from an aviation-era projection with a foldable construction (Phaidon Editors, 2015, pp. 18–19). Shape establishes a connection, but cannot explain the maps' different purposes.



Draft

I read the spread as constructing resemblance while resisting equivalence. Neither map alone contains the comparison produced by their placement together. Another pairing could make other features significant. The captions qualify the visual connection without cancelling it, allowing the spread to sustain similarity and difference. The foldable chart is also reproduced flat: its construction is described rather than enacted. Something made to be handled in one way becomes available for another kind of reading. This makes Phaidon more than a collection of references for me: its format participates in the transformation it allows me to study.





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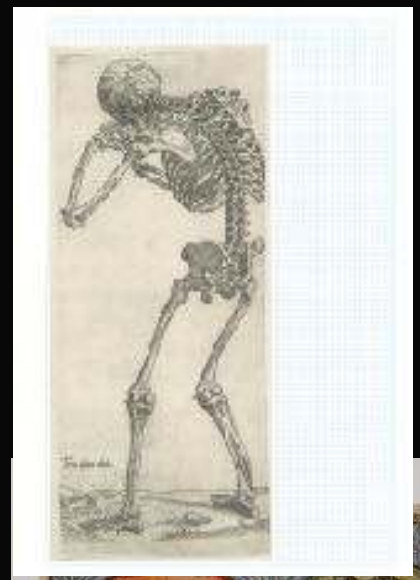
Frida Orupabo's *Weather Girl* (2021) provides a methodological reference for working directly with existing representations. Its inkjet-printed fragments are joined with paper pins and mounted on aluminium (Orupabo, 2021). A recognisable figure coexists with visible tonal differences and fragment boundaries. Gwendolyn Fässler situates the work within Black female representation and pin-up conventions (Fässler, n.d.). These concerns differ from mine, but its assembly informs my choice of collage. I understand the connections between fragments as part of the image's expression, rather than a process concealed behind a finished figure.

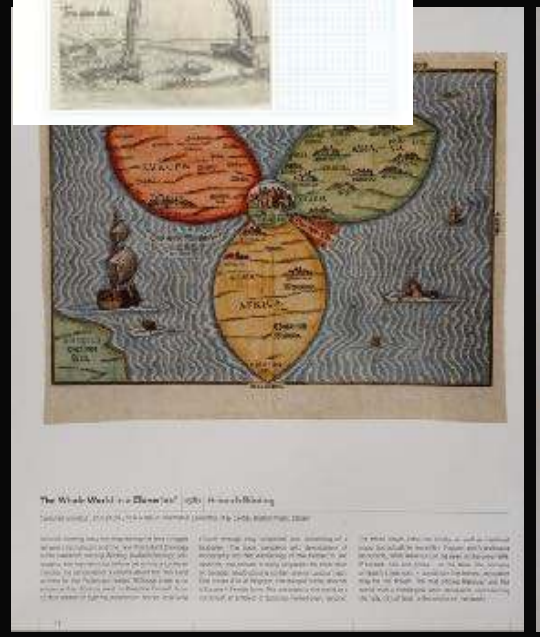


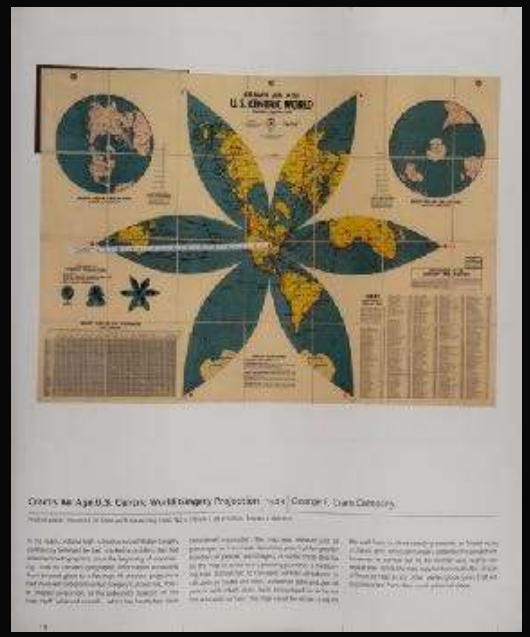
Frida Orupabo, Weather Girl, 2021

Draft

Printing anatomical reproductions similarly changes what I can do with an image. I do not restore the historical publication, its paper or its printing process. I produce copies that can be cut, lifted and rearranged. Printing is therefore already a material translation, not simply preparation for collage. In my current work, cutting around figures turns a depicted contour into the physical edge of a paper fragment. The remaining sheet and the extracted image make separation materially present. I am considering a further comparison with cuts that retain a body and its support together; this remains a proposed experiment. The question is not which cut preserves more paper, but which depicted relationships accompany the fragment into another arrangement.



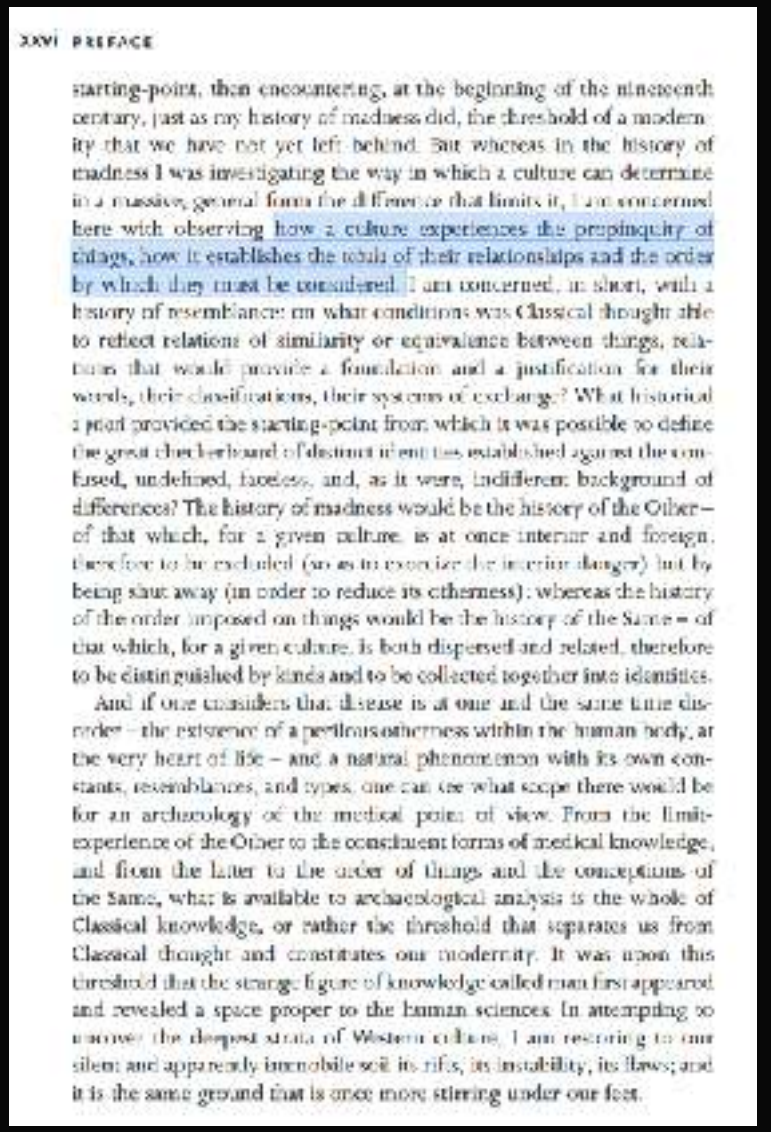




Draft

However, a cut cannot contain every condition through which an image acquires meaning. Michel Foucault's 'Preface' to *The Order of Things* opens a historical question beyond my immediate material operations. He describes his concern with "how a culture experiences the propinquity of things, how it establishes the tabula of their relationships and the order by which they must be considered" (Foucault, 2001, p. xxvi).

I draw on this to explore how images are understood within different historical arrangements of knowledge, rather than to justify my cutting method. Under what conditions might anatomical imagery be approached as medical knowledge, artistic material or a commemorative emblem? These are possible roles to investigate, not exclusive categories or stages of progress.



xxvi PREFACE

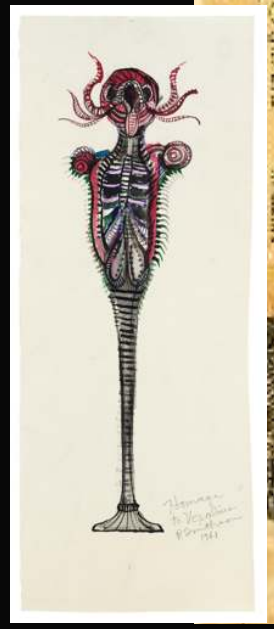
starting-point, than encountering, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, just as my history of madness did, the threshold of a modernity that we have not yet left behind. But whereas in the history of madness I was investigating the way in which a culture can determine in a massive, general form the difference that limits it, I am concerned here with observing how a culture experiences the propinquity of things, how it establishes the tabula of their relationships and the order by which they must be considered. I am concerned, in short, with a history of resemblance: on what conditions was Classical thought able to reflect relations of similarity or equivalence between things, relations that would provide a foundation and a justification for their words, their classifications, their systems of exchange? What historical a priori provided the starting-point from which it was possible to define the great checkerboard of distinct identities established against the confused, undefined, faceless, and, as it were, indifferent background of differences? The history of madness would be the history of the Other – of that which, for a given culture, is at once interior and foreign, therefore to be excluded (so as to exorcize the interior danger) but by being shut away (in order to reduce its otherness); whereas the history of the order imposed on things would be the history of the Same – of that which, for a given culture, is both dispersed and related, therefore to be distinguished by kinds and to be collected together into identities.

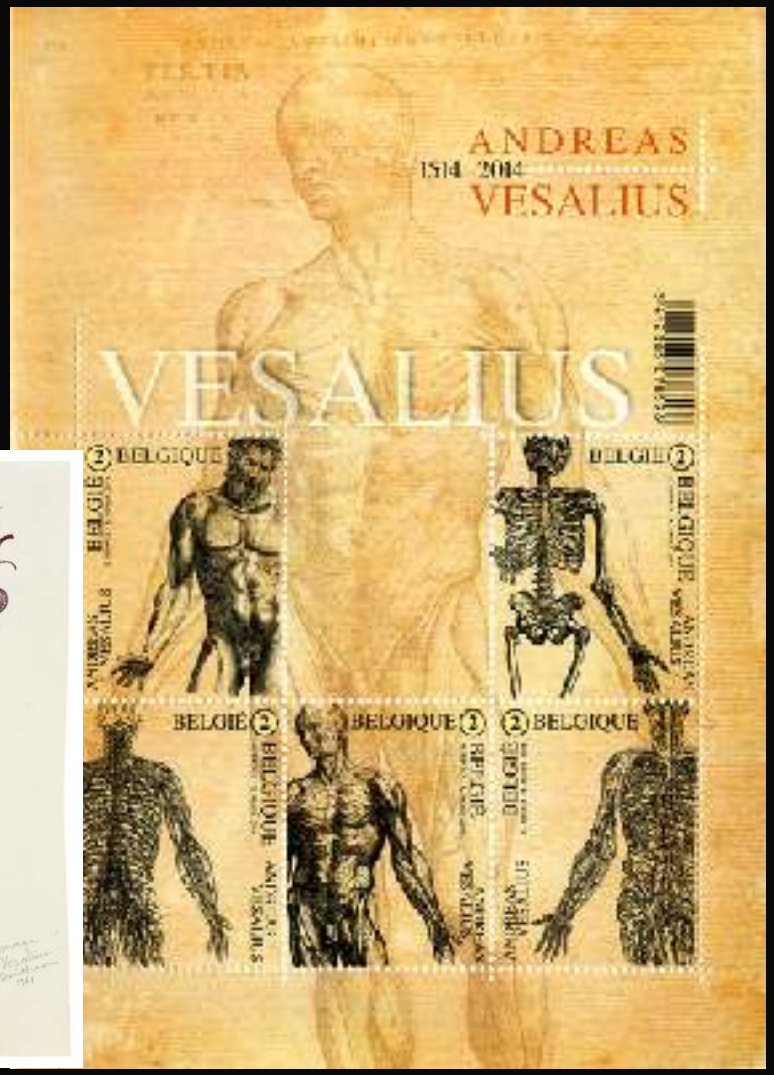
And if one considers that disease is at once and the same time disorder – the existence of a perilous otherness within the human body, at the very heart of life – and a natural phenomenon with its own constants, resemblances, and types, one can see what scope there would be for an archaeology of the medical point of view. From the limit-experience of the Other to the constituent forms of medical knowledge, and from the latter to the order of things and the conceptions of the Same, what is available to archaeological analysis is the whole of Classical knowledge, or rather the threshold that separates us from Classical thought and constitutes our modernity. It was upon this threshold that the strange figure of knowledge called man first appeared and revealed a space proper to the human sciences. In attempting to uncover the deepest strata of Western culture, I am restoring to our silent and apparently immobile soil its rifts, its instability, its flaws; and it is the same ground that is once more stirring under our feet.

Draft

Later engagements with Vesalius make this question concrete. Robert Smithson's *Homage to Vesalius* (1961) bears an explicit dedication to Vesalius and reflects his interest in the visual organisation of the body (Smithson Foundation, n.d.). I read its invented bodily form as an artistic reinterpretation; this does not establish that it copies a particular plate.

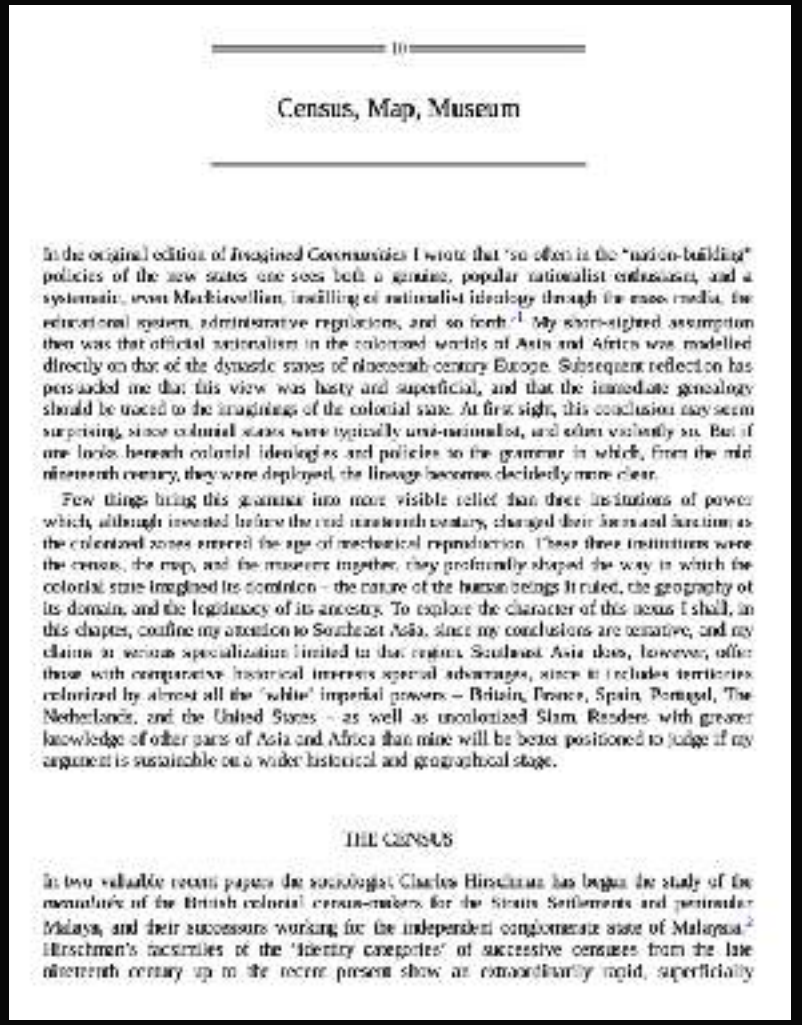
Michael J. North (2014) also documents anatomical figures from the *Fabrica* on commemorative stamps and first-day covers, including Belgian and Portuguese issues marking Vesalius's five-hundredth birthday in 2014. Here anatomical imagery enters a commemorative setting. I understand the figure as identifying a historical contribution as well as depicting a body. These examples concern different kinds of engagement, not a verified chain linking the same plate through every instance.





Draft

Benedict Anderson's account of the *map-as-logo* helps me consider such changes of use. He describes territorial shapes detached from geographical annotations and surroundings: "Pure sign, no longer compass to the world" (Anderson, 2006, ch. 10, 'The Map'). Repeated across posters, official seals and other surfaces, these forms acquired significance within anticolonial nationalism. The removal of one explanatory setting accompanied the formation of another meaning. This does not equate anatomical publishing with nationalist mapping; it challenges the assumption that preserving a recognisable shape also preserves its earlier function.



10

Census, Map, Museum

In the original edition of *Imagined Communities* I wrote that 'so often in the "nation-building" policies of the new states one sees both a genuine, popular nationalist enthusiasm, and a systematic, even Machiavellian, instilling of nationalist ideology through the mass media, the educational system, administrative regulations, and so forth'.[1] My short-sighted assumption then was that official nationalism in the colonized worlds of Asia and Africa was modelled directly on that of the dynastic states of nineteenth-century Europe. Subsequent reflection has persuaded me that this view was hasty and superficial, and that the immediate genealogy should be traced to the imaginings of the colonial state. At first sight, this conclusion may seem surprising, since colonial states were typically anti-nationalist, and often virulently so. But if one looks beneath colonial ideologies and policies to the grammar in which, from the mid nineteenth century, they were deployed, the lineage becomes decidedly more clear.

Few things bring this grammar into more visible relief than three institutions of power which, although invented before the mid nineteenth century, changed their form and function as the colonized zones entered the age of mechanical reproduction. These three institutions were the census, the map, and the museum. Together, they profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion – the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry. To explore the character of this nexus I shall, in this chapter, confine my attention to Southeast Asia, since my conclusions are tentative, and my claims to serious specialization limited to that region. Southeast Asia does, however, offer those with comparative historical interests special advantages, since it includes territories colonized by almost all the 'white' imperial powers – British, France, Spain, Portugal, The Netherlands, and the United States – as well as uncolonized Siam. Readers with greater knowledge of other parts of Asia and Africa than mine will be better positioned to judge if my argument is sustainable on a wider historical and geographical stage.

THE CENSUS

In two valuable recent papers the sociologist Charles Hirschman has begun the study of the mentalités of the British colonial census-makers for the Straits Settlements and peninsular Malaya, and their successors working for the independent conglomerate state of Malaysia.[2] Hirschman's facsimiles of the 'identity categories' of successive censuses from the late nineteenth century up to the recent present show an extraordinarily rigid, superficially

Draft

Together, these references complicate my focus on what a fragment physically retains.

Phaidon itself places maps within an illustrated comparative survey, giving them another role without erasing their different origins. My collage likewise does not sit outside this process. I am both responding to existing relationships and establishing another setting in which anatomical fragments can be read. Their new neighbours matter, but so does the fact that I present them as contemporary graphic practice rather than anatomical instruction.

My enquiry therefore connects material extraction with historical recontextualisation: when anatomical images are reproduced, regrouped and placed within new contexts of use, which relationships remain available, and what readings become possible? The history of these images does not supply one original meaning to recover, nor does it imply that every image inevitably becomes a symbol. It makes me attentive to how a recognisable form can occupy different roles. Through printing and collage, I want to explore these shifts without deciding in advance how every viewer should interpret them. The project is not only about what is cut away, but about what an image becomes available to do next.

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