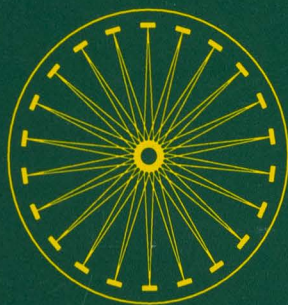


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In This Issue

It has been the intent of *Sagar* to publish exceptional graduate student and junior scholar papers on South Asia, as well as to offer other material which will be of interest to graduates students, such as papers on research methodology and resources, reports from the field, and book reviews. The contributors for this issue of *Sagar* all present papers concerning the theme of research. The *Sagar* staff hopes that this issue will be of help to graduate students in their work.

The first paper is that of Bhuvana Rao. Dr. Rao was the recipient of the **1996 Sagar Annual Award for Best New Dissertation On South Asia** for her dissertation "Is She Ill Or Is She Not: Female Sexuality, Gender Ideologies, and Women's Health in Tehri Garwal, North India." The dissertation explores the complex factors affecting women's health in a rural Pahari community. The paper published in this issue addresses Dr. Rao's concerns on fieldwork methodology and is based on a lecture she gave last November in the South Asia Seminar at the Center for Asian Studies, the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Rao is a 1996 doctoral graduate of the Department of Anthropology, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University. She was also recipient of the of the Graduate School of Syracuse University **1996 Doctoral Prize for Exemplifying Excellence in Research and Scholarship**. She is currently a Visiting Lecturer at Cyprus College and Rancho Santiago College in California, and will soon begin teaching at the University of California, Riverside.

Richard J. Bingle, in the second paper, has been kind enough to present a most helpful introduction to the India Office Library and Records. Dr. Bingle has recently retired from his position as head of the European Manuscripts Collection. He is also a historian of South Asia, with a doctoral degree in history from Balliol College, Oxford. His area of interest is the British in India in the eighteenth century and his thesis was on the Marquess of Hastings. He has taught as Visiting Professor at the University of Calgary.

Ratnesh Pathak has been working in Varanasi as a research assistant for Western scholars for the last ten years. As a fifth-generation Banarsi Brahman, he is familiar with the languages, people and traditions of Banaras. He has worked as guide,

interpreter, translator, counsellor, body-guard and story-teller for numerous scholars. His paper in this issue reflects his personal interest in the process of scholarship and represents the often unheard voice of those assistants who participate in the scholar's work.

ANTHROPOLOGIST AS NATIVE AND OTHER: SOME EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUES IN FIELDWORK

Bhuvana Rao

This paper briefly addresses some epistemological issues in anthropological fieldwork. Drawing from the author's own fieldwork experiences, it argues that indigenous anthropologists also need to address issues of positionality and contextualize their social position within their research in order to be accountable for the data they collect.

Like every graduate student of cultural anthropology returning from the field, I too, was faced with the challenge of writing an ethnography based on first-hand research. After spending a year with the Pahari's, a Himalayan community in Tehri Garhwal, North India, I returned to the United States to write my dissertation. I did not intend to write an ethnography based on earlier traditions but the solutions provided by the critiques of anthropology in the form of experimental ethnography also were not adequate. Moreover, my experiences in the field led me to question the very nature of anthropology and its methods- the fieldwork process and the writing of ethnography. While it was clear that experimental ethnography considers many critical issues regarding writing ethnography, one thing became very clear as I struggled to write--epistemological issues in experimental anthropological writings have not been addressed critically.

Experimental ethnography questions the notion of the objectivity of ethnography, claiming that writing ethnography is a subjective enterprise, subjective to the cultural baggage of the ethnographer, where the ethnographer's biases should be acknowledged through self-reflexivity. The resulting ethnography can therefore, never be an objective description of the culture. So

Bhuvana Rao, a recent doctoral graduate of Syracuse University, is currently a Visiting Lecturer at Cypress College, Cypress, California. She was the winner of the 1996 Sagar Annual Award For Best New Dissertation On South Asia.

ethnographies should be read as semi-literary texts which are open to the interpretation of the reader. While this critique allows for a breakthrough in experimental ethnographic writing with special emphasis on the presentation of the voice of the subjects or the native,¹ it simply alludes to the basic issue in question - that of how and why the knowledge of the "other" is created. In other words, it digresses from the heart of ethnographic methods: the business of fieldwork and the dynamics of the "data collection process". Epistemological issues in anthropology have not been considered perhaps because they question the very essence of anthropology - the business of studying the "other".

A second related issue is that most critiques of anthropology assume the dichotomy of "Western knowers" and "non-Western knowns and representeds".² But what of those indigenous anthropologists? Can we unquestioningly accept their voice as "native" representations? In this paper I address these epistemological issues and direct our attention towards rethinking our role as anthropologists.

Positionality and Research: The Indigenous Anthropologist

That the politics of positionality are as important in fieldwork as they are in writing ethnography is beyond question. But what of those indigenous anthropologists? Here I make reference mainly to those anthropologists who like me, conduct research among their own societies. I was a graduate Student in an American University who had returned to India to conduct fieldwork. Can our voices be unquestioningly accepted as true "native" representations? The critique of anthropology argues that one can be reflexive by presenting the voice of the subjects or the native,³ in ethnographic writing. While I agree with this position, I would like to add a note of caution in that, taking this position can pose the danger of homogenizing the category "native" and not

¹See, for example, Vincent Crapanzano, *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980); and Marjorie Shostack, *Nisa: The life and words of a !Kung Woman*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

²See Abu-Lughod, Lila, "Can There be a Feminist Ethnography?" in *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*. 5, No.1 (1990): 7-27.

³See, for example, Vincent Crapanzano, *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan* and Marjorie Wolf, *Thrice Told Tale*.

consider fully the complexity of social hierarchies of class, caste and ethnicity of people within it.

In her radical critique of experimental ethnography, particularly feminist anthropological approaches, Visweswaran argues that feminist ethnographers overlook a crucial element: that is the "relationship between the women of the colonizer and women of the colonized". She continues,

cross-cultural and class "others" have finally been acknowledged within the women's movement, while feminists in anthropology, the bastion of cultural relativity, insist on maintaining an us/them split that does not call into question their own positions as members of dominant Western societies. Insisting on the opposition between a unified self and a male other removes the power categories that exist between all anthropologists and their subjects: the way in which women anthropologists may pass as honorary males in some societies, or as persons of higher status by virtue of their membership in Western culture.⁴

The relationship between the anthropologist and the people she studies needs to be explored further.

The category of female anthropologists⁵ needs to include those women who study their female counterparts in their own society.⁶ Should we not call into question our own positions within

⁴Kamala Visweswaran, "Defining Feminist Ethnography," *Inscriptions* 3:4 (1988): 27-46.

⁵Male anthropologists are certainly not excluded. Since my research adopted feminist perspectives, and I mainly worked with women, I am directly addressing researchers in similar situations.

⁶Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's World's* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990); Dorinne K. Kondo, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* (Chicago, University Press, 1990); and Kirin Narayan, *Storytellers, Saints, and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teaching* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989) are some excellent examples illustrating this point. Abu-Lughod and Narayan contextualize their positionality as "halfies" (offspring of parents from two different ethnicities) doing fieldwork in one parent's country of origin, and Kondo as a Japanese American who returns to Japan for field research.

the social hierarchies in which we are placed and contextualize that vis-à-vis our position as native anthropologists studying our own society? The relationship between the researcher and the researched; between "us" and "them," is inherently hierarchical. We are placed in positions of power by virtue of our social differences, be it class, status or prestige. While we (i.e., indigenous female anthropologists) may belong to the category of the "other" in the Western world, we, by the very nature of our work, "other" the women we study in our own society. During the years of my graduate studies I was the "other," the native in the United States, but now, I realized, I was the "self" studying the "other". I realized that however close I became to my Pahari friends and however hard I tried to be just like one of them, I was constantly reminded that I was first an anthropologist. I could never be like them when I had that notebook flashing out of my bag and the camera shooting all the wonderful detail that I was supposed to take back with me to the United States to prove the validity of my research. Of educated, urban middle-class origins, I was in a privileged position in my own country and was as much to be accused as the Westerner of studying other cultures and exoticizing them. Like those Westerners, I too had come to do research among the *Paharis*, a community in India different from mine. I too was guilty of self-interestedly looking for data.

Although I shared Indian "womanhood" like my *Pahari* counterparts, it was clear that I was unlike them in several ways. While I was not as different as a Western woman, I was more privileged because of my education and class background than *Pahari* women. I had the opportunity to achieve higher education and the independence to make choices regarding my personal life. The social inequality between the women I studied and myself was clear. My possessions, although limited, sharply contrasted theirs. I had more money to spend and I found myself either avoiding questions regarding my father's and husband's salary and my stipend, or getting defensive about the amounts by trying to explain that unlike the village, everything was purchased in the city so one needed more money than one would need in the village--weak explanations that did little to justify the disparity between us.

I was unable to contribute a lending hand in the daily chores of *Pahari* women. I acquired many bruises while trying to pound rice. I could neither lift the heavy bundles of fodder and fire wood nor work long hours in the fields. My feeble but sincere attempts to help the women only provided much amusement to the monotony of daily life. However, I had access into their lives that they did not have into mine. One day the neighbor came to borrow some flour from the village headman's house where I lived.

She saw me writing in my notebook and asked me what I was doing. I replied that I was working. She burst with laughter and retorted,

Work! This is not work! Work is what we women of the hills do. Only when you get callouses on your hands and feet, and your back hurts from lifting heavy loads can you say that you are working. If what you do is work then I will trade it with you!

In addition to our differing definitions of "work," my entry into their lives was not reciprocated. I could participate in their lives when I wanted, but they had less power to choose either my entrance or exit into their community or to enter my world.

Although being an "indigenous ethnographer"⁷ may give me an advantage over non-Indians of depth and understanding of certain types of cultural information, I cannot claim to possess a better understanding of truth. By problematizing further the relationship between the researcher and the researched, we can avoid homogenized categorizing of natives. The following incident of Sumitra's⁸ childbirth experience and my involvement will help clarify my points.

Sumitra, a young woman had returned to her natal home for the delivery of her first child since there was no female member in her affinal family to care for her. One morning I saw her pounding rice with her sister-in-law. She mentioned that she had been having a dull throbbing pain since the night before. Later, she made several trips to fetch water for the house. In the afternoon, she fed the goats and performed some light chores around the house. She was also caring for Lado, her brother's eight month-old daughter during the time her sister-in-law was working in the fields. Around five in the evening, she felt strong contractions. Since the village midwife was away, the former midwife, an elderly woman in her seventies, was summoned. Sumitra's mother, her mother's co-wife (*sauk*), and her brother's wife assisted her in labor. Three other unmarried women, Kresna, Kala, and Asha, accompanied by me, watched Sumitra's childbirth from a distance.

⁷A term given by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney. "Native Anthropologists," in *American Ethnologist* 11, No. 3 (1984): 584-586.

⁸All names appearing in the paper have been changed to protect informants' identity.

The preparations were minimal. Sumitra changed into an old skirt (*ghagra*). She sat on a low wooden stool and tightly held on to a rope tied from a cupboard handle. The midwife massaged her belly and announced that Sumitra was ready to go into labor. The midwife declared "I heard the sound of her water break when she was urinating. She is too young, what does she know about all these things?" The other women laughed. Her contractions did not seem very close together. Each time she felt a contraction, her mother yelled, "push down" (*zor laga undi*). Her mother's co-wife yelled "bear down like you would for bowel movements. Bear down hard and soon there will be peace" (*zor laga zor, ubbe na undi, jaise tatti ka zor tab hondi santi*). The women felt that she was not bearing down enough. They narrated their own experiences. One woman said, "This is her first child, she does not know how to push." The women assured Sumitra that next time the child would come out on its own. Meanwhile, her sister-in-law pushed her shoulders from above, Kresna wrapped her arms around her belly from behind and squeezed. This continued for about three hours. Sumitra told them that she was not ready and that she felt tired and sleepy. They yelled at her: her mother swore at her and told her that the baby might die if she did not continue pushing. Sumitra yelled back and told her that she did not care anymore. In the meantime, her brother, who was in the room napping, got up and slapped her hard. He told her to push hard or else he would beat her again. Sumitra cried.

My mind raced. These women were experienced in childbirth, but why were they hitting her? She had done no wrong. Wasn't she trying? The rope had cut into her skin with all that pulling and pushing. I faced another dilemma, should I express my opinion? My concern for Sumitra might be seen as interference. I was, after all a spectator with no practical experience in the process of childbirth. I had neither the knowledge nor the wisdom women gain when they have children. I felt, however, that the abuse and violence against her could not be justified; wasn't Sumitra already in pain? Feeling agitated and frustrated for not being able to do anything about the beating, I left. I went back to my room to read about pregnancy and childbirth from David Werner's health manual.⁹ The manual specified that if a woman wanted to rest she should be allowed to do so. During labor she should be given plenty of fluids. I also

⁹An excellent book on situations where there is no doctor. Titled: *Where There is no Doctor*

became concerned about complications. Since no one had notified the government midwife, she would be unable to come if needed.

Two hours later I returned. By now Sumitra's mother became very anxious. With mixed emotions of anger and pain I found her yelling at her daughter. Angry for not being able to do anything, and pained because of the flood of memories of her own experience of losing three babies in childbirth and those of her older daughter who died during childbirth. She was worried about seventeen year old Sumitra's fate. Everyone present was concerned about her weak and irregular contractions especially since several hours had passed since the midwife announced that Sumitra's water had broken. I decided to take the risk of suggesting that Sumitra needed to rest and told them that when she was ready she would know. My suggestions were initially dismissed, but after some more persuasion, her mother considered my suggestion as the last resort. She said fatalistically, "Whatever has to happen will happen" (*Jo honde so honde*). The midwife was angry with me. She said "What do you know? You city folk think you know everything." In a tone laced with bitterness and anger she told me that if I was wrong, they would never forgive me. Did I realize I may be putting Sumitra's life in jeopardy? Silence pervade the room. The calm of that winter night was broken by occasional moans from Sumitra. With sweat glistening on her brow and upper lip she continued to push. Everyone present resumed to pressure her and one woman continued to squeeze her belly. Tight lipped, I gave her an electrolyte beverage, soon after which she fell asleep on a nearby mattress. We sat around her, some of us now talking softly. I was scared since so much had been invested in this decision. Not only would my research be at stake but Sumitra might even lose her life.

My moral dilemma was sorted out around three in the morning when Sumitra woke up screaming in excruciating pain. She wanted to urinate so her mother accompanied her to the little space in the kitchen. We heard the sound of her water breaking and realized that the midwife had been wrong earlier about the water breaking. Her contractions were close to each other and consistently grew stronger. Before the break of dawn, around four in the morning, a tiny baby boy was born. Sumitra was alive and so was my fate in the village.

This incident allowed me to reexamine myself, my assumptions, and my fieldwork. My initial hesitancy to get involved stemmed from my training. I had learned to collect data in the totality of its setting, taking into consideration all aspects of the situation. Yet how could I not be engaged? By maintaining an engaged relativism I would have perhaps been a mere spectator and

noted the events in a chronological order: what did the relatives and other caretakers do? What did they feed her? How many times did they beat her? Who beat her? What were her responses? What were the responses of the other women? Who was making the decisions? What were the surroundings like? After all, this was "data?" It was the perfect case study on health decisions that I was here to study.

I realized however, that there was no such thing as the objective recording of data or facts. The data and ultimately the truth are subjective and are the result of interactions between the fieldworker and the community. As Lock and Schepher-Hughes rightly point out, "metaphorical flights of fancy come crashing down in the face of anguish and pain that often surround birth, illness and death."¹⁰ One has to get involved in the community. I could have been a mere spectator recording the process of childbirth and other medical practices in this community. While it would have contributed to my data and supported the initial purpose of the study, the life of a human being was surely more important. My notebook could wait.

This raises a second issue: I was able to impose my decision because of my social position of an educated urban middle-class woman working in a rural community. I asserted my power through a display of my knowledge. By administering the electrolytes, I had scientific validation. Medicines in a fancy package command a lot of respect for the person administering them and I had used that to influence my decision to get involved. This incident allowed me to recognize that the relationship between the fieldworker and the community of study is inherently unequal. This inequality must be recognized at the outset because it influences the data we collect. The interactions between the community and the researcher are subject to the inequalities of status and power. Recognizing this is a crucial element of fieldwork, because this inequality contributes to the ways we collect our information and essentially represent the "other."

Experimental ethnography suggests a methodology of "engaged relativism" calling for participating with the people whose culture is under consideration while adopting a relativistic stance in order to challenge the homogenizing tendencies of the modern

¹⁰Margaret Lock and Nancy Schepher-Hughes. "A Critical-Interpretive Approach: Rituals and Routines of Dissent," *Medical Anthropology: A Handbook of Theory and Method*, eds. Thomas M. Johnson and Carolyn F. Sargent (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), pp. 47-72.

world.¹¹ But as others have argued, such a stance is more concerned with the politics and poetics of representing the "other" than with the politics of engaging with them. The position of the ethnographer remains relativistic and engagement is merely a tool of representation.¹² To simply acknowledge our differences would not help me to better represent Pahari women. Adopting an extremely objective or a relativistic position does not help to present the truth either. To follow the method of engaged relativism, I would have had to remain apolitical in my research and personal relationships, and consequently, could also not recognize the issues of power that envelop such interactions. The above episode clearly illustrates that I could not be engaged with the women and at the same time be relativistic in my methodology.

Partial Perspectives and Partial Representation

In my research I explore the multiple understandings of Pahari women's health. Emphasizing women's definitions of well-being and illness and their life experiences, I explore how cultural beliefs inform illness perception by focussing on the relationship between gender, female sexuality, health, social structure and ideology. To interpret the data I collected, I adopt a "feminist objectivity" a perspective that is neither completely objective nor extremely relativistic. Haraway suggests that feminist objectivity is about "limited location" and "situated knowledge" that yields partial perspectives. Partial perspectives allow heterogenous multiplicities to be represented because they are locatable and allow for critical knowledge building. According to Haraway neither objectivity nor extreme relativism allows for the building of critical knowledge because they pose a danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their position. Haraway emphasizes that there can be no one feminist standpoint because one cannot be simultaneously in all or wholly in any one of the privileged positions at the same time.¹³

¹¹See George E. Marcus and Michael M.J Fisher, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

¹²See for example Elizabeth Enslin. "The Dynamics of Gender, Class and Caste in a Woman's Movement in Rural Nepal", Doctoral Dissertation. (Stanford University, 1990)

¹³For a detailed discussion on partial perspectives see Donna Haraway "Situated Knowledges" *The Science Question in Feminism and the*

The politics of positioning therefore become as important as the politics of representation. The politics of positionality allows for a better representation of the ensions, conflicts, resistance, complicities, and transformations in society. I do not claim to present any romanticized ethnographic truth about Pahari women. On the contrary, I wish to establish that I present, at best, "partial truths"¹⁴ by adopting "partial perspectives".

The above incident of Sumitra's childbirth also illustrates the importance of engagement in research. A neutral approach may have helped me to understand some obvious differences between gender, but engagement provides better insight into the subtleties of gender relations, especially the dynamics involved in any conflict-ridden situation. While my day-to-day interactions with women were never free of subjective judgements and interpretations, by maintaining partial perspectives the social realities of Pahari life, especially regarding gender dynamics, emerged. I gained rich insights regarding not only differences between men and women, but also about differences among women, and gained a better understanding of the expected social roles of women.

I concentrated on an intensive study based on participant observation of a small rural mountain community which I gradually came to perceive as a lived and contested reality and not as a community that I could take for granted. As I wrote my ethnography, however, I began to question the aim of my inquiry. Is it simply one more interpretation of Pahari life? Moreover, the intrusive aspects of fieldwork present ethical dilemmas that I cannot easily overlook. Should I, as a fieldworker, have the right to document intimate details of people who relate their personal stories as if to a friend rather than an anthropologist? Can I use this material to publish papers for personal profit? Finally, even though we became friends, the unequal relationship of power between me, the researcher, and them, the researched, remains inescapable.

I have no conclusive answer. Simply acknowledging ethnographic dilemmas is also not sufficient. If anthropologists continue using current research methods, the only way we can absolve ourselves of this predicament is with sustained involvement

Privilege of Partial Perspective in *Feminist Studies* 14, No. 3 (1988): 575-599.

¹⁴James Clifford and George E. Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

with the community and by the restructuring of our methodology to emphasize praxis¹⁵ or in ways that empower the community.¹⁶ Anthropologists need to reconsider epistemological issues in the light of unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched. Finally, do we have any right to study the "other"? Do we have any right to represent the "other" in a fashion that suits our purpose? We need to address the basic issues of fieldwork which are how and why the knowledge of the "other" is created--even if it questions the very essence of anthropology. I will conclude with a reflective quote by Abu-Lughod:

Epistemological issues--issues about how we know--have become quickly elided with issues of how we represent, allowing a sort of sidestepping of the basic political issue at the heart of anthropology--the issue of western knowers and representers, and non western knowns and representeds. This is an issue of self and other, subject and object.¹⁷

¹⁵As suggested by Lock and Scheper-Hughes.

¹⁶As demonstrated by Pramod Parajuli and Elizabeth Enslin, "From Learning Literacy to Regenerating Women's Space: A Story of Women's Empowerment in Nepal" in *Convergence* 23, No. 1 (1990): 44-56.

¹⁷Abu-Lughod, 11.

An Introduction to the India Office Library and Records (Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, London)

Richard J. Bingle

This paper should be of great use to those scholars who need to be knowledgeable of the extensive resources of the India Office Library and Records. The author, the former head of European Manuscripts and himself a historian of South Asia, is familiar with both the holdings of the Library and Records and the needs and questions of newcomers to the institution.

The resources of the India Office Library and Records have been used by generations of scholars specializing in South Asian studies. All newcomers, however, come to the collections with fresh questions and find the sheer volume of available material somewhat daunting; they experience problems in gaining access to relevant documents. Some react to this situation by plunging in recklessly, hoping that luck or serendipity will lead them to the material they want. Alas, the usual result of this procedure is frustration or bewilderment, or both. The alternative is to amass as much information as possible before the first visit to London, using published guides and personal inquiries. This article is intended to help the scholar ascertain if the material which he or she would like to use is available in London, or only in archives in India, or whether it exists both in India and London. In most cases, research-trips to India have to be combined with visits to London, but the balance varies in every case, and can only be decided in discussion between student and supervisor.

After a sketch of the scope and arrangement of the India Office Records (IOR), this article provides descriptions of the biographical sources, the collection of private papers, and a brief account of the India Office Library (IOL), and some practical information. The scholar may also consider investigating some of

Richard Bingle has recently retired from his position as head of European Manuscripts at the India Office Library, London.

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the books in the list at the end of this article, and a detailed study of *A General Guide to the India Office Records* by Martin Moir (London: British Library 1988).

The Scope of the India Office Records

The India Office Records, as they stand now, are the product of bureaucracies in London. The bureaucratic element means that the archives were kept to serve the requirements of the corporate bodies which produced them, and tended to be neglected or weeded when certain series were considered to be of little use. Thus the seventeenth century records were neglected and many disappeared (including the copy of the first Charter) until a record-keeper was appointed in 1772, and when the India Office itself was inaugurated in 1858, and moved into new buildings in 1867, some 300 tons of records were destroyed; some were unwanted duplicates but others were the East India Company's shipping records. The London bases of these bureaucracies means that the countries of South Asia are always viewed from a distance, through European eyes, and dependent, as we shall see, on what was sent to London.

The archives of four separate organizations are embedded in the IOR: the East India Company (1600-1858), the Board of Control (1784-1858), the India Office (1858-1947) and the Burma Office (1937-48). These records amount to some 175,000 volumes and occupy about nine miles (14 km) of shelving. The collection consists mainly of printed and manuscript records, but there are also specimens of textiles, private papers, printed books, and, in the collection of private papers, oral archive recordings.

The geographical scope of the IOR is based firmly, as one might expect, on the countries of South Asia, namely modern India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma (Myanmar), and together with materials relating to diplomatic missions and trading-stations (originally known as factories) in neighboring areas at various periods, including Sri Lanka, Nepal, Tibet, Afghanistan, Iran and the Gulf, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. Further west, the IOR contains materials contacts with West, South, and East Africa; and further east there are records relating to Hong Kong, China and Japan.

It should also be noted that the British are not the only Europeans represented in the IOR. Relations with the French and the Portuguese possessions in India are reflected in the IOR over a long period, while the Danish and Dutch East India Companies make fewer appearances. There were German and Swiss mercenaries in the Company's armies in the eighteenth century,

and German foresters founded and directed the Government of India's Forestry Department from 1856-1900. These and several other nationalities are to be found in the IOR, in a variety of roles, for instance, as scientists, linguists, soldiers of fortune, missionaries, and businessmen.

The Arrangement of the IOR

The IOR is now arranged in an alphabetical sequence, ranging from IOR:A, Charters, to IOR:Z, Indexes (see list at the end of this article). The largest of these series, and the ones which contain most material for students of modern South Asian studies are IOR:L, Departmental Records, and IOR:P, Proceedings and Consultations of the Government of India and the Presidencies and Provinces. Virtually all the series are now provided with a hand list, available in the OIOC Reading Room, or a published catalogue; the exceptions to this rule are IOR:L/L, Legal Advisor's Records, and IOR: Q, Commission, Committee and Conference Records. The IOR can be roughly divided into three groups, according to their place of origin, London, India, and the correspondence between them.

Records Produced in London

These include the Minutes of the Court of Directors and the Court of Proprietors of the East India Company, 1599-1858 (IOR:B) and the Minutes of the Council of India 1858-1947 (IOR:C); the former includes the Minutes of Dissent by individual members of the Council of India, which are often more interesting than the Court and Council Minutes themselves. There are also the committee papers, home correspondence, and departmental papers of the various East India Company and India Office Departments. The most important of these were:

IOR:L/P&J, Public and Judicial Department, which was concerned with internal administration, law and order, constitutional reforms and the Civil Service;

IOR:L/P&S, Political and Secret Department, which dealt with matters relating to the Indian States and external relations;

IOR:L/MIL, Military Department which organized the recruitment of army officers, private soldiers (to 1858) and medical officers in England, and recorded the operations of the East India Company's armies, and the Indian Army.

The other basic departments were the Accountant-General's Department (IOR:L/AG), the Financial Department (IOR:L/F) and the Revenue Department (IOR:L/E) which later developed into the Economic and Overseas Department.

The East India Company's departmental papers do not survive as an identifiable group, apart from the committee papers and home correspondence. Traces of the work of departments can be seen in the collections of material assembled as background material to answering letters from India, the Board's Collection (see next section) and the Collections to Despatches 1859-80.

The departmental papers of the India Office become easier to handle after about 1880 (the date varies from department to department) when a registry system was introduced. Each paper coming into a department was entered in a register with a brief description, given a number, and indexed. A file was created, and included the reply to the letter, any minutes, and relating correspondence. The keys to the system are the annual registers and indexes, for the registers indicate what happened to a file, including transfer to another department, and destruction. Users of the indexes have to remember that the clerks who compiled them were not modern professional indexers, and the terms which may now appear inaccurate or inappropriate; for example, events relating to the national movement may be found under "Civil Disturbances" or "Sedition." Another curiosity is that the indexes are not completely alphabetical; under each letter, the index had two sections, nominal (the names of individuals) and subject, and each letter was sub-divided according to the first vowel of the word, e. g. Assam before Ahmedabad. If this system seems to make the researcher's work more difficult, there is another system which makes it easier. As papers on one subject accumulated during one year or several years, they were gathered together to form a collection. Thus it becomes possible to trace a subject, such as relations with a particular India State or the development of a protest movement, in one collection. In the Public and Judicial Department these collections were kept in the main sequence of files until 1930 (L/P&J/6) and a separate series of collections only appears after that date (L/P&J/8), while the Political and Secret Collections form a separate series from 1902 (L/P&S/10).

Correspondence with India

The official correspondence between London and India was conducted through the dispatches sent to the Government of India, and the Governments of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, and

the letters received from these Governments. Note the distinction: despatches to India and letters from India. There is one set of the letters from the Indian Governments for the period 1709-1858, and sets of despatches to India for the period 1753-1858, in E/4. There are separate sets of despatches and letters in each department's records covering the same period, and later correspondence between the India Office and Indian Governments (e.g. L/P&J/3). Letters from India were accompanied by voluminous enclosures, which often contain a great deal of useful information, but both before and after 1858 these enclosures were often separated from the letters on arrival, and used as background material for the despatches from London. So in the period 1796-1858 these materials can be found in the Board of Control's papers, the so-called Board's Collections (F/4); a new list of these collections is being prepared, and the sections already produced (to about 1845) have revealed a wealth of fascinating information. For the period 1858-80, the former enclosures are called "Collections to Despatches" in the departmental records, and are reached through the indexes to despatches. This may seem to be a rather convoluted method of reaching the enclosures, which do much to explain statements in letters from India, but it works.

The correspondence with India in the IOR reflects the different situations of administrative departments in London and India. A despatch from London can be traced through all the various stages, from the draft produced in the department, and the changes which modified that draft (reflecting various points of view) to the final despatch signed by the members of the Court of Directors or later the Council of India. The parallel process which took place in India and led to the final letter from India, signed by the Governor-General and members of his Council or by Presidency Governors and their Councils, cannot be traced from the material in the IOR; the relevant drafts and alterations to drafts exist only in India, and are to be found in the National Archives of India, and the State Archives. It is time to say, however, that final forms of despatches to India and letters from India are present both in the IOR and India.

Records Produced in India

At the beginning of this paper it was noted that the East India Company was somewhat negligent in the care of its early records, and this is evident when the sources for the study of seventeenth century India are considered. The researcher has to

rely mainly on two series, the "Original Correspondence" (E/3) and the "Factory Records" (G/1-40), and both are artificial series, compiled in the late nineteenth century from the early papers that had survived the vicissitudes of the centuries. Some of the Original Correspondence has been published, but much remains to be investigated. The Factory Records are concerned with papers emanating from two sources: firstly, the early trading-stations in India, some very short-lived, and others the precursors of the Presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Bengal; and secondly, the overseas posts,, including South East Asia and China, dating from the early days of the Company to the mid-nineteenth century.

The main series of the IOR produced in India, and copied to London, are the Proceedings and Consultations of the Government of India and of the Presidencies and Provinces 1702-1945 (P); this series amounts to some 46,500 volumes, and provides "the fullest and most detailed account of the unfolding of events and policies in the Sub-continent available in the India Office Records" (Moir, p.218). It is important to note that the IOR has signed copies of these Consultations and Proceedings; the originals, and associated background materials, are to be found in the National Archives of India and the State Archives.

The simple system used to produce these Consultations originated in the East India Company's factories in the seventeenth century. Each week the Governor (or the Chief, i.e., the most senior civil servant) and his Council met to deal with all the important business of the factory, to read despatches from London and reports from subordinates in distant outposts, and to review the work of the factory; then the Councilors recorded their views in minutes and resolutions and instructed the secretaries to reply to letters. All these proceedings were recorded in full, including letter received, reports, and replies, and a copy was sent to London. At first all matters were recorded in a single series, the Public Consultations, with an occasional series of Secret Consultations in times of war, but as administration replaced trade the volume of business to be transacted increased. To cope with this the Council met on different days to consider different types of business, and the separate sets of Consultations were developed, e.g. Military, Political (India States), Revenue, and later Public Works, Education, Railways and several others.

Until 1860 all Consultations were kept in manuscript, and full copies were sent to London. After 1860 the Proceedings as they were then called, were divided into two series and printed. The A Proceedings dealt with more important matters and were printed in full and sent to London, excluding the Councilors' minutes. Part B Proceedings, which dealt with more routine

matters, were summarized and printed, and only these summaries are to be found in IOR, the full documentation remaining in India. The distinction between these two series can be rather tantalizing for researchers, for the Part B Proceedings often refer to matters which, in retrospect, appear to be rather important.

In addition to the Proceedings there are a number of other groups of material produced in India which are of particular importance for researchers. Within the limits of this paper it is only possible to give brief descriptions of these series.

Political Department and Residency Records, c 1789-1947 (R/1 and 2)

These were virtually the only series of original records removed from India in 1947, and deal with British relations with the Indian States. There is a microfilm of the Political Department records (R/1) in the National Archives of India.

Official Publications, c. 1760-1957 (V/1-27)

This large collection, of about 70,000 volumes, included parliamentary papers and debates, central and local administration and departmental reports, statistical series, civil service lists and histories of service, monographs and many other categories.

Survey and Settlement Reports (V/27)

These printed reports are a basic source for local agrarian history and conditions.

Map Collections, c.1600-1960 (W,X,Y).

This large collection, amounting to some 65,000 maps, covers India and neighboring countries. These range from early manuscript surveys and James Renell's maps to the systematic Survey of India maps covering the whole of India. City and town maps related to areas of British administrative interest are included, e.g. divisional headquarters and military cantonments, and there is a superb map of Calcutta in 1824, measuring eighteen feet by eight feet.

Home Miscellaneous Series (H/1-814). c1600-1900, 839 vols.

This is an artificial series, compiled in the late nineteenth century, and containing documents from many sources; there is little dated after 1858. There is material on most topics relating to the East India Company's administration, including letters received from India, and material produced in East India House, and a few

collections of private papers. For the catalogue by S. C. Hill (1927), see list of books below.

Indian Newspaper Reports (L/R/5), 1868-1939.

These are weekly reports on India vernacular and English-language newspapers, arranged by province. In some cases this is the only evidence of the contents of short-lived newspapers, since the files have not survived. The items selected for notice are often revealing, both of the newspapers' contents, and the selector's criteria.

Biographical Sources

Sooner or later every researcher encounters a need for biographical information about the people named in the archives. The resources of the IOR can be particularly useful for certain categories of Europeans who lived and worked in India, but not for Indians unless they happened to be from princely families, or entered the Indian Civil Service, or achieved a high status in their professions. The records for Europeans cover a wide range of occupations, but contain most detail for civil servants and army officers.

Ecclesiastical Records(N)

These consist of the quarterly returned of baptisms, marriages and burials of European Christians in India from 1700 to 1947. Civil registration of births, marriages and deaths was not compulsory in India (as it was in Britain from 1837) and so the ecclesiastical records are the main source of evidence for India; there are few registrations in these records. The quarterly returns depended on the Christian priest or minister who conducted the services making his returns to the Bishop of Calcutta, Madras or Bombay, and there are obvious omissions. Some children were never baptized, or were baptized in Britain later, some marriages were never solemnized in a church, especially between European men and Indian women, and deaths occurred in remote places, where there was no clergyman to conduct the burial service and fill in the forms; burials in India normally took place within a few hours of the death of the person, a necessary measure of hygiene in a hot climate. Despite these difficulties the ecclesiastical returns are believed to be 80-90% complete. In addition to the main series for the Episcopal areas of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, there are separate returned for the Indian States, Burma, St. Helena (which includes the death of Napoleon), Fort Marlborough (Sumatra),

Prince of Wales Island (Penang), Macao and Whampoa, Kuwait and Aden.

Service Records

Within the official files of the East India Company and the India Office there is a vast amount of information on the lives of civil servants, army officers, and European private soldiers in the Company's armies. It is usually possible to work out a complete life-history of their Indian activities from these sources.

Civil Service

Entry into the Company's Civil Services was by patronage until 1854, each Director being able to nominate six or seven candidates a year, mostly military. Each nomination took the form of a petition to the Company in the candidate's own hand, and incorporated a birth certificate, and educational details (J/1). After 1854 and the competitive entry into the Civil Service, the marks of all candidates were published by the Civil Service Commission, and entry forms of successful candidates are in the Public and Judicial Department files (L/P&J/6). Civil Servants careers can be traced in the manuscript Records of Service (L/F/10), in the printed Civil Lists (V/13) and Histories of Services (V/12), and are summarized in the published East India Registers and India Office Lists. The elaborate pension schemes meant that not only did the civil servants receive pensions, but also their widows; in addition their sons received an allowance until they were twenty-one, and daughters until they married.

Indian Army

Applicants for commissions in the East India Company's Armies had to follow a procedure similar to the one used by civil servants. The Cadet Papers include evidence of education, and a baptism certificate (L/MIL/9). Thereafter the service records for each of the Presidency Armies- Bengal, Madras and Bombay, record each officer's career in considerable detail, with references to the printed General Orders which announced promotions and transfers (L/MIL/10,11,12). There are similar pension records (L/AG/23/6,10,12). Private Soldiers who were recruited into the Company's European Lists (from 1753) and Registers of Recruits (1801-60) give details of a recruit's age, place of birth and former employment, with a perfunctory physical description (L/MIL/9). There are no detailed service records, but the private soldiers are listed year by year in the Registers of East India Company

European Soldiers (L/MIL/10,11,12). Pensions for NCO's and private soldiers and their widows (but not their children) were paid from the Lord Clive Fund, established in 1770 (L/AG/23/2 and L/AG/21/10). The Company's European Regiments were transferred to the British Army in 1861.

The Companies medical officers were recruited to serve the Bengal, Madras, and Bombay armies, and their application papers provide information about their medical qualification (L/MIL/9). There are records of their services in the Service Army Lists (Medical) and similar pension records. The Indian Medical Service

European Manuscripts

European Manuscripts, the collection of private papers in the IOR, is the largest of its kind outside South Asia, and forms a major resource for research into the British connection with India and neighboring countries. It amounts to some 16,000 volumes, files and boxes, and is still growing, as new collections come to light, and the owners offer them to the to be preserved and made available for research. This artificial collection, built up as opportunities have occurred, still offers rich materials for research. Within the limits of this paper, there is space only for a brief chronological survey, and some assessment of the collection's strengths and weaknesses.

Chronological distribution

1600-1750

The first 150 years of the East India Company's operation are poorly represented. There is a contemporary summary of the Company's first Charter, and a fragmentary notebook of Francis Buck, a sailor on the Red Dragon (1607-8), one of the ships on the Company's third voyage. Later there are letter-books of Isaac and William Lawrence (1672-9 and 1659-96), merchants in Surat, and the letter-books of Joseph Collet at Fort Marlborough 1712-16, and Governor of Madras 1716-20.

1750-1800

The expansion of British rule in India coincides with the first large collections of private papers, notably the papers of the historian Robert Orrac (330 volumes), the papers of Robert Clive, later Lord Clive, (96 boxes, MSS.Eur.G.37) and of his secretary Henry Strachey (MSS.Eur.f.128), and of Clive's successor as Governor of

Bengal, Harry Verelst (MSS.Eur.F.218). The events of Warren Hasting's period as Governor-General 1774-85 are reflected in the papers of his arch-enemy Philip Francis (74 volumes, various numbers) and the Fowke family (25 volumes, various numbers). Madras politics are reflected in the diaries of George Patterson 1769-75 (MSS.Eur.E.379), the correspondence of the notorious Paul Benfield 1772-1801 (MSS.Eur.C.307), and the papers of Edward, 2nd Lord Clive as Governor of Madras 1798-1803 (MSS.Eur.G.37). Bombay politics can be traced in the papers of Sir Charles Malet, 1770-98 (MSS.Eur.F.149). French activities in Chandernagore and Dacca can be seen through the eyes of the Verlee family 1734-1840 (MSS.Eur.F.193).

1800-58

The volume of materials available for this period increases sharply, and embraces both London and India, and areas outside India. Consequently only a few examples can be named. The Court of Directors is represented by William Fullerton Elphinstone (MSS.Eur.F.89) and Sir George Abercrombie Robinson (MSS.Eur.F.142) and the Board of Control by Sir Charles Wood, later Lord Halifax (MSS.Eur.F.78). There is one Governor-General, Lord Amherst, 1823-8 (MSS.Eur.F.140) and several Governors, notably Sir Thomas Munro (MSS.Eur.F.151) and the Marquess of Tweeddale (MSS.Eur.F.96) for Madras, and Mounstuart Elphinstone (MSS.Eur.F.88) and Sir George Russell Clerk (MSS.Eur.D.538) for Bombay; John, 13th Lord Elphinstone was Governor, successively, of Madras and Bombay (MSS.Eur.87). For North India we must note the Survey of Bengal 1807-12 by Francis Buchanan Hamilton (56 volumes, various numbers), the papers of Sir Henry Lawrence (MSS.Eur.F.85) and the explorations of Charles Masson and William Moorcroft. Further afield there are documents on South-East Asia in the papers of Sir Stamford Raffles (MSS.Eur.D.742 and F.148) and Lt. Col. Colin Mackenzie (Mackenzie Private and 1822 Collections) and Nepal in the papers of Brian Houghton Hodgson. The Indian mutinies of 1857-8 are illustrated in over one hundred collections and smaller groups of papers.

1858-1900

The heyday of Victorian imperialism is strongly represented in the collection by the presence of the papers of numerous Viceroys, Secretaries of State for India, Governors of Indian Provinces, and many others. The Viceroys were the 8th and 9th Earls of Elgin (MSS.Eur.F.83 and F.84), Lord Lawrence (MSS.Eur.F.90), The

Earl of Northbrook (MSS.Eur.C.144), the Earl of Lytton (MSS.Eur.E.218), the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava (MSS.Eur.F.130) and the Marquess of Lansdowne (MSS.Eur.D.558). Among the numerous Secretaries of State, the most notable were Sir Charles Wood (MSS.Eur.F.78), the Duke of Argyll (MSS.Eur.B.380) and Lord George Hamilton (MSS.Eur.C.125-6), D.508-10,F.123). Two commanders-in-Chief are represented in the Collections: Lord Napier of Magdala (MSS.Eur.F.114) and Field Marshal Sir George White (MSS.Eur.F.108). Among the Governors, the largest collections are of the papers of Sir Richard Temple (MSS.Eur.F.86) and Sir Alfred Lyall (MSS.Eur.F.132). The longest-serving Permanent under-Secretary of State for India was Sir Arthur Godley, 1883-1909, who left his papers in his office when he retired (MSS.Eur.F.102). Two other collections deserve mention: the papers of Lt-General Sir Richard Strachey include many letters from his brother Sir John Strachey, and reflect his scientific interests (MSS.Eur.F.127), while the papers of Henry and Annette Beveridge reflect their divergent interests, Henry as an ICS officer and Annette as the founder of a school for Indian girls in Calcutta (MSS.Eur.C.176).

1900-1947

The problem of selection becomes even more difficult in relation to twentieth-century collections. There are good runs of Viceregal papers from Lord Curzon to Lord Linlithgow (with sections of Lord Wavell's and Lord Mountbatten's papers and a similar run of papers of Secretaries of State for India, from Lord Morley to Lord Zetland. Among the 225 Governors of Indian Provinces, we must mention Lord Hailey for the Punjab and U.P., Lord Lytton and Ronaldshay and Sir John Anderson for Bengal, Sir Harcourt Butler for Burma and U.P., Sir George Cunningham for the NWFP, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith and Sir Hubert Rance, the last two Governors of Burma, and Sir Francis Mudie, Sind and West Punjab (Pakistan). There are papers from a wider range of occupations, for instance the diaries of a Bombay businessman, Wilfred W. Russell, the papers of two British business groups, the India, Pakistan and Burma Association, and the Indian Tea Association, and the papers of Sir Roger Thomas, who was concerned with agricultural development in Sind. The supporters of Christian missions in India represented by the papers of the small Lakher Pioneer Mission in Assam, and further South, the supporters of the Women's Christian Colleges in Madras, and the Vellore Christian Medical College and Hospital. The growing interest in Indian art is

seen in the papers of Percy Brown, and William and Mildred Archer, together with the papers of the Royal Society for India, Pakistan and Ceylon. Four collections of prominent Indians are present: Cornelia Sorabji (social reformer), Dr. S. K. Datta (Christian leader), Sudrinath Ghose (novelist), and Sir Fazl-i-Husain, Punjab political leader.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The main strength of the collection lies in the papers of senior British officials, for their semi-official correspondence often highlights the discussions and disagreements which lay behind official policies. For instance, the Viceroy and the Secretary of State exchanged letters every week, discussing appointments, current problems, and the background to their official correspondence; both of them considered this to be a private correspondence, and removed the letters at the end of their terms of office. At the other end of the scale, young ICS officers often wrote home to their parents every week, and revealed much about their attitudes to their work (but who tells parents everything?); a good series of diaries is even better, e.g. G. M. Ray, I C S Bihar 1937-47.

The weakness of the collection lies in the concentration on the higher echelons of civil administration and the army; There are relatively few collections of non-official--businessmen, shopkeepers, missionaries, teachers, and professional people (lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc.), possibly because few of them seem to have kept their papers. Also the collection does not cover every province for every period, and there are many gaps. Some of these weaknesses have been filled by oral histories interviews, and requests to write memoirs, but this record is often tinged with hindsight. However, the collection is still growing, and interesting new material comes to light every year, to surprise and delight researchers.

The India Office Library

The scope and contents of the India Office Library (IOL) demand extensive separate treatment by a librarian. The following sketch is based on long experience of using the resources of the

IOL, as a historian and archivist, and cannot be regarded as exhaustive or definitive.

The IOL consists of three main sections: a large collection of printed books, periodicals and newspapers in European languages; an extensive collections of similar printed materials and manuscripts in the classical and modern languages of South Asia; and a magnificent collection of paintings, prints, drawings and photographs relating to India and neighboring countries. It should be noted that the East India Company did not establish its Library and Museum until 1801, and books published before that date have been acquired as opportunity offered, and in this respect the collection is not complete. The Museum exhibits were dispersed to other national collections in 1874-9, the most famous of them being "Tippoo's Tiger" (a large model of a tiger mauling a British soldier, to the accompaniment of shrieks and growls from a concealed barrel-organ) which went to the Victoria and Albert Museum, and can still be seen there.

The Company began to build the collection of European printed books by collections books from the departments in East India House, by purchase, and encouraging publication of new books on Indian topics by purchasing multiple copies for distribution in India. The acquisition of books published in India was changed by the Indian Copyright Act of 1867, which gave the Library the right to a free copy of every book published in India. At first the Library was flooded with material of all kinds, and so a system of selection was introduced in 1877; the books required were selected from printed quarterly lists of publications compiled by provincial governments in India. In addition, copies of "proscribed publications," I.E. books banned in India, were also added to the collection. The result has been the development of a research library of great value to scholars of many specialties. Since 1947 the acquisition of printed books has continued, but on a more moderate scale, as funds have permitted. Certain subjects, namely specialist works on medicine, science, and law, are not acquired, as they would duplicate the work of other libraries in London. The Library also holds an extensive collection of periodicals, and pamphlets, known by their old title as "Tracks." The collection of Indian newspapers, some of which were printed on very poor paper, has been microfilmed and readers now use the microfilms rather than the originals. Access to the collection of European books is through a card-index for the older books, and by a microfiche of books catalogued since 1982. The statistics for the collection are 134,000 monographs, 35,000 volumes of periodicals (c 842 current titles), and 10,800 microfilm reels of newspapers (22 current titles).

The East India Company's Librarians, and those appointed by the India Office, were all distinguished Sanskritists (who usually knew other languages) with the exception of one Islamic scholar, and so the collection of books in Indian languages is extensive (272,000 volumes), ranging from Assamese to Urdu. Within this collection there are a large number of rare pamphlets (Vernacular Tracts) and proscribed publications, which have been widely used by modern historians. The collection of periodicals amounts to some 6400 volumes (c 104 current titles). There are 27,800 volumes of manuscripts, including large collections in Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and Prakrit, and smaller groups in modern Indian languages. The IOL collections of books and manuscripts in South and South East Asian Languages are now administered in conjunction with the relevant sections of the British Library's Oriental Collections. Although the older collections remain separate, and are reached through separate catalogues, accessions since 1991 have been unified.

The collection of paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs is a jewel in the crown of the India Office collections. The paintings were amassed by the Company and the India Office to grace their offices, and included works by the eighteenth-century artists who visited India, notably John Zoffany, Thomas and William Daniel, and Francesco Renaldi, and many portraits of British administrators and army officers. British and Indian artists, professional and amateur, are all represented in the collection of 23,000 drawings. The sketches by professional artists were often the basis for later oil paintings, while the British amateur artists drew a wide variety of subjects as a record of the places they visited and as portraits of friends. The India artists display remarkable diversities of style. The oldest consists of the collection of Indian and Persian miniatures, based on the sixty albums filled by Richard Johnson and sold to the Company in 1807 by his widow. Then there are 5000 natural history drawings by India artists, the majority executed for Lord Wellesley (Governor-General 1798-1805). Thirdly there are the "Company paintings" (3500) made by Indian artists in a mixed British and Indian style for sale to the British. And finally there are 626 Indian popular paintings, mainly from Bihar or by Kalighat artists, Calcutta. Over three thousand prints, combined with the volumes of prints in the European books section, constitute a collection which is almost complete.

The photograph collection amounts to 225,000 prints and includes some of the earliest photographs taken in India. There are four main groups, one official, two professional and one amateur. The official group consists of the photographs taken by the Archaeological Survey of India. Then there are photographs

taken by professional photographers in India, e.g. Bourne and Shepherd, mainly of Indian scenery. Thirdly there are albums of photographs collected by three Viceroys of India, the 9th Earl of Elgin, Lord Curzon, and the Marquess of Reading. And finally a large number of amateur photographs, mostly of family and friends with some of homes and holidays.

Practical Information

Address: Oriental and India Office Collections
British Library
197 Blackfriars Road
London, SE1 8NG

The Oriental and India Office Collections are located at the junction of Union Street with Blackfriars Road. The nearest railway stations are Waterloo and Blackfriars. The London Underground lines serving these stations are the Northern and Bakerloo line (at Waterloo) and the Circle and District lines (at Blackfriars). Bus routes serving Blackfriars Road stop at The Cut. Other bus routes serve Waterloo Station, from where it is a short walk to OIOC.

General inquiries: phone: 44-171-412-7873
fax: 44-171-412-7641

Detailed inquiries: by post to the above address

E-mail: oioc-enquiries@bl.uk

IOR World Wide Web Page: <http://portico.bl.uk/oioc/records>

Important notice

The Oriental & India Office Collections of the British Library will be moving from Orbit House, 197 Blackfriars Road, to the new British Library building at St. Pancras, Euston Road, London NW1. THE MOVE OF THE OIC COLLECTIONS IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE OVER A 9 MONTH PERIOD BETWEEN SPRING 1998 AND SPRING 1999. The Reading Room at the Orbit House will remain open until the start of the move, but with some material being unavailable during the last 3 months. There will be no Reading Room Service from OIOC collections for a period of 4 months shortly after the start of the move. The new Oriental and India Office Reading Room in the St. Pancras building will open at the end of this closed period, but some material may still not be available to begin with. Full services

from all parts of the collections will be resumed within 5 months of the opening of the New Reading Room. Delays in answering inquiries--letter, fax or email, can be expected during this period. Requests for information regarding the move should be addressed to Move Information, Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, 197 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NG. Telephone: 0171 412 7811, Fax: 0171 412 7641, email<oioc-move@bl.uk>

Appendix

*India Office Records: Summary list of main clauses*¹⁸

A	Charters, Deeds, Statutes and Treaties, c 1500-c 1950
B	Minutes of the East India Company's Directors and Proprietors, 1599-1858
C	Council of India Minutes and Memoranda, 1858-1947
D	Minutes and Memoranda etc. of General Committees and Offices of the East India Company, 1700-1858
E	East India Company General Correspondence, 1602-1859
F	Board of Control General Records, 1784-1858
G	Factory Records, c 1595-1858
H	Home Miscellaneous Series, c 1600-c 1900
I	Records relating to other Europeans in India etc., 1475-1824
J	Haileybury Records, 1749-1857
K	Records relating to other Establishments, 1809-1925
	[L Departmental Records]
L/AG	Accountant General's Records, 1601-1974
L/E	Economic Department Records, 1786-1950
L/F	Financial Department Records, c 1800-1949
L/I	Information Department Records, 1921-49
L/L	Legal Adviser's Records, c 1550-c 1950
L/MAR	Marine Department Records, 1600-1879

¹⁸Taken from: M. Moir, *A general guide to the India Office Records* (London 1988, pp. 129-30).

L/MED	Medical Board Records, c 1920-c 1960
L/MIL	Military Department Records, 1708-1957
L/PARL	Parliamentary Branch Records, c 1772-1952
L/PO	Private Office Papers, c 1858-1948
L/PWD	Public Works Department Records, c 1839-1931
L/P&J	Public and Judicial Department Records, 1795-1950
L/P&S	Political and Secret Department Records, 1756-1950
L/R	Record Department Records, 1859-1959
L/SUR	Surveyor's Records, 1837-1934
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Commercial Ventures and Tour Bus Scholarship in Banaras

Ratnesh Pathak

Western scholars engaged in field work in South Asia frequently employ the services of local residents as research assistants. The assistants are useful in various capacities as translators, interpreters, secretaries, guides and informants. While assistants can prove to be invaluable, their participation in the process of scholarship is obscured, deemed as unobtrusive as a typist's hand. At most, an assistant's name may appear in the list of acknowledgments in the preface of a book. In this paper a research assistant steps out of the background of scholarship to give voice to his perspective on current work being done in his area and to offer suggestions for scholars.

I am a paan-chewing Banarsi Brahman and sometime research assistant to Western scholars. I am not a scholar, but I have been close enough to the process of scholarship to be concerned about some of the problems of field work in India. It pains me when I see scholars come here from great distances and at great expense to engage in research and leave having practically an imaginary picture of their subject, one which they could just as well have made up in their libraries at home. It is also quite amazing to see intelligent people pretending to be experts on their subjects after a few months, maybe a year, of fieldwork. It is especially maddening to me when some foreigner comes around acting superior, thinking that he or she knows all about some aspect of Banaras because he/she has read the authoritative works on the subject and has worked here. I have lived in Banaras all my life and have been curious about my own environment, but I would

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never dare to imagine that I had come to full knowledge of any aspect of Banaras. Great saints, poets, Sanskrit scholars, philosophers, ritual specialists who lived their lives and left their bodies in Banaras, even until their last moment of existence felt that they still had much to learn about Banaras, a city thick with every aspect of human existence, with history, culture, tradition, social change. This is not to say that I do not applaud the sincere attempts by scholars to understand and document elements of life here. Some of the work I have seen is most heartening. But I would like to offer a few observations and suggestions for scholars doing field work here which may be helpful in making them at least conscious of their approach and attitudes toward their subjects.

Ten years ago I had my first experience working as a guide for a Western-trained scholar. The scholar was in Banaras working on his dissertation. One evening during Ram Lila season, he was in my neighborhood trying to ask a group of children why the Ram Lila was not being performed. One of the children, knowing that I knew a bit of English, came running to my house and told me I was needed to help talk to a foreigner. I went out and in my halting English explained to the scholar that Ram Lila had been postponed due to rain. I invited him to my home and offered him tea. He was in Banaras to explore means of cultural transmission in India. He did not explain his project to me in those terms though. In the half-Hindi, half-English language of most Western scholars, he told me that he wanted to talk to children about the Ram Lila and what they thought about it. I had a mixed reaction to his project. The Banarsi side of me said, "Oh, what nonsense." This side of me, I think, came from that the inherited point of view that all white people are *angrez* (British).

My experience of Westerners had been limited. My community remembered the British as dirty meat-eating, toilet-paper-using rulers and robbers of Indian wealth. All white foreigners were regarded as British. I was born after independence and had not seen any of the ruling British. My first encounter with foreigners was seeing the hippies in Banaras. They fulfilled every Banarsi expectation of white people, adding to the list of defilements drugs and promiscuous behavior. Banaras gave these people the treatment they felt they deserved. Banarasis felt that all that the money they were spending so freely was actually money stolen from India by the British, so it was only right that we take as much of it back as we could. When the foreigners came snooping around asking stupid questions about how many people are at this festival, or why do you believe in Ram, then we simply gave them nonsense answers to their nonsense questions. Asking such

questions like "What do children think about Ram Lila" is like asking a rickshaw driver about the Hindu philosophy of life. The rickshaw driver only knows that he must peddle or he will not eat. He is concerned with tires and chains. He is inside life, dealing with it. Westerners who come to Banaras are outside life. They know nothing about life here. They are looking at it from the outside and asking such inappropriate questions. So, one side of me reacted to his inquiry negatively.

The other side of me, though, looked at the scholar and saw him as a person to be treated with respect. My father was a lawyer and often dressed in Western attire when going to court. I knew other professionals, including professors from Banaras Hindu University, where I was a graduate student, who had that certain distinguished air about them. I had an image in my mind of what a respectable and intellectual person should look like. This scholar fit into that image. He wore glasses, had a neatly-trimmed beard, was well-dressed and had the demeanor that I associated with respectability. His appearance, along with his stated purpose of conducting research, helped me to take his question seriously. He was, after all a foreigner who needed assistance understanding Banaras culture. I tried to be as helpful as possible and this led him to ask me to work for him as his assistant.

At this point, I had very little background in Western thinking. My education up to the master's level had been for the most part Indian. I had been exposed to snippets of Western literature, but not enough to influence me to any significant degree. Banaras and the Brahman community in which I lived and breathed was my chief reference point. This scholar began my education in the Western scholarly point of view by giving me an anthropology textbook to read. After working with him for over a year, he completed his research. Soon thereafter I became the research assistant for another scholar, who was working on the recitation of the *Durgasaptasati* in Vindhyaasini. After my time with that scholar, word got around that I was available as a research assistant and I have had an almost constant stream of research scholars with whom to work.

Fundamental Problems

After several years of working with scholars, I began to be familiar with their ideas and their approach to working on topics in India. What I found was that most Western scholars do not really come to India to know India, to partake of life here. Instead of talking to people, getting to know them as individuals, imbibing the sense of life here, many scholars are only anxious to get their data,

their raw material. It is like they are here on a commercial venture. They are here on business. In the competitive world of academics, scholars must constantly be producing material if they are to get tenure, if they are to stay ahead in the business. They have to collect their primary data, their raw material and rush it back home to that it can be manufactured for Western academic consumption. The raw material of South Asia will be transformed into better jobs and higher status for those who are skilled in both collection and the manufacture of trendy, fashionable articles. While current scholars look back on colonial commercial enterprise and production of oriental knowledge with contempt, they seem to be dead blind to the fact they themselves are engaged in a very similar venture. While they closely examine the assumptions of the British, they do not think that their own assumptions fit into the same category.

Scholars also seemed to be engaged in what I call tour-bus scholarship. They are always in a rush, wanting to keep on schedule, to see the things they came to see and get back home safely with their stories and souvenirs. They may come and be present for a few months, eat our food, do without toilet paper, etc., but they never truly fit into the rhythm of life here. Their minds stay in the air-conditioned comfort of the Western-manufactured academic bus. They see everything through the tinted windows of Western academic thinking. They rely heavily upon the academic guide books, the luggage they have brought with them, to help them interpret what they see here. The books of the leading Western scholars or Western-trained Indian scholars are always considered the authorities on Indian subjects. They have been given research grants and are obligated to produce research along the lines of their proposals. Their proposals follow the paths, the models, set out for them by the experts in their fields. So they look for those details of the Indian landscapes which will fit into their theoretical models, which correspond to the descriptions found in their guide books. This leads to all sorts of interesting problems.

I will not say, though, that all Western scholars fail so miserably in doing justice to their subject. I have met scholars, those whom I consider true scholars, who pursue every aspect of their topic to the fullest degree possible for them. They open their minds, dig out all the information they can on their subject, and will explore the tangled connections and side roads to which their research leads them. They are totally involved in their subject and they want to understand it and accurately describe it. Curiosity, love for their subject, is their primary motivation, not academic or commercial ambition. Of the other scholars, only a minority are

truly what I would call purely commercial. They come here with narrow goals and time limits; they want to find the material for a specific subject in order to publish an article on it. They are not at all interested in receiving all the information on a subject. They do not want to get involved. They only want enough for their story. An extreme case of commercialism is a researcher who came because he wanted write an article on the Ayodhya issue. He planned to sell the article to a magazine. He wanted to get the goods and be out of here in a month. Other scholars are semi-commercial. They also want to produce a publishable article or book, and they choose a subject for its marketability, but they are interested enough in their subject to become involved in it in a limited way, time permitting. But even with some of these people, the consumer-oriented mentality remains. They may be involved in the subject, but it is still something they want to possess and they will go to any means to get it. I once met two Scandinavian women who had come here to research the electric crematoriums. They seemed truly interested in the subject. When they found I had worked with a well-known professor, they told me that they were his students and persuaded me therefore to help them. They got their work done quickly and left. It was only when the professor returned to India that I learned they were not at all his students. I realized that I, as their local informer, was only a means to an end, nothing more. I questioned, also, if their interest in their subject, was only a means to an end as well. I wonder why some of these conniving and greedy people do not go into a more appropriate and lucrative business. Honestly, integrity, and patient plodding should be the stuff of scholarship, not commercialism. Academia should allow no room for wheeler-dealers; the serious scholars have enough problems with which to concern themselves.

A major and fundamental problem is that scholars are often blind-sighted by perceptions learnt in Western universities. Research scholars regard the successful professors of the West as being the sole possessors and dispensers of authoritative knowledge on South Asia. Even though scholars, up until this very day, regard the orientalist scholarship of colonial times as misinformed and misinforming, they do not acknowledge that the Western powers are still in the process of describing India according to Western models of knowledge. The early orientalists may have distorted Indian tradition by regarding Brahman *pandits* as the authorities on Indian culture, but today the situation is even worse. All of India, from *pandits* to *dalits*, is considered merely raw material available at cheap rates for use by Western-trained scholars. Indians, regardless of the extent of their learning and insight, are not considered authorities unless their thinking

corresponds to and has been accepted as valid by the Western scholarly community. The basic idea of Western scholars seems to be that Indian scholarship is an exaggerated description and poorly written. This may contribute, along with the Western superior attitude, to the view that the rest of the Indian population is also incapable of correct thinking. The opinions of local people who may actually be more knowledgeable about a certain topic, but who do not fit into the Western image of reliability, are disregarded.

An incident involving this favoritism served to convince me that I did not want to go on with my studies and complete a Ph.D.; I do not want to become involved in this near-sightedness. I had been working for some time with a research scholar and had thought that I could lead her to the most informed people in Banaras for her topic. I am a fifth generation Banarsi and know who is who here. But one day the scholar asked me to help prepare some festivities for a special guest. When I asked who the grand personage was, it was told me that it was a professor from the local university. Now, anybody who is anybody in Banaras knows that the professor, who is not a Banarsi, was not the one to consult on the topic. But in the Western scholar's eye, this professor had the proper credentials and was given far more respect than any of the more learned, but local, non-academic, non-degree-possessing informants.

There is more to this story. What happened, in the end, is that the Indian university professor, having helped the Western scholar with her work, tried to steal it. The knowledge that most Banaris would have given freely to a deserving person, was looked upon by this professor as an academic possession, something to be stolen and sold in the form of a book. He clearly had imbibed Western attitudes towards knowledge. The shallowness both of the Western scholar's reliance on academic credentials and the professor's idea of knowledge as a commodity with a price-tag, which I have seen repeatedly in Western scholar's greed over "their topic", does not suit the true pursuit of knowledge. Western academic insistence upon the production of privately-owned articles and books as indicators of academic success is blatantly a reflection of Western culture. A scholar who is working blindly out of such a culture, will never be able to describe Banarsi culture because he or she cannot think in terms of our culture. The value of a topic is seen by Western scholars only in terms of what sales, what is trendy in the current academic scene, not for what value it has on its own terms, in its own context.

Another distorting aspect of Western academic culture is the acceptance of texts as authoritative evidence. This problem

comes in two forms. One is the tendency to accept the latest, popular academic books and models on a subject, the latest word so to speak, as being at the apex of all accumulated knowledge and therefore the superior guide. I have seen it happen on multiple occasions that a scholar will come here, see an event, and think he knows all about it because he read about it in an authoritative book. Because he has read the authoritative and comprehensive book list on his subject, the scholar has a high regard for himself and his superior position. If a local informer tells him another story, he will think the informer is wrong or misguided. Scholars believe that whatever they have learned at Western universities and in current books is the best information and that what they are hearing here is second-rate material. For instance, I worked with a scholar who was working on the goddess Vindhyachal. The scholar heard references to the *Autsanasa Puran*, a text specifically about the goddess Vindhyachal and the geographical descriptions of Vindhya zone. The scholar had never heard of this text before coming to the field. As far as she knew, the text had never been translated into English, quoted or mentioned by any other scholar. So until she saw the original manuscript, she was very suspicious about the existence of such a text and the verses which were quoted from that text in various interviews and in the printed Mahatmya books on Vindhyachal. She thought the references to the text were fabrications of the local people.

A most unfortunate situation is when so-called authoritative books on a subject are full of misinformation or are biased in a certain direction. A scholar comes here with the books he or she has read as the basic ground of perception. He or she looks for a picture of reality which will correspond to his version of received truth. There is a tendency to read the interpretations of this received truth into basic observations and to deny validity to any evidence that might go counter to the desired picture. The previous works of other scholars can serve to seriously handicap one's ability to actually observe the present. This has been a problem to one extent or another with every scholar with whom I have worked. It can lead to a continuation and amplification of misinformation when the scholar refuses to see what is actually happening. Several scholars have come to Banaras to work on Hindu-Muslim conflict. According to the information they had received, they considered conflict as defining Hindu-Muslim relations in Banaras. When they were shown the silk industry, which has required ongoing Hindu-Muslim cooperation for centuries, they were not at all interested in having their notions disproved. They did not see this as a sign of cooperation and I doubt if they ever mentioned it in their work. Their attitude was

set. Another fact presented to the scholars interested in conflict was the popularity and importance of Banarsi saris. All over India they are considered to be special attire to be worn at important occasions, especially weddings. If Muslim-Hindu conflict was so deep-rooted and basic, why would Muslims put their hearts and livelihoods into making saris for Hindus and why would Hindus so value the saris made by Muslim hands? There was never an answer to this question by scholars. It did not fit into their received ideas of communalism.

Now, communalism is only one topic of current scholarship on South Asia, but it is a popular one. The most disturbing part of the situation in which people look for evidence of communalism is that the people who are involved in this kind of activity are intellectuals and they have the responsibility to give society a picture which is real and not based on propaganda of the mass media and the politics of their government. Scholars should try to examine the popular topics. Are the topics popular because they perpetuate negative images of India? Does not the West still consider itself superior to the East? If a focus is given to negative topics, even if it be to disprove them, does it detract from scholars' looking for the positive in a culture? Scholars sometimes fail to see that their topics have been to some extent decided for them by previous scholarship, previous perceptions and attitudes. Inaccuracies and misconceptions, having a long history, can be very deep-rooted.

This leads me to the second aspect of reliance on texts. It is not just works of recent Western scholarship which are the problem. The problem with basing information on texts could be said to go back as far as the Vedas. The problem goes back before the work done in the previous recent decades, to the work of colonialist scholars and to that of early translators of texts, and finally to the texts themselves. Fortunately, scholars are awakening to the problem of texts, but there is still a tendency to give extra weight to texts over other kinds of evidence. Texts like the *Manusmriti* are an element of my own life, but only one among many elements. When scholars ascribe authority to ancient texts on modern or ancient matters, they give the text an authority that it does not necessarily deserve. Things are constantly changing in society. Even going back to the time when the texts were first written, the rituals described in them had probably become outdated. Cultural practices take time, a long time, to develop and a much longer time to be codified. The codification, though, does not mean that the practice has become static. Though general practices and rituals were codified in the epic period, as time went by the texts were revered, but not because they corresponded to

everyday reality. Early Western scholars, though, regarded those same texts as being descriptive of Hindu religion and practices. They were translated and sometimes mistranslated and misinterpreted by Western scholars to give another layer of unreality to the situation. The scholarship on India for the recent decades has largely followed the tradition of relying on texts as authority and has absorbed much misinformation based on past scholarship. Non-textual and folk traditions were therefore largely ignored. A Western-produced book which has been a source book for several scholars with whom I worked, describes death rituals in Banaras according to ancient texts and totally neglects non-brahmanical death practices. Students who came to study death in Banaras were surprised to find things not as they had been described in the book. Another authoritative Western-produced book on the *Devimahatmyaya* talks only about textual goddesses. Recent work done on goddesses rely on this book as reference. It leaves out all the non-brahmanical goddesses which have their own independent identities. These goddesses may be of more ancient origin than the prominent brahmanical goddesses, but scholars either consider them recent adaptations of brahmanical goddesses, or simply ignore them. It seems sometimes that what is actually happening on the streets of India, in daily life, in a constantly changing society, is of little interest to scholars--perhaps because reality is much more difficult to grasp than a text. Textual studies may be difficult, but it is much more of a challenge to grasp a living culture. But the homage to texts is still a tendency of scholars. A certain attention to old texts is admirable, but excessive attention seems to lead to lack of interest in what is really India, what is really happening here now, what is truly important to the present generation of living beings in India.

Standard descriptions of ritual practice made by fly-by night observers or descriptions taken out of ancient texts do not fit the reality of life here. This is sometimes a disappointment to scholars. It has been the idea of the West that India is slow to change. Though unobservant scholars may not perceive them, changes happen all the time. For instance, when I and another scholar were working together, we started looking for the Lota-banta, a *mela* (festival) which was mentioned in several books about Banaras and which was a very popular *mela* in my childhood. I remembered the *mela* from my childhood. But when we went in search of Lota-banta, we found that it no longer exists. While it is assumed that Hindu practices, festivals and rituals are ancient and static, this case shows that within a matter of a few years a tradition may be neglected and disappear. It is living people who make festivals happen, who keep traditions alive, who constitute a culture.

Too often, though, scholars, are looking for a festival, a ritual, a practice and ignoring the actual people as if they were only pawns moved about in the ancient and fixed grid of tradition.

Things to Do Differently

What do I think scholars should do differently to avoid tour-bus scholarship and commercialism? I do not think I can offer many suggestions for the commercialism problem. That is a problem caused by the Western academic system which demands that scholars produce popular articles. If scholars want to be successful, they must play the game. But I think sometimes scholars allow ambition and personal status to get the best of them. Scholars can be mindful of the competitive system in which they exist, yet still try to retain some bit of humanity about themselves, some humility, some empathy for the people they study. This is the best way to avoid tour-bus scholarship. You need to get off the academic tour-bus when you come to do your field work. You may have been well-trained in current thought and methodologies of research in your subject, but that does not make you an expert on life in India. It makes you an expert only in your own Western academic context. When you come here, try to take the more humble attitude of a newcomer, a learner. There are many pitfalls in scholarship you can avoid if you try to be mindful that you are in a situation where you are not running the show, where your ideas are not the predominant ones, where you need to respect and respond to the society here instead of making it accommodate you and your project. Only then will you be able to make the first step toward truly getting involved in the local situation.

There should be some mental preparation before coming here. In my personal experience, most of the researchers I have worked with have suffered major disappointments when things do not work out for their projects in the way they planned. Sometimes the problem is that they have come here to work on something specific and they find themselves in the general. There is so much information with which they have to deal that it overwhelms their theoretical framework. Another problem is when people come with certain ideas and a fixed proposal, but find the situation to be not at all like they thought. So they are downcast and confused. Another problem is when scholars come here and cannot find enough information for the project on which they wanted to work. It has always been interesting for me to notice the reaction of the people with whom I work when they are faced with such difficulties. There is disappointment, depression, degrees of denial, and sometimes even a complete change in personality. A

friendly person can become a total jerk when his plans for his research fall apart. Scholars should come here prepared to be flexible. Talk to your advisors beforehand and have it understood that if the conditions here prove your project unworkable, that you will not be penalized for changing your direction in midstream. Prepare yourselves to be educated by the field. Try to have an open mind and be flexible. It will be much easier than trying to make the Indian environment conform to your expectations. Your work will also have a better chance of being authentic because you will be more likely to report what you see and not just what you hoped to see. You will also avoid much unnecessary mental anguish for yourself and your assistant.

You should also be prepared by having a firm grounding in the language of the area in which you will be working. It is ridiculous to come here to do research if practically all you can say is "What?" It is better to stay at home and study the language more, or come here for a year only to study the language. You would never expect someone to be an expert on England who did not know English. Neither will you receive much respect here if you have not taken the time or interest in learning the language properly. There are even problems for scholars who know standard Hindi. When they are conducting interviews, they phrase questions in very standard Hindi when the people they are interviewing speak Bhojpuri or Hindi. This causes a communication gap. Either the interviewee does not understand the question or does not want to answer in standard Hindi. Sometimes the research scholar keeps repeating the question because he has not received the answer he wants and it is very irritating to the one being interviewed. So you need to know the language and you need to know when you still need help in communicating. If you use an interpreter, it is best to let the interpreter ask the question, then wait patiently for the person being interviewed to fully answer the question. It is very distracting when the scholar keeps interrupting to ask what is being said and demands on-the-spot translation. It prevents a natural flow of expression and sometimes when the flow is interrupted the thought of the interviewee is lost. If you have a good interpreter, you can trust that his interpretation of the interviewee's answer is good. It is even better to have recording equipment also. You can record the interview by tape recorder or video recorder and go over it later. Simply explain the questions to your assistant before you go to the interview. Explain to the interpreter the reasons you are asking the questions and what information you are really trying to get at. Have the questions placed in order so that they will lead the conversation where you would like it to go. But be prepared in

all interviews for the conversation to take you into unexpected topics, topics that you might consider irrelevant to your work. Be patient. Not every interview will produce jewels of information for you. Do not be obnoxious by trying to shake answers out of people. Always be polite and the people might let you come back a second time and talk to them.

It is important not to offend people. Scholars should try to learn about the social etiquette of their area. They should especially realize that just because they are white and having money and education, does not guarantee that they will be welcome at everyone's doorstep. Remembering this, they should take great pains to be respectful of local people and of their biases, customs, schedules. I have heard that few scholars are given lessons on these things at their universities. If you have had no lessons in day-to-day proper behavior, you should ask local people to give you instructions before you set out in your work. Even then, there are many things that people will not say to your face. Many people still regard all white people as *angrez*. Once I went with a scholar to interview a *sadhu*. We tried to introduce ourselves to him, but he immediately put forward in perfect English "Are you a veg or non-veg? Do you eat beef?" The scholar admitted to being meat-eater and the *sadhu* refused to talk to him. Another scholar wanted to interview someone named Brahmacharyaji who was supposed to be an expert in that the recitation of *Durga Saptasati*. We tried to interview him several time, but each time he sent us away without explanation. One day, we were having lunch in a building next to the recitation place where he was giving his discourse. He mentioned in his talk that he hated the West and Western people. Many foreigners are not accustomed to reverse discrimination and it does not even occur to their minds as a possibility.

For instance, scholars are not aware that many people are very offended and disgusted when foreigners walk in on the performance of religious rituals. They will not say anything to you, though. They may even politely say that it is fine for you to go in if you ask them, but this may not be the truth. And the priest who is busy performing the ceremony and the participants may not like your presence at all. It is best if you stand to the side at some distance and watch the affair and not bother people with questions. Most people do not like to be questioned during a ritual or a festival. I have seen scholars try to barrage people with questions immediately after a ritual is over. They do not realize that usually people have things to do after the ritual or that they are anxious to go home. It is best to wait until later to go to peoples' homes and ask questions about the ritual.

Learning about the daily routines and schedules can serve you well. For instance, you might not have a good interview or be able to see the manuscript for which you are searching if you go to someone's home at the wrong hour. In the morning someone may be having their meal or doing *puja*. In the afternoon many people are napping and do not want to be disturbed. You need to find out about the schedule people keep in the area. Schedules change according to the season. In Banaras in the summer people work in the morning and evening and during the daytime they sleep. In winter they shift to coming out late in the morning and finishing social obligations early in the evening. All this needs to be taken into consideration. It is good to make appointments ahead of time, but do not be disappointed if at the time you arrive you find that there are other quests at the house. Simply sit and talk a while and set up a time to come back later if forcing an interview would interrupt the atmosphere of the moment.

Some scholars are so caught up in their own agendas and are so pressed for time, that they set for themselves a very rigid schedule. They want to plan things far in advance, line up several interviews and appointments in one day and set very specific times for appointments. Some are so demanding and pushy that they have even tried to interrupt people doing their morning *puja*. People are very offended by such behavior. Being so rude and clumsy in a culture in which you are trying to obtain answers will not work to your benefit. You will get *taalu* answers. *Taalū* is a term we apply to those situations where people say things just to get rid of people. They may be brief, curt answers or absolutely stupid or wrong answers. But they are not the answers you want to get. But they are answers appropriate for tour-bus scholars who do not have the time to be polite and respectful. Unfortunately, some scholars do not realize that this is an important part of scholarship. They do not teach courses in appropriate behavior in college. It is a sad fact that university education leaves out much about the culture you are studying, as well as how you should learn to move about in that culture in an appropriate manner. Some scholars are absolutely horrified to find that there are few Western toilets and hot showers in Banaras. There are many other things of which they are unaware and for which they are psychologically unprepared. There are many things which they simply cannot understand even after receiving what seem to local people as very logical, reasoned explanations. Their own assumptions and prejudices cloud their entire vision. Their problems adjusting to the conditions in which they find themselves lead them to have a negative view of the area and this negative view creeps into their work in various ways.

I have seen various Western biases exposed in different ways. The most blatant expression of prejudice came one day when one scholar asked another what he was working on. The scholar replied that his work was on the poetry of Ravidas, often referred to as Raidas, a member of a *chamar* or untouchable caste. The other scholar replied, "Oh, you are working on that type of people." His attitude was very condescending. Scholars should go beyond this type of prejudice. Other scholars have taken the attitude that Hindu-Muslim tensions indicate a very backward society. They read this interpretation into the situation without stopping to consider racial situations in their own country. I have asked them to think about answers for why some white people do not like black people. You will probably not get some profound answer such as it is a matter of conflicting political interests. A prejudiced person does not have to have a reason. That is the whole point: prejudice is unreasonable. But prejudice is universal. It may be backward, but it is not at all confined to India. I try to make scholars aware of their own national, cultural and racial prejudices.

A major point of contention I have had with several scholars is over the gender issue. The scholars come here and want to condemn every aspect of women's position in Indian society. They have a very negative, very judging attitude. They do not want to consider the positive aspects of women's lives here. The women of India do not all spend their life in misery. There are some abuses, and things can be improved, but there are many good things in the lives of women. But scholars devote little time to looking at what is positive in women's lives. They focus on the negative, always comparing the position of Indian women to the position of Western women. The negative aspects get exaggerated. There is also little reflection on the problems modern Western women have which Indian women do not have. For instance, the difficulties of raising a family alone, which many Western women face, is rarely known to Indian women. Scholars sometimes get upset at Indian men like myself who try to explain the positive side of things. There is no respect for our culture as a culture which has produced many happy living beings who live satisfied lives. Scholars should be able to step back and observe a culture and try to see why things are the way they are without pronouncing judgment according to their own ideologies. There is no point in venting one's anger at one's assistant or informant. It is inappropriate. Whereas in the past religious differences gave colonial bigots excuse to call Indians heathens, now such topics as feminine rights serve to issue similar judgments. Scholars should not try to be preachers.

Conflicting values and social practices can keep scholars at a distance from their subjects. While I was not the subject, but the research assistant, I saw that how some scholars treated me was a reflection of how they would deal with their subject. Scholars wanted me to conform to their program in ways that were very strange to me. I usually obliged them until it became unbearable, as in the following case: A certain scholar, before employing me, asked me to sign a written contract with her binding me in specific terms under detailed articles as her research assistant. I did not feel good about it from the very beginning. For one thing, I do not like to consider myself an employee. I like to get involved with the scholarship, learn something myself from it, be a friend and help to the scholar. I like to think they are sharing their research grant with me because I helped with the project, not because I was their employee, their servant. But some scholars cannot understand this. They want a strictly formal arrangement. In this case, according to the contract, I was allowed to have one hour for lunch each day. If we were in the field and lunch was not taken, the hour could be taken as an early leave for that day. One day we were trying to interview a group of pilgrims from South India. When we went to their lodging place, they were out sightseeing. When they returned, they immediately went to have lunch. The scholar decided that I should go home for lunch and then come back and do the interview. So I came home, had lunch, and went back after 45 minutes. By the time I had returned, the pilgrims were gone sightseeing again. This is where she showed me her imperialistic attitude and made a nonsense comment that it took me a very long time to have my lunch. I showed her that the clock and even after that she kept blaming me for not getting an interview with the pilgrims. This was the time when I read the paragraph of the contract and reminded her about her order for me to go home and have lunch. I had not even taken my full hour for lunch. She was still upset. This situation led me to a bitter situation, when for the first time in my life I left research work in the middle of an unfinished project. I decided never to work with her again which was unfortunate and let her to go back to the States with an unfinished project.

The imposition of this very systematic relationship seemed to me as the scholar's way of expressing a social arrogance. If this was her way with me, if she treated me in such a condescending manner, I doubt if she would have had much respect for the pilgrims, the subjects of her study. She would have tried to impose her own cultural norms on them. It is best that she went back home. Scholars should not try to bring their culture with them when they come to India. Leave your contracts in your offices.

Try to get a sense of how we do things here. A nod of the head is all it takes to make an agreement. A little knowledge of the culture and of the people will help you learn who can rely on and who you should not involved with. A contract or other similar impositions and their indication of social bias and commercialism will only keep you apart from the culture.

Following the few suggestions I have given will not guarantee successful field work, but I believe that it will help you take the first steps toward departing from the Western academic tour-bus and entering the field with an open mind and humble attitude. The field is wide open to those who would leave behind their presuppositions and agendas. Let down your barriers and allow yourself to be embraced by all your find here. You cannot pretend to remain an unbiased observer, so it is better that your biases are tempered by an intimate involvement in your subject. You will never understand a culture by imposing your ideas upon it. You will never understand someone by handing them a questionnaire to fill out. Let them tell their own stories, not just the stories that will prove your theoretical model. Your work will be enriched and you will give an authentic representation of your subject. We will be happy and honored to welcome all sincere seekers. For these scholars there is always plenty to see. The most stupid thing I ever heard a scholar say is "Banaras is over-worked," meaning that enough research had been done on Banaras. Being born and raised in Banaras, I myself can claim to know only ten or twenty percent of Banaras. The problem is that the scholar that made such a statement was thinking in commercial, tour-bus terms. He had read the academic tour-guide versions of Banaras and was ready to move on to something else. He needed to find something new to produce for the academic market. If you are this kind of scholar, please stay home. Otherwise, you can look me up anytime. I will be happy to discuss your project with you. I live at Lolark Kund.

Book Reviews

Contesting the Nation, David Ludden, ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996. Pp. 346.

I concur with David Ludden who states it is "obvious that college teachers do not have good enough books at hand for teaching about the recent history of political and communal conflict in India" (p.vii). *Contesting the Nation* challenges this paucity of prose by adopting an interdisciplinary approach toward the analysis and interpretation of Hindu nationalism. The success of this approach in understanding the complexities of Hindu Nationalism is based not only on its interdisciplinary approach (i.e., it contains perspectives by anthropologists, historians, political scientists, ethnomusicologists, and religious studies experts), but also on its comparative methodology.

The methodology adopted in *Contesting the Nation* is comparative both spatially and temporally. For example the essays in book's first section (entitled "Mobilizing Hindutva"), analyze Hindu nationalism in relationship to the broader context of contemporary Indian politics. Victoria Farmer and Zoya Hasan achieve this methodological end by examining the acclivity of Hindu nationalism in comparison to the decline of Congress hegemony, while Richard Davis and Amrita Basu's contributions examine Hindu nationalist strategies for maintaining cohesion and combating adversaries within the context of electoral politics.

Contesting the Nation's second section (entitled "Genealogies of Hindu and Muslim"), analyzes Hindu nationalism in relationship to the broader history of Indian politics. Tanika Sarkar and Mushirul Hasan offer interpretations that "disrupt" the understanding of "Hindus" and "Muslims" as historically stable descriptive categories, while Peter Manuel and William Pinch illustrate how it is specious to make historical distinctions between "Hindus" and "Muslims" as separate communities.

The third section of Ludden's book (entitled "Community and Conflict"), combines spatial and temporal comparative methodologies to explore how Hindu nationalism "contests" the nation. Sandria Freitag, drawing on examples from the 19th and 20th centuries, illustrates the alienation of the state from society in India. Based on this alienation, she shows how sites of struggle in the public sphere have been opened and exploited by Hindu

nationalists wanting to win elections and public opinion. Richard Fox argues that reified communal identities (i.e. Hindus and Muslims), which often form the basis of conflict between communities, are the product of a modernity which produces antagonism by obliterating the pre-modern world while simultaneously failing to fulfill its promise of economic prosperity. Peter van der Veer criticizes the standard narration of Indian riots, arguing that it is mistaken and misguided to treat this form of violence as a mask for material conflict. He poignantly makes the case that violence is a total phenomena in which the distinction between secular and religious is particularly tenuous. In contrast, Sumit Sarkar argues the rise of Hindu nationalism results from a perceived threat to upper caste hegemony. For Sarkar, Hindu nationalism represents an ideology of reaction or conservatism constructed against chaotic threats by women, tribals, peasants, and lower castes.

Contesting the Nation (unlike Fox's modernity) produces precisely what it promises: an interdisciplinary text that addresses the history of political and communal conflict in India. The text's adoption of a comparative approach gives it a unique depth and breath of understanding. However, the text's depth and breath is diminished by the fact this approach is not extended to the internal politics of Hindu nationalism. Richard Davis attempts to appropriate this perspective by examining conflict between Hindu nationalists over the Rath Yatra's hard-core and soft-core imagery, but ultimately concludes that "religious vision and political agenda [are] united" (p. 51). There is real and caustic conflict between those Hindu nationalists who view their agenda as political and those who view it as religious (a point cryptically acknowledged by van der Veer [p. 253]). An acknowledgment of this conflict would lead to the understanding of Hindu nationalist politics as being not only about contesting the nation (or rather, as Basu and Hasan argue, the hegemony of Congress), but also about maintaining cohesion among Hindu nationalists who contest one another--a point, this otherwise insightful book, fails to address.

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Telling the Truth about History, Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob. New York, London: Norton, 1994. Pp. 322.

The authors' main effort is to recover a sense of history devoid of the intense relativism of much of current thought, especially, for them, that of post modernism. But at the same time they have no desire for historical theory to reach back, nostalgically, to what they call in the first chapter "the heroic model of science" (p. 15). Their theory is to their credit laid out plainly enough, but it really emerges in the first and final parts of the book. My first observation (not really an objection per se, since one learns much, for instance, about nineteenth-century outlooks on both science and history) is that much of the middle part is dedicated more to descriptive than theoretical concerns and seems to go adrift of their intent as expressed in the first chapter. My second observation is that when they do present their theory, which argues for an acceptance of what they call "practical realism," there is a significant amount of repetition that actually undermines the credibility of their argument (as do some of their descriptive materials in the middle), particularly with regard to their presentations of some of the philosophers of science, notably Karl Popper.

They state their thesis very clearly in the introduction: "Our aims in this book are simple and straightforward but also ambitious. We want to provide general readers, history students, and professional historians with some sense of the debates currently raging about history's relationship to science, truth, objectivity, postmodernism, and the politics of identity. We chart a course of reflection on these issues that we hope will provide new answers" (pp. 9-10). In their next chapters they focus upon "The Heroic Model of Science," "Scientific History and the Idea of Modernity," and so on. But it is not until their last two chapters entitled "Truth and Objectivity" and "The Future of History" that they fully focus on what they mean by "providing new answers," which I shall point out, are not all that new; nor are they ambitious having been argued (unconvincingly) throughout this century.

Their task, as above, is that of finding some kind of middle ground between the excessive (and naive) appeal to objectivity that defines "heroic science," which they associate with the nineteenth century, and the radical relativism that they particularly equate with post-modernist thought. They find their central ground in the

position that they call "practical realism," and which they feel has the capacity to bridge the gap between science and history: "The practical realist is pleased to have science as an ally, because the study of nature suggests that having knowledge of a thing in the mind does not negate its being outside of the mind behaving there as predicted" (p. 250). As an aside here, they of course look at Berkeley's "idealism" in a footnote on the same page. They then later cite Hume as denying "the knowability of things outside ourselves, even of memory as an indicator of past experience" (p. 258). It is beyond the scope of this review to argue this point. However, if they are in effect talking about the "thing in itself," then they would be more accurate to introduce Kant's distinction between "noumenon" and "phenomenon," which goes along with Hume's argument that no one denies that there is something "out-there," but that there is always a perceptual grid that mediates our understanding of "noumenon." I bring this in now not as an objection, because I think from what they say later they would not basically disagree with this point. But I do object to a lack of precision--especially for historians talking about truth and history--in making proper distinctions among Berkeley, Hume and Kant. In fact, the above quote (p. 250) does not deny this assertion about the distinction of "having knowledge of a thing in the mind" (phenomenon) and of something's "being outside of the mind" (noumenon). The problem in their assertion (which I address later in this review) lies in the last part of that passage: "behaving there as predicted."

Recognizing the distinction between noumenon and phenomenon, they acknowledge that what is now called for is a "qualified objectivity" that "must come to terms with the undeniable elements of subjectivity, artificiality, and language dependence in historical writing" (p. 259). For them, historical objectivity is perceived as "an interactive relationship between an inquiring subject and an external object" (p. 259). As stated in the introduction, their project is indeed ambitious! So the question goes: how do we get on with the prospect of "coming to terms." Their answer is: "Rather than grounding truth on first principles, pragmatists make truth's attainment a matter of self-correcting endeavors where any factual claim can be called into question, although not in the manner of the relativist who calls all propositions into question, all at once" (p. 285). The statement sounds suspiciously like what Popper has called for; even in their concluding remark they state: "Telling the truth takes a collective effort." Popper used the word "decision," a choice associated with his sense of "intersubjective agreement" that of course involves a collective effort, as noted in his *Logic of Scientific Discovery*, just as

does Kuhn's sense of "paradigm" (for which he advocated in *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*), and Fish's notion of an "intellectual community" (as developed in *Is There a Text in this Class*, and *Doing What Comes Naturally*).¹⁹ The authors under review seem to think that through such collective efforts there may evolve "a multiplicity of accurate histories" that "do not turn accuracy into a fugitive from a more confident age" (p. 262). They want to "put it all together," as it were, the past and the future. Their "ambitious" project wherein they hope to "chart new answers" sounds (again suspiciously) like Carr's statement in *What is History*: "What is history?, is that it is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past."²⁰

"Practical realism" simply allows men and women to "follow their different trajectories as that event's consequences concatenate through time" (p. 262). This is an old appeal that is most notably associated with the so-called "neo-Aristotelianists" of the "Chicago School."²¹ Pluralism is ultimately a position that is grounded in what is normally referred to as "foundationalism," or, as Popper called it in, among other works, *The Open Society and*

¹⁹All such theories are well-known and pervade the works of the above authors: Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965). Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970); Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980), and *Doing what Comes Naturally*, (Durham: Duke Univ. Press), 1989

²⁰Edward Hallet Carr, *What is History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 35.

²¹The "Chicago school," or "neo-Aristotelians," as they preferred to call themselves, are well-known for their adherence to the principle of pluralism. I would direct the reader, however, because of the content of this review, to R. S. Crane's *The Critical and Historical Principles of Literary History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press., 1967). In particular, see some of his opening statements about history in general, pp. 3-4, which confront some of the issues raised in this review (e.g., "collective differences."). Our authors closely parallel Crane's appeal to pluralism in their observation: "We want to move beyond this kind of skepticism [relativism] while still embracing a pluralistic and complex understanding of ourselves as Americans and Westerners" (p. 8).

its Enemies, "essentialism,"²² which for him involved an act of recovery, just as it does for our three authors: "To interrogate a text is to open up the fullness of meaning within" (p. 267). And later, "This effort to control the collective memory necessarily affronts those committed to recovering [my italics] the fullness of the past record" (p. 297). This is hardly a new argument, and one usually finds it as a response to the "anything goes" position. But as, say, Fish and Kuhn know all too well: How, when we allow subjectivity in through the back door, can we establish this kind of pseudo-objectivity, this mish-mash of communal standards and Kant's noumena that provides the tools that allow us to discern "recovery" from "covering over" with our own biases? Can we show evidence of communal or even transdisciplinary standards, particularly in the humanities (or in the sciences for that matter)? Speaking from my own specialty in critical theory, the answer is decidedly that we can't, which has compelled people like Fish, Rorty, Putnam, Quine (and myself) to advance the position of "anti-foundationalism." The program our three authors propose sounds fine on first glance--something between rigid dogmatism and radical relativism. The problem is, ultimately, what do they have to show for a positive need to adopt their position and once again become involved in questions of "recovery," which drove philosophers such as the above four and many literary critics to reject their wished-for proposal? Fish, for instance, does believe in the power of community standards to govern as, for instance, does Goodman (see below), but it is just this belief that has led Goodman to reject the very idea of truth itself for "rightness," as opposed to our authors' contention that "knowledge seeking involves a lively, contentious struggle among diverse groups of truth-seekers" (p. 254). Goodman, in the same breath, also rejects the very notion of "knowledge" for that of "understanding."²³

I will briefly re-introduce Goodman a bit later. However, right now I want to touch on the middle part of the book under review, and focus particularly on the authors' presentations of Popper and post-modernism in order to show why their position

²²Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press), see in particular his chapter 11, the first in Vol. 2, entitled "The Aristotelian Roots of Hegelianism," pp. 1-26, and especially when he defines such terms as "essentialism" and "nominalism," pp. 18-19.

²³I am referring here to Nelson Goodman's and Catherine Z. Elgin's collaborated book, *Reconceptions in Philosophy*, (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co, 1988), and to which I shall return later (see fnnt. #11).

(however nice sounding) leads, particularly if there is not some recourse to Popper's falsification program (which rejects the inductive principles implicit in *Telling the Truth about History* for deductive systems), to a cacophony of tongues. They mistakenly miss this point about deductive systems in their discussion of Popper. They are right in that he did observe "the rules of logic," but he also realized that within the very machinery of this system lies an act of "decision." Moreover, Popper's rules were those of formal, not informal, logic and had little to do with "verification" (p. 170) as the authors maintain. (Furthermore, Popper himself associated "verification" with induction--a process he totally rejected.) Also, Popper was keenly aware of the uncertainty of human decision, of human belief, which led him to propose the principle of falsification and to reject that of verification.²⁴ His position was the opposite of our authors, who comment that "when the scientist speaks, whatever the vernacular, his words are really about the eternally true, or the eternally unfalsifiable in Popper's important modification" (p. 170). While there certainly was a Kantian aspect to Popper's thinking, his own defense of "falsification" and "fallibilism" at least makes the above statement about his belief in the "unfalsifiable" quite "fallible" and, at worst, unfortunate for those who perceive their roles as "truth seekers." Certainly, one can add that Popper, "being outside the mind" of these authors, is not "behaving as predicted." If Popper is assuredly "outside the mind," and we are to judge by the authors' analysis of his positions, then this book has eluded the predictability factors our historians seek as a means of ferreting out a "qualified" objective analysis (in this case, of Popper). Here it is important to note that their reading is not just a pluralist one that traces the differing trajectories of men and women through time, but rather it is simply wrong and flies in the face of Popper's life-held commitment to falsification and, again, fallibility.

I have other examples of erroneous history-making here with regard to Popper but will leave it with one more example. The authors of *Telling the Truth about History* state: "Buoyed by Popper and his associates, the latter sometimes called logical positivists, these philosophers taught that only a positive--and we would argue an essentially ahistorical--understanding of science could reinforce the barrier of reason in a century where reason had been in short supply" (p. 167). In fairness to the authors, they do

²⁴Again, see Popper's *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, and in particular, chapter one, "A Survey of Some Fundamental Problems," pp. 27-49, for his discussion of falsification, verification, induction, and positivism.

add the footnote that "In the interest of brevity we have necessarily elided the differences between Popper and many logical positivists" (p. 167). What could they possibly mean by "elided"? Throughout his career Popper was consistently at odds with logical positivists in general and those at the Vienna circle in particular. Nor, for that matter, did he ever aim for something "positive" but in fact, along with "fallibilism," introduced the concept of "negativism," which led him to conclude: "It may be that a theory makes assertions only about its potential falsifiers. (It asserts their falsity.) About the 'ermitted' basic statements it says nothing. In particular, it does not say that they are true."²⁵ Small wonder, then, that in *The Open Society and its Enemies*, he writes, in the chapter "Has History Any meaning": "Although history has no ends, we can impose these ends of ours upon it; and although history has no meaning, we can give it a meaning."²⁶ Somehow, his statement comes close to sounding like some of the quotes provided from the book under review, though without the claims of recovery and so forth. And for our authors who seek a "kind" of objectivity, perhaps they could consider replacing the criterion of "brevity" for that of accuracy.

In this regard before leaving the world of science (with Popper being a kind of hangover from heroic science), I want to make a few remarks about Nelson Goodman, especially with regard to his book *Reconceptions in Philosophy*, written with Catherine Z. Elgin, because their task parallels that of the authors of *Telling the Truth about History*. Basically, Goodman and Elgin's arguments are much like those found in Goodman's other well-known texts (for instance, see *The Ways of Worldmaking*, and *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*)²⁷. He is an "internalist," just as Putnam is an "irrealist" and Rorty an "anti-foundationalist." All stress that there is "no

²⁵Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, p. 86

²⁶Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Vol. 2, "Has History Any Meaning," p. 278. In the same book see pp. 374-376 for his discussion of fallibilism and the growth of knowledge.

²⁷My interest in the Goodman/Elgin book relates to the effort to "reconceptualize," in their case philosophy. But our authors are themselves attempting to reconceptualize, in their case history, with the intent the same, only differing subject matter. What is of interest for this review is how opposite the directions they take.

ontological groundfloor independent of our theorizing."²⁸ The parallel I wish to draw between the Goodman/Elgin book and the one under review is that both works not only seek to redirect our thinking from the "old ways" (for Goodman the misconceptions in traditional philosophy--read "externalists"?), but also realize very disparate strategies. For the sake of brevity, we can sum up the Goodman/Elgin position in one passage: "When truth, certainty, and knowledge--all confined to declarative symbols--are supplanted by rightness, adoption, and understanding, some further notions must be stretched, or else be supplemented or replaced by others that cover the same wider range. Belief, doubt, evidence, probability, confirmation, for example, commonly have to do solely with what statements say; we do not, in ordinary discourse, give evidence for or against, or confirm or disconfirm, a way of seeing or a scheme of classification."²⁹ Of course, the positions advanced by Goodman/Elgin and the book under review are opposing, (with the latter clearly arguing for truth, a qualified certainty, and knowledge) claims already explored with regard to Popper (and addressed below with regard to the post-structuralists and post-modernists), that must still be further qualified beyond their own assertions of knowledge and truth, and in such a way that Goodman's appeal to "rightness," "adoption" and "understanding" cannot salvage. But I asked myself as I read Goodman, could he, by giving precise examples, show why "rightness," "adoption," and "understanding" can and should replace the older misconceptions (for him) of "truth," "certainty," and "knowledge." We find him silent on this question and are left hanging. Our three authors have tried to address this point in the middle part of their book (first in the instance of "heroic science" and now in a further instance of the radical relativists); however, they ultimately bring their own theories into question, and certainly do not point up Goodman's sense of "worldmaking" and my own of "covering over." Can they ever show convincingly that we can ever know when we are actually recovering or when we are covering over the past? In short, the authors of the book under review underscore the very problem of "doing history" while simultaneously acknowledging one's own subjectivity or historicity. For this reason alone, they shed light on why, like in Popper's view, history has no meaning. Perhaps Goodman made the right

²⁸The phrase is that of Hilary Putnam, as given in his Foreword to Nelson Goodman's *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983), p.xiv.

²⁹Goodman/Elkin, p. 165.

decision when, after having made the above proclamation on how to reconceive philosophy, he remembered to follow Hamlet's advice and let the rest remain silent.

We are now brought to the opposite extreme from the heroic scientists to the radical relativists, and in particular, the post-modernists. What our authors have done is conflate post-modernism with post-structuralism. There is a meaningful difference. Post-structuralists work with a rhetorical mode of maneuvers. They are derivatives, actually, of the American New Criticism, as well as French structuralism, and as such should and must be considered as a "formalist" school of critical thought. Post-modernists, while incorporating something of, say, deconstruction, range further in their focusing upon cultural operations and have much in common with the American New Literary Historicism. Now, I have no objections to our authors' following observation: "Postmodernists have collapsed the tension between the conviction that objects have an integrity that can sustain itself through external investigation and the awareness of the snares and delusions that accompany efforts to make sense of objective reality" (pp. 257-58). But I do have problems when they add: "Postmodernists have gone one step further and give a new fluidity to words by denying that there is any bonding between the word signifier, and the object signified [an idea inherent and long recognized as de Saussure's "insight" is that words relate to words and not to objects]. Without this bonding, they say, it is theoretically possible to have an infinite number of meanings to any sentence. With rapturous playfulness, they have spoken of words "dancing, cascading, colliding, escaping, deceiving, hiding, leaving less imaginative word users to wonder why they bother with them at all" (pp. 267-68).

But, on the other hand Fedric Jameson tells us in his Foreward to Jean-Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*: "What is most striking in Lyotard's differentiation between story-telling and "scientific" abstraction is its unexpected modulation towards a Nietzschean thematics of history. In effect, indeed, for Lyotard the fundamental distinction between these two forms of knowledge lies in their relationship to the retention of the past."³⁰ But the "past" is not in question, and

³⁰Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, Vol. 10, 1989), p. xii. The book is part of an ongoing series concerning theory and history of literature, which, again, has little to do with deconstruction. While I certainly disagree with their "eliding" for, of course, "brevity," post-

culture as an imperative is certainly not "dancing, cascading, colliding, escaping." Even Derrida, with his sense of difference is not quite this hyperbolic. But then, while he would admit of such opportunities, Derrida is considered a post-structuralist rather than a post-modernist. Which brings me to one final example, where they write: "Postmodernists, many with debts to French theorists, have since joined the ranks of skeptics. In their deconstructive enterprise, they have fastened onto the irreducible element of arbitrariness in the production of all knowledge, going on from this observation to question the capacity for human beings to understand anything outside of their own closed systems of communication" (p. 244). And there you have it--a total conflation of deconstruction with post-modernism. Perhaps once again in the interests of "brevity," they have sacrificed accuracy by "eliding" the post-modernists with the deconstructionists. Not only that, they have also misrepresented the deconstructionists in and of themselves, regardless of the appeal to elision, in their unwitting and ironic obedience to Derrida's "sovereign law of sliding." In fact, it was DeMan, talking about one's "closed system of communication" who proclaimed in his analysis of Shelley's *Triumph of Life* that this fragmented drama reveals that "to monumentalize this observation [i.e., about a closed system of communication] into a method of reading would be to regress from the rigor exhibited by Shelley which is exemplary precisely

structuralisms and post-modernism, when they do focus on Lyotard, briefly, they also don't quite get right what Jameson more accurately perceives in that influential post-modernist's efforts. Compare his statement with their following one about Lyotard's reaction to history: "Like Nietzsche, the postmodernists want to use history against itself, to attack the certainties and absolutes that provided the foundation for positivism and for the human sciences that emerged in the course of the nineteenth century" (p. 210). Their statement is far too reductionistic and certainly does not fit the model of a "truth finder." Also, compare Jameson's above observation about storytelling and theirs: "When storytellers narrate in person, they can change the details or modify their meaning every time they give a rendition of their story. An oral tradition is almost always a work of successive retellings of a past event, each narrator transmitting and refashioning the tales that form the collective memory. In written history, the text itself becomes an object with properties of its own" (p.266). Theirs is simply one more call to the univocal reading of the written text as a "thing outside the mind" that can "behave" as the historian predicts.

[my italics] because it refuses to be generalized into a system."³¹ Perhaps one could (and can) show that DeMan is involved here in self-refutation; but then isn't the historian also making claims of recovery and qualified that subjectivize the very schools, systems, and figures introduced to confirm his/her tenets?

Obviously, there are considerable problems with historical theory that no amount of short changing can solve. In a way I'm reminded of the old phrase: "she's just a little bit pregnant." No, it can't work both ways. In the instance of this book in particular, and historical theory in general, the law of the excluded middle that is central to formal logic applies here: One can talk about trying to be objective, a discarded notion for decades except among the critically inert or the naïve realists; or one can adopt something akin to Goodman's position or some other forms of anti-foundationalism, some of which do claim that we can talk only about what our systems allow us to "think," and which can at least lead to a sense of consistency not found in this book. Perhaps Goodman was right and concurs with my assessment of *Reconceptions*: preach but don't practice. In years of teaching critical theory and meta-criticism, I have found that the one (say, preaching, which always comes first) inevitably undermines the other (practicing) when combined in a single article or book. And this is the case in *Telling the Truth about History*. Perhaps they should have taken Goodman's lead and retitled the book *Telling the Rightness about History as a Process of Adoption through which Comes a Communal and Relative Understanding in the Ways we Create our Disparate Worlds*. But then, that title would not fit on a single line. My own feeling about their work is that they are trying to make a pitch for the teaching of "multiculturalism," and of course by means of the same kinds of tools historians bring into their lectures, including a sense of penetrating to the core or essence of the work. By presenting themselves as "truth seekers," they reveal how deeply engaged they are in the process of recovering what is really there, except this time the object of their investigation (read "the politics of identity") relates to the subject of multiculturalism rather than the supremacy of Anglo dominance. But then, for Popper, as for Goodman and me, this is business as usual in the history department; or, we can say, along with the structuralists, that while the form might change (from Anglo- to multi-culturalism), the condition remains the same. We forget, as DeMan would have us believe, and then start the same process all

³¹Paul DeMan, *Deconstruction and Criticism*, in "Shelley Disfigured" (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), p. 69.

over again: "And to read is to understand, to question, to know, to forget, to erase, to deface, to repeat that is to say, the endless prosopopoeia by which the dead are made to have a face and a voice which tells the allegory of their demise and allows us to apostrophize them in our turn. No degree of knowledge can ever stop this madness, for it is the madness of words."³²

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³²DeMan, p. 68.

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