ONE

INTRODUCTION

IN THE PREMODERN STATE, in Europe as elsewhere, power was made visible through theatrical displays, in the form of processions, progresses, royal entries, coronations, funerals, and other rituals that guaranteed the well-being and continued power of the rulers over the ruled.[1] The theater of power was managed by specialists (priests and ritual preceptors, historians and bards, artists and artisans) who maintained the various forms of knowledge required.

From the eighteenth century onward, European states increasingly made their power visible not only through ritual performance and dramatic display, but through the gradual extension of "officializing" procedures that established and extended their capacity in many areas. They took control by defining and classifying space, making separations between public and private spheres; by recording transactions such as the sale of property; by counting and classifying their populations, replacing religious institutions as the registrar of births, marriages, and deaths; and by standardizing languages and scripts. The state licensed some activities as legitimate and suppressed others as immoral or unlawful. With the growth of public education and its rituals, it fostered official beliefs in how things are and how they ought to be. The schools became the crucial civilizing institutions and sought to produce moral and productive citizens. Finally, nation states came to be seen as the natural embodiments of history, territory, and society.[2]

The establishment and maintenance of these nation states depended upon determining, codifying, controlling, and representing the past. The documentation that was involved created and normalized a vast amount of information that formed the basis of their capacity to govern. The reports and investigations of commissions, the compilation, storage, and publication of statistical data on finance, trade, health, demography, crime, education, transportation, agriculture, and industry—these created data requiring as much exegetical and hermeneutical skill to interpret as an arcane Sanskrit text.[3]

The process of state building in Great Britain, seen as a cultural project, was closely linked with its emergence as an imperial power, and India was its largest and most important colony. It is not just that the personnel who governed Indian were British, but the projects of state building in both countries—documentation, legitimation, classification,

and bounding, and the institutions therewith—often reflected theories, experiences, and practices worked out originally in India and then applied in Great Britain, as well as vice versa. Many aspects of metropolitan documentation projects were first developed in India. For example, the Indian civil service provided some of the models for the development of the Home services. Conversely, the universities and public schools in Victorian Great Britain were the factories in which the old aristocracy was associated with the new middle class, and new governing classes for the empire were produced. These models were exported to India and the other colonies to produce loyal governing elites.[4] And the central symbol of the British state and the focus of national loyalty, the Crown, was reworked in the second half of the nineteenth century in relation to India and the rest of the empire.* A guiding assumption in my research on the British conquest of India in the eighteenth and. nineteenth centuries has been that metropole and colony have to be seen in a unitary field of analysis. In India the British entered a new world that they tried to comprehend using their own forms of knowing and thinking. There was widespread agreement that this society, like others they were governing, could be known and represented as a series of facts. The form of these facts was taken to be self-evident, as was the idea "that administrative power stemmed from the efficient use of these facts."'

What were these "facts" whose collection lay at the foundation of the modern nation state? To the educated Englishman of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the world was knowable through the senses, which could record the experience of a natural world. This world was generally believed to be divinely created, knowable in an empirical fashion, and constitutive of the sciences through which would be revealed the laws of Nature that governed the world and all that was in it. In coming to India, they unknowingly and unwittingly invaded and conquered not only a territory but an epistemological space as well. The "facts" of this space did not exactly correspond to those of the invaders. Nevertheless, the British believed they could explore and conquer this space through translation: establishing correspondence could make the unknown and the strange knowable.

The first step was evidently to learn the local languages. "Classical" Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit as well as the currently spoken "vernacular" languages were understood to be the prerequisite form of knowledge for all others, and the first educational institutions that the British established in India were to teach their own officials Indian languages. The knowledge of languages was necessary to issue commands, collect taxes, maintain law and order—and to create other forms of knowledge about the people they were ruling. This knowledge was to enable the

British to classify, categorize, and bound the vast social world that was India so that it could be controlled. These imperatives, elements in the larger colonial project, shaped the "investigative modalities" devised by the British to collect the facts.

An investigative modality includes the definition of a body of information that is needed, the procedures by which appropriate knowledge is gathered, its ordering and classification, and then how it is transformed into usable forms such as published reports, statistical returns, histories, gazetteers, legal codes, and encyclopedias. Some of the investigative modalities of the colonial project are quite general, such as historiography and muscology, although they might include very specific practices such as the location and description of archaeological sites. Other modalities, such as the survey and the census, were more highly defined and clearly related to administrative questions. Most investigative modalities were constructed in relation to institutions and administrative sites with fixed routines. Some were transformed into "sciences" such as economics, ethnology, tropical medicine, comparative law, or cartography, and their practitioners became professionals. A brief discussion of a few of these modalities will illustrate my approach.

The Historiographic Modality

In British India, this modality is the most complex, pervasive, and powerful, underlying a number of the other more specific modalities. History, for the British, has an ontological power in providing the assumptions about how the real social and natural worlds are constituted. History in its broadest sense was a zone of debate over the ends and means of their rulership in India. From the beginning of their large-scale acquisition of territorial control and sovereignty, the British conceived of governing India by codifying and reinstituting the ruling practices that had been developed by previous states and rulers. They sought to incorporate, as much as possible, the administrative personnel employed by previous regimes. Thus knowledge of the history and practices of Indian states was seen as the most valuable form of knowledge on which to build the colonial state.

Starting in the 1770s in Bengal, the British began to investigate, through what they called "enquiries," a list of specific questions to which they sought answers about how revenue was assessed and collected. Out of this grew the most extensive and continuous administrative activity of the British, which they termed the land-settlement process. Entailed in this enterprise was the collection of "customs and local histories," which in the British discourse related to land tenure. The process culminated

in the production of settlement reports, which were produced on a district-by-district basis.

A second strand of the historiographic modality involved the ideological construction of the nature of Indian civilizations, as typified in the major historical writings of Alexander Dow, Robert Orme, Charles Grant, Mark Wilks, James Mill, and James Tod. The histor iographic practices and narrative genres of these writers can obviously be subjected to critical analysis, but beyond this they can be seen to have begun the formation of a legitimizing discourse about Britain's civilizing mission in India.

A third historiography strand involves histories of the British in India. This entails what might be thought of as "popular" history—the study of representations, whether in England or in India, of specific events. Thus stories of the Black Hole of Calcutta, the defeat of Tipu Sultan, or the siege of Lucknow involved the creation of emblematic heroes and villains, as individuals and types, who took shape in illustrations, various popular performances, and poetry; their "history" was made concrete through the construction of memorials and sacred spaces in India.

The Observational / Travel Modality

The questions that arise in examining this modality are related to the creation of a repertoire of images and typifactions that determined what was significant to the European eye. It was a matter of finding themselves in a place that could be made to seem familiar by following predetermined itineraries and seeing the sights in predictable ways. Two itineraries seem to have provided the narrative structure for many of the early travel accounts, and reflect the routes that brought Europeans to India. The earlier accounts follow the seventeenth-century trade pattern that brought merchants to the west coast of India, usually to Gujarat. The traveler then proceeded down the west coast to Ceylon, and up the east coast. By the eighteenth century much of British traffic to and from England went directly to Madras or Calcutta, and in the second half of the eighteenth century through the nineteenth century, arrival in Calcutta was followed by what became the standard traveler / tourist route—by boat up the Ganges, then to Delhi and either further north into the Punjab or southwest through Rajasthan and Gujarat to Bombay, then down to Malabar, Ceylon, and up the east coast to Madras. Although the travel routes were conceived as linear and continuous, there were particular things that had to be included: the river front in Banaras, the fort at Allahabad, a visit with the Nawab of Oudh, sightseeing

in Agra and Delhi. In addition, travel accounts included set pieces, such as the description of Indian holy men and their austerities, encounters with traveling entertainers, and a sati seen or heard about. Increasingly in the nineteenth century, these accounts included discussions of historical sites—Hindu, Muslim, and British.

Although the itineraries and the particular sites, social types, practices, and encounters with India and Indians that are reported show considerable consistency through a two-hundred-year period, their representation changed through time. What is observed and reported is mediated by particular socio-political contexts as well as historically specific aesthetic principles, such as the "sublime," the "picturesque," the "romantic," and the "realistic."

The Survey Modality

The word "survey" in English evokes a wide range of activities: to look over or examine something; to measure land for the purpose of establishing boundaries; to inspect; and to supervise or keep a watch over persons or place. In other contexts it can mean to establish the monetary value of goods and objects. For the British in India in the late eighteenth century, it also meant a form of exploration of the natural and social landscape. The survey as an investigative modality encompasses a wide range of practices, from the mapping of India to collecting botanical specimens, to the recording of architectural and archaeological sites of historic significance, or the most minute measuring of a peasant's fields.

Although the mapping and establishment of routes were part of the mercantile history of India, the beginning of a systematic survey of India can be dated to 1765, when Robert Clive assigned James Rennell, a naval officer turned surveyor, the task of making a general survey of the newly acquired Bengal territories. In the context of colonial India, the concept of the "survey" came to cover any systematic and official investigation of the natural and social features of the Indian empire.

The result was the vast official documentation project that included the Survey of India, under the direction of George Lambton, which eventually covered India with an imaginary grid on which the government could locate any site in India. Upon the acquisition of each new territory, a new survey was launched, which went far beyond mapping and bounding to describe and classify the territory's zoology, geology, botany, ethnography, economic products, history, and sociology. The history of this documentation project has tended to be written in terms of the "genius" and / or obsessions of great surveyors—James Rennall, William Lambton, Colin Mackenzie, Alexander Cunningham, and Francis

Buchanan Hamilton. But this "great man" theory of surveying can be enriched by a study of the structure of the practices by which such knowledge was compiled, the underlying theories of classification and their implications for the governing of India, and the process by which these vast amounts of knowledge were transformed into textual forms such as encyclopedias and extensive archives that were deployed by the colonial state in fixing, bounding, and settling India.

The Enumerative Modality

For many British officials, India was a vast collection of numbers. This mentality began in the early seventeenth century with the arrival of British merchants who compiled and transmitted lists of products, prices, customs and duties, weights and measures, and the values of various coins. A number was, for the British, a particular form of certainty to be held on to in a strange world. But when they turned to early attempts to enumerate the population of India in various localities, as part of early surveys, they found that even the simplest of enumerative projects raised problems of classification.

As part of the imperial settlement project after the repression of the Indian uprising of 1857-1858, the Government of India carried out a series of censuses which they hoped would provide a cross-sectional picture of the "progress" of their rule. By 1881 they had worked out a set of practices that enabled them not just to list the names of what they hoped would be every person in India but also to collect basic information about age, occupation, caste, religion, literacy, place of birth, and current residence. Upwards of 500,000 people, most of whom were volunteers, were engaged in carrying out the census. The published census reports not only summarized the statistical information thus compiled but also included extensive narratives about the caste system, the religions of India, fertility and morbidity, domestic organization, and the economic structure of India. The census represents a model of the Victorian encyclopedic quest for total knowledge.

It is my hypothesis that what was entailed in the construction of the census operations was the creation of social categories by which India was ordered for administrative purposes.[7] The British assumed that the census reflected the basic sociological facts of India. This it did, but through the enumerative modality, the project also objectified social, cultural, and linguistic differences among the peoples of India. The panoptical view that the British were constructing led to the reification of India as polity in which conflict, from the point of view of the rulers, could only be controlled by the strong hand of the British.

The Museological Modality

For many Europeans India was a vast museum, its countryside filled with ruins, its people representing past ages—biblical, classical, and feudal; it was a source of collectibles and curiosities to fill European museums, botanical gardens, zoos, and country houses.

Until the 1860s the generation and transmission of knowledge of the antiquities of India—its art, architecture, scripts, and textual traditions—were largely left to individuals and scholarly societies, and were the by-products of other investigative modalities. In the late eighteenth century artists who traveled in India in pursuit of commissions and patronage, such as the Daniells brothers, William Hodges, and George Chinnery, sketched and painted not only landscapes and portraits of opulent princes and British officials but also created a visual record of the monuments of past dynasties. There was a large market in Great Britain for illustrated books, portfolios, prints, and drawings of oriental scenes and depictions of the people of India.

As a byproduct of the revenue surveys and the settlement proceedings, many archaeological sites were identified and mapped. The first large-scale excavation of an Indian archaeological site was directed by Golin Mackenzie who, in addition to his official duties, carried on a twenty-year project in south India which involved the collection of archaeological specimens, texts, manuscripts, and oral histories. James Fergusson, who had gone to India as an indigo planter, traveled widely in India in 1837-1842, and wrote a series of accounts of its art and architecture, which established a hegemonic history and evaluation of Indian art and architecture. He was active in the planning of the Crystal Palace exhibition, and became the "official" connoisseur of India's artistic achievements.

An army engineer, Alexander Cunningham, who had developed an interest in Indian archaeology, successfully lobbied Lord Canning in 1859 to establish the Archaeological Survey of India, of which he was to become the first director. The primary concern of the ASI was to record important sites on the basis of topographical research. In addition, the Survey became responsible for the preservation of historical sites, and began to develop on-site museums as well as to build a national collection of archaeological specimens. The first large-scale museum in India was built in Calcutta in the 1840s by private initiative, under the aegis of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The museum developed into the India Museum, which is the largest general museum in India today with large collections and displays of archaeological, natural historical, and ethnographic specimens.

Representations of India bulked large in the international exhibitions and world's fairs of the second half of the nineteenth century, which in turn provided the basis of private and public collections of India arts and crafts, paintings, and antiquities. The power to define the nature of the past and establish priorities in the creation of a monumental record of a civilization, and to propound canons of taste, are among the most significant instrumentalities of rulership.

The Surveillance Modality

The British appear in the nineteenth century to have felt most comfortable surveying India from above and at a distance—from a horse, an elephant, a boat, a carriage, or a train. They were uncomfortable in the narrow confines of a city street, a bazaar, a *mela*—anywhere they were surrounded by their Indian subjects. In their narratives of their lives and travels in India, few Indians are named other than royalty and personal servants. Indians who came under the imperial gaze were frequently made to appear in dress and demeanor as players in the British-constructed theater of power, their roles signaled by prescribed dress, their parts authored by varied forms of knowledge codified by rulers who sought to determine how loyal Indian subjects were to act in the scenes that the rulers had constructed. Everyone—rulers and ruled—had proper roles to play in the colonial sociological theater.

There were, however, groups and categories of people whose practices threatened the prescribed sociological order. These were people who appeared by their nature to wander beyond the boundaries of settled civil society: sannyasis, sadhus, fakirs, dacoits, goondas, thags, pastoralists, herders, and entertainers. The British constructed special instrumentalities to control those defined as beyond civil bounds, and carried out special investigations to provide the criteria by which whole groups would be stigmatized as criminal.

Starting in the late eighteenth century, certain clans, castes, and villages were accused of practicing female infanticide, a crime that was difficult to prove in British courts, in which only an individual and not a group could be proven guilty. Female infanticide became a "statistical crime" for which corporal punishment could be administered. In 1835 a Thagi and Dacoity Department was created to investigate and punish gang robberies and murders. Hie first task was to devise means for gathering information on the practices of those the government accused of committing a ritual form of murder, particularly of travelers. This involved primarily the use of informers who turned states evidence, and acted not only as witnesses but also as informants on the "culture" of the

Thags. The work of the Thagi and Dacoity Department led to the formation of an archive of criminal ethnography and the designation of increasing numbers of people as members of "criminal tribes and castes."

The British in India (like the police in urbanizing western Europe) faced a problem identifying those who were suspected of antisocial, political, and criminal activities that the state sought to control or eliminate. The ideal was to create a systematic means of recording and classifying a set of permanent features that distinguished an individual. Although photography offered some possibilities for recording a physiognomy, India's large scale required a schema by which one could recover each of thousands from among potentially millions of images. Toward this end, in Paris in the late nineteenth century, Alphonse Bertillon, prefect of police, devised an anthropometric system that was believed to have the potential of providing the descriptive as well as classificatory power to identify individuals accurately.

At much the same time as Bertillon was carrying out his investigations, William Herschel, a civil servant in India, was experimenting with the use of fingerprints to individualize documents, as a means of preventing fraud and forgery. Herschel continued his explorations even after he left India and later Sir Francis Calton, in cooperation with Herschel and a number of Indian police officers, devised a system of classification that made possible fingerprinting as a means of identifying individuals.

Investigative Modalities in **the Post-Colonial World**

Both historians and anthropologists—though the latter might not have labeled themselves as such—were always directly involved in the colonial situation. The origins of anthropology as a distinctive form of knowledge lay, in fact, in the internal and external colonies of the Europeans. Throughout the colonial period, some anthropologists argued, in a highly ambivalent fashion, that they had a particular role to play in mediating between the colonial subjects and rulers. In the colonial history of India, there were explicit efforts made to construct an "official ethnography" at the moment that anthropology was beginning to be defined as a distinctive form of knowledge. Anthropologists developed practices through which they sought to erase the colonial influence by describing what they took to be authentic indigenous cultures. Their epistemological universe, however, was part of the European world of social theories and classifacatory schema that were formed, in part, by state projects to reshape the lives of their subjects at home and abroad.

Since the early twentieth century, there have been internal profes-

sional discussions among anthropologists about their responsibilities for their chosen subjects, who were frequently defined as "native" or "tribal" or "wild men," in relation to state policies and practices which sought to control them. With the end of political colonialism, anthropologists have translated their colonial past into history, and into a site for the critical and epistemological exploration of their own construction of knowledge. The anthropologists' characteristic investigative modality was and *is* ethnographic fieldwork; the essays in this volume expand the anthropologists' epistemological explorations into other investigative modalities that were also part of the cultural project of colonialism.

But ruling the colonies of an empire was not the only state enterprise that shaped the investigative modalities of Western social scientists. In the middle and late twentieth century, for example, as the United States replaced Great Britain as what came to be termed a "superpower," the study of "others" (whether Native American or Japanese) required collecting and interpreting data within the framework of dominant theoretical paradigms of the times. Social scientists first became heavily involved in government projects during the Depression; economists and sociologists, for example, were the most important architects of the New Deal's social welfare projects. In the 1930s, anthropologists were called upon to involve themselves directly with Native American affairs. Most notable was the effort of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to establish self-government / self-rule on Indian reservations. Anthropologists were called upon to develop histories and sociologies—through the interpretation of histories and sociologies from Indian interlocutors—which would then constitute the basis of the institutions of these tribal federations. There were also large numbers of anthropologists employed in planning economic development programs of Indian reservations, through the Department of Agriculture. The deployment of agricultural economists on the reservations provides a parallel to the general systemic analysis of the American economy at large in its recovery from the Depression. In keeping with that experience, the New Deal for Indians was to be effected by bringing them into the "mainstream" economy—and culture—thereby hastening the process of assimilation.

During the Second World War, and America's ascendence as a major player in that epochal crisis, academia increasingly became the site within which the struggles to understand the American place in the world was institutionalized within disciplinary arrangements, as well as deployed for more pragmatic contributions to what became more transparently imperial rule. The onset of the Second World War saw the beginnings of multi-disciplinary social science research, most notably at Yale University, where an interdisciplinary program was established through what was called the Institute of Human Relations. The Institute

brought together sociologists, anthropologists, psychoanalysis and psychologists, and the dominant intellectual mode was positivism.

Out of the Institute of Human Relations emerged several research projects. For anthropology the creation of the Human Relations Area File (HRAF) was a significant development. The HRAF was, and continues to be, at its core a taxonomy of "world cultures" that followed and elaborated on the models of the Cross-Cultural Survey at Yale, and its related undertakings such as the Plains Indians Survey at the University of Nebraska. One objective of the HRAF was to incorporate into a precise and "accessible" analytic framework a vast descriptive literature, the "descriptive data which no other social science can even remotely compare in quantity with in wealth of ethnographic detail available." The HRAF continues to be a "cooperative enterprise of fifteen universities, operating with the aid of foundation and government grants, for the assembly, translations and classification of the descriptive material of anthropology."*

Hie first task of the HRAF was to set universal criteria for delineating cultural units. Which social groups would be treated as cultural units? What were the criteria for separation of social groups from each other? The logic of this global cultural patterning, the creation of an elaborate mosaic connecting the smallest units with larger social wholes was expressed through a biological metaphor. Thus, the smallest group to carry essentially a total culture was the parallel to a "subvariety" in biology. A cultural system carried by a community could be called a "local cultural variant." Terms of biological evolution were grafted into this cross-cultural mapping in a transparent fashion: "In the realm of culture, the equivalent of inbreeding is diffusion, and barriers to diffusion may be used to separate cultural species."" The underlying logic of the HRAF was the need to define universals, to "discriminate between superficial and fundamental differences in ways of life. It was then necessary to define and classify that which is comparable from one society to another."[10]

The HRAF became directly involved with the war effort of the United States. It was quickly recognized that cross-cultural knowledge could very pragmatically assist the U.S. government in its strategic maneuvers. For example, when the U.S. Navy was getting ready to liberate Micronesia and Melanesia from Japanese control, it found itself in charge of civil government in these territories as well as being responsible for setting up such infrastructure as airfields with "native" labor. The importance for naval officers and policy makers to learn quickly about "customs and practices" was clear, and the HRAF stepped in to assist. A positivist social science, dependent on a notion of universals, which was based on an understanding of human society as comparable to a biologi-

cal system—this "practical knowledge" created a taxonomy of cultures that was deployed well beyond the boundaries of the academy, and assisted in important ways the business of realpolitik.

There were, or course, other ways in which social science training assisted in the allied effort. A psychoanalytic approach to social analysis was dominant during the period of the war. For example, Karen Horney and Erich Fromm directed their attention to the German situation, which they viewed in terms of a distinct social pathology. Well-known "national character"* studies were conducted by anthropologists Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, and exemplified in texts such as *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword,* which influenced U.S. policy toward the emperor of Japan. Historians found their skills useful in managing a variety of large-scale sources, and participated directly in military policy. Many were involved in the OSS. Furthermore, linguists were put to work to implement language-training programs for work in occupied, or newly liberated, territories. In order to do this, linguists rapidly had to analyze hitherto unknown languages for the purpose of teaching. The first small group of linguists worked in German and French linguistics, and branched into other languages.

At the end of the war, what happened to the academic institutes by which American scholars were inserted into the global arena? A number of scholars emerged from the war with a wide variety of "field" experiences, knowledge of languages derived from first-hand contact with other societies. It is they who founded the "area studies" programs as we know them in the American academic world. These programs emerged out of wartime experience in which the prime concern was to make sense of "imperfect information," in an important way to create "systems" out of scraps of knowledge that were trickling in as the war progressed. Interdisciplinary pooling was the method arrived at when social scientists and policy makers had imperfect access to the site, and couldn't conduct surveys, or use the other "investigative modalities" of their predecessors.

The social science paradigms of the postwar years, particularly in political science, rested on an explicitly evolutionary perspective. This was most apparent in the development policies that became one cornerstone of American foreign policy and whose overall agenda was articulated in the theories of Walt Rostow, Daniel Lerner and such. In anthropology, this was exemplified in important cultural studies such as *Contemporary Change in Traditional Societies,* edited by Julian Steward." These studies were primarily interested in the "problems of modernization" in cross-cultural contexts, "to develop and test a systematic approach to the problems of modernity." The global scenario, which included newly independent states, had now to be understood within a telos of "modern-

ity," where national development was graded against a model of Western development. Methodologically, members of this cross-cultural research project had a "specialized knowledge of different world areas which would ensure a cross-cultural selection of cases for field research."[1]* As in direct lineal descent from HRAF's epistemological position, the research procedures were aimed at creating "a possible taxonomy of contemporary societies [through] the process of social change ... in an effort to understand cross-cultural differences and similarities." Most significantly, the research study was to trace a "trajectory of social change" as societies moved from "tradition" to "modernity."[13]

Stasis was assumed, and history, including the effects of colonial processes, was erased. The clearly evolutionary model for social change that emerged had a shadow side—a Durkheimian notion of social *anomie,* the threat of possible disequilibria in the evolving system. The central preoccupation of these cultural analysts, defined within theoretical language, still manages to reflect the fears of powerful American political ideologies, the imperative for smoothly functional social change in societies moving from inert "traditional" ways into the light of "modernity."