

NEPAL—THEN AND NOW: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF NEPAL

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Introduction

The Kingdom of Nepal is best known for its legendary Himalaya mountains. It boasts nine of only fourteen mountains in the world over 8000 meters (26,247 feet), including the tallest, Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest). The country also claims tropical jungles (currently being lost at an alarming rate) which are home to Bengal tigers, elephants and rhinoceros. The diversity of landscape mirrors the collage of cultures. The country (the only Hindu Kingdom in the world) is home to more than a dozen cultures (each with their own languages and multiple dialects) from three major ethnic groups which have settled over thousands of years through subsequent historical migrations.

Scholars tell us that the anthropology of Nepal is quite young, beginning, in fact, only in the nineteenth century with the publication of research works of western scholars which "stretched between history and anthropology" (Allen 1994: v). The three works selected from this period certainly fit this characterization. Not only are they history, but they are in history: The *Pax Britanica*¹ mentality which wrapped the globe in colonial expansion is easily reflected in the earliest ethnographic descriptions, the products of British officers bent on colonization; And in form, the explorations which produced these early "ethnographies" were scientific endeavours characteristic of the Enlightenment era. Differences between the works also display the contemporary differing sociological philosophies concerning the "natural state of man." These issues will be examined in the following pages.

The "middle" works, although they mostly escape the trappings of colonialism, exhibit theoretical anthropological issues of their day as well. The influence of Franz Boas led to the "modern" era of anthropology which placed a strong emphasis upon a more "empirical" or "scientific" approach to ethnography. The reflection of Boasian thought shines through clearly in these more "traditional" ethnographies but they also strongly reflect the

post-Boasian ideas of Julian Steward's ecological anthropology which was just beginning to emerge as a more "empirical" anthropological model during this era.

The latest ethnographies are also a reflection of the sociological interests which characterize the period in which they are written. They reflect the rise of various other models of ethnographic analysis including symbolic anthropology and post-modernism. The influence of post-modernism is most strongly noted in the growing reflexivity and admitted subjectivity of the ethnographers, as well as in the growing agency of the subjects under study. The writings of this period also retain some elements from the earlier periods.

Through a careful examination of the ethnographic writings from these three periods, one can observe a gradual repositioning of anthropology through the years. The interplay between voices change as the ethnographers come to slowly understand the limits of their ethnographic authority and ability to accurately represent another culture as well as the limitations of the science known as anthropology. This will be the focus of this paper.

Ethnography: The early period: 1722-1874

No Englishman had hitherto passed beyond the range of lofty mountains which separates the secluded valley of Nepaul² from the north-eastern parts of Bengal: and the public curiosity respecting that Terra Incognita [unknown land] (as it might be justly called, was still ungratified except by the vague and unsatisfactory reports of a few missionaries and itinerant traders (Hindu), when towards the close of the year 1792, an opportunity was unexpectedly presented to the British Government in India, of removing the veil which had so long interposed between the two countries, and of establishing a more intimate and beneficial connection with the Hindoo [sic] state of Kathmandu [the current capital city, but then a kingdom], than had yet been found practicable (Kirkpatrick 1811:iii)

These are the opening lines of the first English account of the kingdom of Nepal. They are the words of Colonel Kirkpatrick, a British officer serving in British India, who was charged with the first diplomatic western foray into what is today known as the country of Nepal. Although Kirkpatrick was not the first Westerner to have visited Nepal (the Italian Capuchin Mission had a short-lived stay there in the early 1700's before being expelled less than 30 years later), his report was the first to reach the eyes of Western scholars through publication.

Scholars of Nepal anthropology tell us that Kirkpatrick's work is the first among only a handful of early sources which provided "insights into the nature and structure of Nepalese society and culture," and which stimulated the interests of anthropologists of later generations as to the structure and nature of Nepali culture (Allen 1994:v). It is Kirkpatrick's book, along with two others listed by Allen (1994:v) which will serve as the focus of analysis of the early period of Nepal ethnography. The three books are briefly introduced below.

It is into the context of Gorkha domination³ that the first European visit to Nepal occurs. Colonel Kirkpatrick, a British officer serving in British India, was charged with an urgent diplomatic mission of negotiating a settlement between Nepal and China, who had recently invaded Nepali territory, surrounding the capital city of Kathmandu. The urgent request had come from the Nepali Throne and a British envoy (which interestingly enough included a scientist and even an artist⁴) was soon on its way. To the dismay of Kirkpatrick (1811:viii) the two feuding governments had reached a settlement before he reached Kathmandu and so the political journey was in vain. The scientific journey, however, was not the foray into Nepal culminated with a mammoth work titled *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul Being the Substance of Observations Made During A Mission to That Country, in the Year 1793* (1811). The publication is an incredibly complete account combining day by day detail of the routes followed (including degree of difficulty and challenges encountered), detailed descriptions of military outposts passed (and assessment of their strength and vulnerability), wonderful descriptions of the awe inspiring scenery, amazing detail of the flora and fauna encountered along the journey (including detailed pencil sketches), results of scientific experiments conducted upon the water of the country, and fascinatingly complete descriptions of the life, ways and history of the peoples of Nepal.

Although Kirkpatrick's book certainly has been a valuable asset for South Asian anthropologists, it is not immune from the trappings of colonial domination which it was intended to hasten, nor from the ethnocentric view of indigenous peoples held by the, leading European intellectuals of the day. This will be explored in more depth in the coming pages.

A second work produced during this time period was Laurance Oliphant's (1852) *A Journey to Kathmandu with the Camp of Jung Bahadoor*. Oliphant was inspired to travel to Nepal by his friend Jung Bahadoor, the first Nepali ambassador to England. Although this book mimics Kirkpatrick's in style (travelogue) and format (the chapters are set up in the same fashion), it is much less of a scientific analysis. It does, however,

offer us his insight into the people's character and mode of everyday life. Kirkpatrick's and Oliphant's works are similar in a way that is markedly different from the third work: Very little notice is made of the cultural diversity which today (and even then given the archaeological and linguistic evidence) characterizes Nepal. This is probably due to the fact that both remained only on the established trade routes that were populated mainly by Khasa cultural groups (Anderson 1987:35) and then focused their time in the Kathmandu valley where they would have encountered mainly the ruling Gorkha class and the "Indigenous" Newari class. It is also interesting that Oliphant seems to be fixated on his "pioneer" status. He speaks of being the first to see country "on which European foot had never trod (1852:184)," and of participating in hunts and sports the likes of which no other foreigner had ever participated in (1952:66, 75). These comments are probably a bit romantic (and probably not very accurate) given the fact that other Europeans (the Italian missionaries spoken of earlier, and Father George spoken of by Kirkpatrick (1811:20), had indeed been inside Nepal for some time, and various "foreigners" (Asian) had been travelling these international trade routes for centuries. Like Kirkpatrick's tome, this treatise provides a plethora of examples which demonstrate the ethnocentric European views about the "state of the natives" during this period of time.

Another of the works cited as being among the first in "the story of what we call anthropology in Nepal" (Allen 1994:v) is Hodgson's *Essays on Nepal and Tibet* (1874).

This book is a collection of articles which were originally published in the *Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society* between the years of 1828 and 1838. These essays are much more focused on the scholarly investigation of the languages and religions⁵ of Nepal and Tibet and offer us glimpses of several other of the tribes "off the main trail" such as the Chepang and Kusunda who make up a unique part of Nepal's cultural character. Unlike the previous two authors, B.H. Hodgson spent over twenty years living in Nepal (he was the official "British resident"⁶ from 1820 to 1843) which afforded him unique insight into the diverse cultures of that country. His writings include in-depth historical accounts of the various tribes (which have served as the basis for many of the contemporary historical accounts) and offer a more complete ethnographic view of the cultural diversity of Nepal. Hodgson also seems to express a less pejorative view of the natives (reflecting the Hobbs-Locke philosophical debate of the day⁷) and yet, like the other two authors, he does have an openly colonial agenda, describing the commercial systems of Nepal in one essay (Hodgson 1874:92-122) and openly advocating European colonization in another (Hodgson 1874:83).

The colonial agenda: One need not look far to see the agenda of colonial expansion in the writings of this era. The most explicit example is found in an essay by Hodgson in which he states:

I say, then, unhesitatingly, that the Himalaya generally is very well calculated for the settlement of Europeans, and I feel more and more convinced that the encouragement of colonization therein is one of the highest and most important duties of the Government (1874:83).

Underpinning such an agenda of expansion is a belief in the superiority of the British race which provided the justification for such endeavours. Nepal is seen as a treasure just waiting to be exploited for British economic gain during a time when the British viewed themselves, according to one chronicler of British history in South Asia, as "a race destined to govern and subdue" (Collins and Lapierre 1988). The emergence of this attitude may partly be explained by the then contemporary theories of social philosophers such as Thomas Hobbs and John Locke. Hobbs had concluded that people are "savages" by nature and that a strong and repressive government is needed to bring order (Garbarino 1977:12), while Locke believed that these "savages" were "blank slates" becoming only what their experiences made them. Both philosophers advocated colonial intervention. It is easy to see how these Enlightenment idea served to legitimize Western domination of "barbaric" and "savage" societies such as those "discovered" by the British in South Asia. These ideas would also later be developed in writings of other social philosophers, such as Herbert Spencer (social Darwinism), and early sociocultural anthropologists such as Tylor and Morgan (unilineal cultural evolution), which would be further used to justify political domination.

One also need not look far to see the ethnocentric language of colonialism which underpins these writings. Oliphant (1852:15) describes one indigenous tribe of Nepal as "a hardy and almost savage race inhabiting the wild valleys of the Himalaya" Other Nepalis didn't fare too well either as he calls them the most "disputable, dissolute-looking wretches imaginable" (1852:97), a "debased" and "squalid" race, and the females in particular as "anything but attractive" (Oliphant 1852:90). Hodgson, perhaps exhibiting a more Lockian view, describes the Chepang and Kusunda tribes as:

altogether as near to what is usually called the state of nature as anything in human shape can well be ... Wealth they despise, or the comforts and conveniences they have no

conception of the value of. They are in fact, not noxious but helpless, not viscous but aimless, both morally and intellectually (Hodgson 1874:45).

Not only are the people of a morally questionable character, but also the places they live are abominable. Kirkpatrick hides nothing of his feelings of superiority or his loath of the native conditions when he speaks multiple times of passing "wretched" (1811:13) and "miserable" (1811:32) huts situated in "mean"(1811:15), "miserable" (1811:25) or "wretched" (1811:20) villages.⁸ Oliphant echoes Kirkpatrick's assessment as he crosses the border into Nepal:

A small stream divides the company's (the British East Indian Trading Co.) from the Nepaulese dominions, and on crossing it the change of government was at once obvious. The villages looked more wretched, the people more dirty, the country was almost totally uncultivated, and nearly all the traces of roads disappeared as we traversed the green sward of the Terai of Nepaul (1852:51).

Kirkpatrick, commenting on the perceived lack of management by the government of Nepal wrote:

yet from the appearance of the corn ... the soil would seem to ... be tolerably fertile The waste state of the country, is to be referred to the want of the population, and to the defects of the government, which but ill understands the means of promoting it (1811: 15).

The Gorkha Dynasty had only fought their way to power 24 years prior to Kirkpatrick's visit and he makes comments about natives who "enjoy but little security or happiness under their present rulers, who on most occasions, make but to fight of their civil and natural rights" (1811:66), or that "throw away their money in the most lavish manner, working only when stimulated by necessity, or by particularly advantageous offers" (1811:62). So, if the natural state of moral inferiority of the natives was insufficient justification alone to colonize Nepal, then surely political repression on the part of the ruling class toward its ignorant subjects was. Certainly the British could manage Nepal and its morally inferior races better than its current repressive government.

Part of a colonial agenda, of course, would be an evaluation of the military strength which might be encountered during an invasion, the economic profitability of such an endeavour, as well as its suitability to European occupation. In these regards none of the writings are lacking.⁹ It is clear that as Kirkpatrick travelled he was evaluating the military strength of the country. He speaks of forts that are "altogether contemptible" serving no positive function but to shade cattle (1811:11). He offers military analysis of their vulnerability when he writes about another fort encountered:

the ascent to it from the valley is not represented to be difficult, and though we could not well judge of its strength at the distance from which we viewed it, yet it certainly had nothing formidable in its appearance (1811:24).

And in speaking of the fort at Cheesapany he says it "possesses no other strength than what it derives from its situation [below the summit of a high pass] ... [and] is not capable of containing above a hundred men ... and is altogether unworthy, in a military view, of any further notice"(1811:54).

Oliphant also seems to be assessing the formidability of Nepal as an enemy when he writes:

In case of a war, there would be no difficulty, even now, in our troops possessing themselves of the whole territory to the foot of the Cheriagotty Hills in the cold season; but as we should have to maintain some position throughout the year, the top of those hills themselves would be the only one available, and here, in the heart of an enemy's country, and cut off from all communication with India, the position of the garrison would anything but enviable (1852:54).

Oliphant's comments, made 36 years after the Treaty of Friendship¹⁰ was signed between Nepal and England, demonstrate that the possibility of further conquest was still alive in the minds of the British.

Besides military assessment the feasibility of colonization would also include an assessment of economic profitability. Contemplating the economic possibilities that were hidden in Nepal, Kirkpatrick noted the potential for profits from forest harvests (1811:18, 43), grazing lands (1811:18), and elephants (1811:17). His economic interests become explicit when he writes:

In a commercial view, the Boori-Gunduck [a large river is entitled to particular notice; the great extent of its course, its depth, and its communication with various other streams that issue from the adjacent hills or forests, fitting it admirably for the purposes of internal navigation (1811:29).

One can almost hear the excitement in his voice as he discovers extensive forests containing,

an almost inexhaustible source of riches ... [trees] not perhaps surpassed in any other part of the world ... which might be conveyed to us both with little trouble, and at little expense ... and from whence we could draw whatever supplies of pitch, tar, and turpentine we required (1811:43).

Kirkpatrick also reports with a little disappointment that earlier reports of gold must have been a bit exaggerated (1811:45), but his party did find several other valuable metals. Likewise, Oliphant (1852:53) speculates that "the Terai might be made yet more profitable" if more use was made of the carcasses of dead cattle (a holy animal to the Hindus!) by processing the horns and hides into products that would "ensure a handsome return." Hodgson also looks to profitability (both economic and militarily) when calculating the possibility of exploiting Nepali manpower for military purposes. He writes,

I am not sure that there exists any insuperable obstacle to our obtaining, in one form or another, the services of a large body of these men (Gurkha¹¹); and such are their energy of character, love of enterprise, freedom from the shackles of caste, unadulterated military habits and perfect subjectibility to a discipline such as ours, that I am well assured their services, if obtained, would soon come to be most highly prized (1874:41).

And of course, the Gurkha's were hired by the British Army and did come to be known as the most fierce and loyal regiment of the British Army, a title they still hold to this day.

The suitability for European occupation would also be a consideration before beginning a colonial expansion. All three works exhibit a strong positive attitude of the ability for this land to sustain European occupation. Kirkpatrick seems to see a bit of his own homeland in the striking

landscape of Nepal, surrounded by objects which reminded him of "some of the natural beauties of [his] native land," comparing its appearance with "many a spot in England" (1811:64). Yet he also sees magnificent peaks "so arresting the eyes as to render it for some time inattentive to the beautiful landscape immediately below it" (1811:57). One must wonder if this reminiscence of home, along with the awe experiences at the sight of these snow-capped precipices, spawned a slight attraction to develop this land thus creating a new England made up of the comforts and beauty of home combined with the awe inspiring grandeur of the Himalaya. Oliphant makes the point of suitability for European occupation by comparing this new land to many a place in Europe. He writes of the land over the Cheesapany Pass,

It reminded me of many similar valleys in Switzerland and the Tyrol more particularly the Engadine, as seen from the hill above Nauders: while the hills, richly clad with masses of dark foliage, and rising to a height of two or three thousand feet, more nearly resembled those of the Cinnamon Isle (1852:80).

And if this leaves any doubt, he concludes,

Many English forest trees flourish here, amongst them, oaks, chestnuts, and pines; rhododendrons also abound, and I observed almost every species of English fruit tree; in the residency garden all the European vegetables are raised to perfection (1852:106).

Hodgson's penultimate essay in a treatise on the wonderful potential that the Himalaya holds for European expansion and colonization. He speaks of Nepal's "capabilities for the successful culture of various products suited to the wants of Europeans, for their own consumption or for profitable sale," all in a climate "favorable to the labours of the healthful and to the relief of the ailing" (1852:83). He stresses the ability of the Himalaya to grow European cereals, and European fruits, and the acceptability of the climate to the European temperament. In short, Nepal's ability to become a new England! The same theme is stressed by the other two works. It seems they are constantly comparing what they see to sights "back home" and the potentiality of "recreating" England, only with the new added benefit of the awe inspiring views created by the towering Himalayas.

Understanding the monologic voice of authority: In trying "to understand the mindset of these earliest ethnographers we must understand the times into which they were born. It was an era when the leading philosophers (who many historians of anthropology consider as the "founding fathers" of modern anthropology) believed that conquest of inferior races by the superior "civilized" European race was a predestined conclusion of natural law. It followed then for many that it was a moral imperative to bring the "savages" along to "civilization." According to one chronicler of anthropology this attitude of social Darwinism was "a convenient philosophy for the rapidly expanding European powers and was used to justify their imperialism, colonialism, and racism" (McGee and Warms 1996:8). It is obvious from the writings of the earliest ethnographers of Nepal that such an attitude was also inherent in their minds. They were the products of their times. Given this attitude, it is no surprise that the ethnographies of this period reflect only the monologic voice of the ethnographers. They nobly spoke (via the pen) with authority for those (the illiterate "savages") who could not speak for themselves. And the people remain throughout these works as nameless and faceless "objects" of study.

Ethnography: The modern era 1953-1980

In his welcoming speech to the participants of the International Seminar on the Anthropology of Nepal in 1992, Professor D.P. Bhandari, the Executive Director of the Center for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, stated that "anthropological research in the modern sense of the term began with the scholarly work of Professor Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf in 1953" (Allen 1994:vi). He further credits von Fürer-Haimendorf's comprehensive research among the Sherpa (which was first published in 1964) as "a landmark in the evolution of Nepalese anthropology... [which] set a pattern in the anthropology of Nepal and the subsequent rapid growth in research in all branches of the subject" (Allen 1994:vi). Because of the significance attributed to von Fürer-Haimendorf's work, *The Sherpas of Nepal: Buddhist Highlanders* (1964), as the harbinger of modern anthropology in Nepal, this book will be the first reviewed. Von Fürer-Haimendorf attempts to describe in depth the customs and worldview of the Sherpa, a Tibeto-Burman people who inhabit high altitude villages surrounding Mt. Everest in eastern Nepal. He writes of their economy, stressing the impact which their high altitude environment has had upon it, their patterns of family life and village organization, and their religion which he finds a distinguishing feature of Sherpa life. Each of these topics

are described in a way intended to help the reader make sense of the unique Sherpa worldview.

The second ethnography under review, *The Magars of Banyan Hill* (Hitchcock 1966) was also chosen because of its greater significance as part of a famous series known as Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology undertaken by Stanford University and edited by George and Louise Spindler. This series, which included ethnographies from over twenty cultures worldwide has been used since the 1960's to train anthropology students how to write a systematic ethnography and the format followed is still emulated in many modern anthropology texts today. The stated goal of the series is "to bring to students in the social sciences insights into the richness and complexity of human life as it is lived in different ways and in different places" (Hitchcock 1966:vii). This volume in the series focuses on the Magars, a unique Tibeto-Burman people group in western Nepal who inhabit the midhills region. Although he describes the Magar economic system, settlement patterns, religion, kinship and marriage patterns, political system and arts (kind of a checklist of culture, characteristic of the ethnography of this period), the underlying theme of the book is a focus on the impact which the environment has upon the Magar culture as well as the impact that their culture has had upon the environment. For instance, the author writes of the Magars, "they feel they belong where they are, and indeed they do, for the people fit the land and the land fits them" (Hitchcock 1966:vii).

The ecological approach: Like the early ethnographies of Nepal, both books exhibit remarkable similarity to each other due to their common point in history under the common theoretical considerations of the day. Under the influence of history (Nepal was closed to foreigners from 1769-1951) the anthropology of Nepal had virtually missed an entire era of post-Enlightenment anthropology. Nepalese anthropology went to sleep following the Enlightenment era, missed the Historical-Particulist era of Boas, the Functionalist era of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, the psychological theories of Benedict and Mead, and awoke mid-century during a period in which a major theoretical change was again underway in anthropology: the move toward an ecological approach. The theoretical model of Cultural Ecology which was developing mainly under the leadership of Julian Steward focused on the cultural adaptations by individual cultures in response to their environments (McGee and Warms 1996:221): a sort of environmental determinism. The influence of the anthropological move toward an ecological approach is quite evident in the two works reviewed from this period. Hitchcock noted during a trek in

Nepal that the "tone and tenor of life," or culture, was different based on difference of altitude. He states that the purpose in going to Nepal was to see whether it was possible to determine with any precision how communities were affected by differences in their physical environment" (1966:1). He did, indeed, discover the hypothesis he expected, that different environments led to different Magar communities (1966:1). Von Fürer-Haimendorf, although he focuses more upon the influence which Buddhist ideology plays in shaping the culture, also claims that the environment of the Sherpa has had a dramatic influence upon all aspects of their culture (1964:1-17). Another dramatic example of the impact of the ecological approach upon these two works is the primacy given to subsistence patterns of the culture¹². Hitchcock's first chapter is titled "Tribesmen and Farmers," while von Fürer-Haimendorf follows his introduction with a chapter titled "Environment and Economy," focusing mainly on agriculture and animal husbandry among the Sherpa. The influence of cultural materialists,¹³ such as Steward, upon anthropology was growing during the 1960s and can clearly be seen in the ethnography of Nepal from this era.

The remaining influence of Boas: The two works also take a similar theoretical view as to the factors which contribute to the uniqueness of culture. Compare the following two quotes from Hitchcock and von Fürer-Haimendorf:

I assumed there were factors besides geographical location that caused communities to differ from one another, and if possible I wanted to hold them constant. They consisted of: (1) the cultural genesis of the peoples living in the communities; (2) innovations made in one community and not shared with others; and (3) outside cultural features either imposed by the political setting during the course of history or offered by diffusion, including contact with peoples who had a different origin (Hitchcock 1966:1).

Its [Buddhist ideology] influence has certainly been profound but environment, historic accident and contacts with other populations have all contributed to the development and growth of the Sherpas' world-view and way of life. Though linked with the people of Tibet and other Bhotia [of Tibetan stock] groups of Nepal by manifold racial, cultural and economic ties, the highlanders of Khumbu [the Sherpa

region) stand out as a people distinctive in their character, their civic sense and the mode of their adaptation to life in extreme altitudes (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964:xix).

One can certainly see the importance placed upon the influence of the unique history and the impact of diffusion (both by-products of Boasian anthropology¹⁴) upon the culture as well as the belief in the multi-factoral nature of culture which was a then contemporary idea in anthropology.

Concerning the unique history which makes up the Magar culture, Hitchcock provides a plethora of examples to illustrate how the Magar culture, through employment as Gurkha soldiers in the British Army, is much more cosmopolitan than would be expected. He talks of villagers who have served abroad in India, Burma and North Africa, and tells of a man who, when there is a wedding in town, "dresses up in a green western-style suit coat made in Singapore, a gift sent him by his only other child, a daughter married to a soldier serving with the British in Malaya" (Hitchcock 1966:8). Likewise, von Fürer-Haimendorf comments that besides environment and historic accident, that "contacts with other populations [has] contributed to the Sherpas' world-view and way of life" (1964:xix). He cites the impact of the introduction of the potato upon the Sherpa culture (1964: 8) as well as the influence that the influx of Tibetans had upon the culture as they fled from Tibet and settled in the region in 1959 (1964:28).

Tylor's complex whole: Both works also exhibit similar structure. This can be explained perhaps in part by the fact that both projects were funded by the National Science Foundation. Their common choice of cultural features for analysis (marriage and kinship patterns, economy, political systems, art, religion, values and moral concepts) is perhaps also a reflection of the impact of the remaining Tylorian¹⁵ view of culture which shaped the form of ethnography as a sort of check-list of cultural features during the earliest period of Nepal and obviously still influenced the content of ethnography during the middle period. This holistic view of culture (that complex whole) has been somewhat lost in many recent ethnographies which tend to focus on a single aspect of a culture.

A focus on emics: Unlike the colourful descriptions of an exotic peoples with bizarre cultural practices designed to enthrall wanderlust readers in the homelands (which characterized the early period), the ethnographies of this era attempted to help the reader understand the emic perspective of the native. For instance, in trying to explain the seemingly illogical attitude of fatalism which some feel plague the Sherpa, Fürer-Haimendorf writes:

The conviction that this life is only one link in a chain of existences [sic] colours the Sherpa's outlook on many aspects of life. The basic unity of all sentient beings is obvious to those who consider animals as sharing the human fate of rebirth and man's involvement in his society is accentuated by the possibility of successive reincarnations within the same environment. Individual actions, on the other hand, lose their irrevocability when judged against the background of a belief in eternally recurring opportunities. If this life is not the only one on earth, there is no finality in any fate, and no permanence in either fortune or misfortune (1964:xvii).

And in attempting to help the reader understand the seemingly laissez-faire attitude of the Sherpa toward "sin", von Fürer-Haimendorf writes "the Sherpa's attitude in these matters is perhaps comparable with a European's view of parking offenses or the evasion of customs duty, which only the most tender conscience will regard as sin" (1964:279). Although Hitchcock's work is far more descriptive in nature in contrast to von Fürer-Haimendorf's, it still strives to "give the details that make it possible to understand behaviour" (1966-viii).

From "other" to subject: The middle era is characterized by a growing awareness of the diversity of the anthropological "other". Unlike the earlier period when all Nepalis were seen as members of only one or possibly two cultures, both works recognize diversity within the groups. Hitchcock comments that although the Magars are certainly one tribe, "when one takes a closer view, differences appear" (1966:4). Hitchcock characterizes these differences as cultural (due to environmental differences—agriculturists vs. pastoralists) and recognizes that the group consists of several sub-tribes that "probably represent two different streams of migration" (1966:4). Likewise, Fürer-Haimendorf recognizes various Sherpa groups (1964:xiii), although he does not seem to make a distinction between the Solu and Khumbu Sherpa, a distinction I have noted in my own fieldwork.

The ethnographies of the middle period begin to add their subjects into their work. Rather than remaining as the undefined "other," as in the earlier works, the authors give their subjects names and faces. They begin to develop these subjects as something beyond the bizarre and faceless "other" of the earlier ethnographies, describing at length unique physical features and personality characteristics of certain individuals in the community which bring these subjects to life (although they still possess no voice of their own). Hitchcock provides a short life history to each member of the

households that he studied (1966:4-13) and Fürer-Haimendorf provides us a cursory introduction to one of his main informants, the hermit of Nagarjun.

Hitchcock employs a creative and picturesque writing style that succeeds in bringing his "subjects" to life by creating a vivid image in the mind of the reader. At many points, you feel as if you are reading a novel which he opens by introducing you to the characters. You meet them and along the way you learn about their clothing, religion, work routines, etc. Consider the following passage speaking of the Havildar (first major) of Banyan Hill:

He was also a typical Magar in appearance. About five feet tall, he was brown skinned, short, stocky, and wiry. His round face, with its definite mongoloid cast, told of an ancestry whose place of origin ultimately was Inner Asia or China. Both he and his wife could cover twenty miles a day barefoot over steep mountain trails. Like all men of the hamlet, he wore a cotton shirt with ties, a cummerbund, and a short canvas skirt. His heavily muscled thighs were eloquent testimony to the strength his way of life required and engendered. In religious matters the Halvidar believed in the seemliness of traditional ways. In this respect he was like Maila Ba, and the two of them occasionally joined by Saila Ba, carefully carried out observances from which the headman had turned away. He had a strong sense of craftsmanship and made the best wicker baskets in Banyan Hill (Hitchcock 1966:9).

Furthermore, we read of the "stick-like arms of grandma" (Hitchcock 1966:5) or of "A slender woman with flashing black eyes ... using paste to stamp his [Shiva] emblems on her body—the sun on her right shoulder, a seashell on her left shoulder, and the God's footprints above each breast" (1966:6). Likewise, von Fürer-Haimendorf opens his book with pictures and an introduction to the hermit of Nagarjun, one of the monks at the Tengboche monastery. This introduction serves to put a face to the belief system that the rest of the book is dedicated to exploring. This method of writing is used to set the stage so that you feel as if you are learning about an old friend's way of life rather than about an anthropological specimen. This perhaps displays the most striking difference between the early and middle ethnographies. In these middle ethnographies there is a lack of the ethnocentric language characteristic of the earlier colonial works and a respect for these "subjects" as people is developed. It is clear that the then contemporary theory of cultural relativity informed these later writings in a

way which was intended to build appreciation and respect for the Magar and Sherpa peoples and their way of life. These authors described a peoples way of life that was different but then went on to help us understand the meaning behind these different life ways.

Ethnographic authority and modernism: Both works develop a sense of the authority of the ethnographer by opening with an account of their residence with the people. Hitchcock tells us of his experience of discovering the Magar while trekking in the Nepal Himalaya and then staying with them from 1960-62 (1966:1). Likewise von Fürer-Haimendorf traces his experience with the Sherpa in depth in the preface to his book, thus establishing ethnographic authority. We are expected to accept them as authorities on the subject because they have lived there. The use of first-person (which only occurs in the openings of these two books), adopted to describe their personal experiences in the villages, is also a rhetorical strategy intended to heighten the sense of the author's ethnographic authority.

Other rhetorical devices characteristic of the "modern"¹⁶ era in anthropology are also employed to further develop this some of ethnographic authority. McGee and Warms (1996:480) have suggested that "some of the attributes of modernist writing in anthropology are detachment, the assumption of a position of scientific neutrality, and rationalism." Detachment is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the first-person pronoun comes to be used after the opening chapter in both works (as mentioned above). The exclusive use of third-person throughout the rest of the ethnography is intended to suggest the ethnographer's "objective distance" and, therefore, scientific neutrality. Concerning this literary trope MacGee and Warms have written:

One of the more insidious writing conventions is that of the omniscient narrator, the authoritative third-person observer who replaces the fallible first person ... the use of the omniscient narrator heightens the sense of scientific objectivity projected by the text, but it also severs the relationship between what the ethnographer knows and how he or she came to know it (1996:481).

Both works display a plethora of examples of the use of the omniscient narrator, thus assuming scientific neutrality. Neither author speaks to the influence which their presence may here upon the culture being viewed nor to the influence of their own backgrounds and personalities upon their

interpretations. It is as if we are to believe that they are invisible as well as totally neutral and objective, flies upon the walls of the Sherpa and Magar cultures. Concerning rationalism, the form of both ethnographies (as mentioned earlier) expresses the assumption that through the systematic dissection of each of the elements of culture (the checklist) we can indeed arrive at an objective and scientific explanation of culture. Hitchcock even views culture as a controllable static laboratory specimen when he writes "I assumed there were factors besides geographical location that caused communities to differ from one another, and if possible I wanted to hold them constant" (1966:1). The influence of cultural materialism is evident as these authors intend to analyze culture using a physical science model, reducing culture to an empirical material phenomenon.

Still pristine: Surprisingly, the ethnographies of the middle period still share with the earlier works the sense of Nepal as an unknown land. Hitchcock describes the country as "a region barely known to anthropologists" (1966:2) and credits Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa's conquering of Mt. Everest (which took place in 1953) and the legends from of the World Wars of the Gurkha soldiers, as the bravest of the brave, as the catalyst to a renewed interest in the place and its people. Likewise, von Fürer-Haimendorf begins his book by stating:

In 1953 Nepal was a country virtually unknown to anthropologists, and when I set out for Khumbu, the region of high altitude at the foot of Mount Everest, I had only the vaguest idea of the people I would encounter (1964:xiii).

Again, as in the earlier works, history would seem the best explanation for this idea of Nepal as a mysterious land. The expulsion of all foreigners from Nepal occurred in 1768, and this policy of protectionism from extensive foreign influence lasted until 1951, shortly after the return of the Shah family to power. Once Nepal opened, the world noticed Mount Everest and the interesting peoples of Nepal, and the place once again seemed as virgin as it had to Kirkpatrick when he declared it *Terra Incognita*.

It is also a bit surprising that like the earlier works, neither accounts for the impact of the then recent political unrest in the country. In 1947 Nepal witnessed the first open political protest against the ruling Rana family who had usurped the throne nearly 100 years earlier¹⁷. Political unrest continued to grow in Nepal and finally came to a head in the 1970's with more violent demonstrations demanding democracy. The villages were not immune to the political problems during this era and yet neither ethnography makes any

mention of the growing problems that would have existed during the ethnographer's tenure.

Ethnography: The post-modern era 1980-present: Although I have titled this final period under review as the post-modern era, the works of this period actually reflect a wide variety of theoretical orientations. As Thomas Khun (1970) has noted, paradigm shifts are not brusque, but rather there is a slow transition from one paradigm to another. This has indeed been true for the periods reviewed for this research. Although I have chosen certain works to display the effects of the dominant paradigms of anthropological inquiry during each period, I have ignored others written at the same time which still reflect other older paradigms. For instance, I picked up a work written during the middle period (Nepali 1965) which had all the characteristics of the writings of the earlier period. It should be noted that the dates associated with the three periods are arbitrary and that the works from any one period are more likely to reflect a transition away from older theoretical concerns and toward more current concerns. But there is always a lag time in which one can find contemporary works that reflect both the old and the new paradigms.

The three books chosen for review in this period display much theoretical diversity. The first, *Illness Beliefs and Feeding the Dead in Hindu Nepal* (Stone 1988) is reflective of symbolic anthropology linking social ideology to illness through symbols of food in a Hindu village in central Nepal. Stone uses the participant observation method in tandem with formal interviews and a survey to collect the data from which her conclusions were formulated. The second, *Against a Peacock Sky* (Connell 1991) is an ethnographic description based entirely on participant observation in a Nepali-speaking village in the remote western region of Jumla. And the third book, *Body and Emotion: The Aesthetics of Illness and Healing in the Nepal Himalayas* (Desjarlais 1992) is a highly reflexive post-modern and yet neo-symbolic account of an anthropologist who studies shamanism among the Yolmo¹⁸ Sherpa of central Nepal by becoming a shaman.

The influence of symbolic anthropology: The influence of symbolic anthropology can best be seen in the work of Stone (1988). Culture is viewed as a mental phenomenon (as opposed to the materialist orientation of the earlier period), but one which can still be empirically studied (as opposed to the contemporary post-modernists belief). The goal of symbolic anthropology is to study symbolic actions within a culture in order to determine how people formulate their reality. Stone set out to study how the Hindu Nepalis construct their cultural reality regarding illness. Her

book demonstrates how social ideology is reflected in the cultural beliefs about illness. She demonstrates how food exchanges symbolically mirror relationships in the wider social hierarchy and how food is symbolically used to "express the themes underlying social relationships" (1988:v). Although not published until 1988, Stone's fieldwork for this book was conducted mainly between 1973 and 1975 (1988:v) which was during the zenith of symbolic anthropology (McGee and Warms 1996:430).

Although Desjarlais' (1992) work is much more post-modern in character, it still reflects the influence of symbolic anthropology. Desjarlais, dissatisfied with symbolic interpretation from the outside (which is characteristic of the work from the 1970s), becomes a shaman and then translates his experience relying heavily upon symbolic interpretation.

Reflexivity: One feature of post-modern writing is that it is highly reflexive. The earlier ethnographers presented their findings as objective scientific fact, as if they were invisible and their presence had no impact upon the culture they were observing. And their personal frustrations and failures were excluded from their final written ethnographies. Perhaps as a result of the publication of Malinowski's famous diaries in 1967, anthropology has begun to re-figure itself, becoming more reflexive in the process. The last two works reviewed from this period (Connell 1991 and Desjarlais 1992) are more characteristic of this self-reflexivity. Unlike the earlier periods, first-person is employed throughout the books and Connell's writings are full of self admissions when she confesses feeling the "rush of panic" upon entering a village where the "paths were littered with excrement, and the houses were very close together," and of experiencing "a sense of being trapped," as people were staring and shouting at her and as stray dogs chased her through the village (1991:7). We learn of her personal struggles as she felt "horrified" and "appalled" by the "sheer arrogance of anthropology" as a sick child was brought to her to be given medicine of which she had none while earlier that afternoon she had told the people that her reason for coming was to learn about their lives so that she could write a book for people at home (1991:9). She writes of living in a room she "hated" (1991:11) and of being "irritated" and "exhausted" by the constant inquisitiveness of the people of the village (1991:13), and of "never really [coming] to terms with some of the physical discomforts that were part of everyone else's accepted reality" (1991:15). Connell's book displays the blending of anthropological field notes and personal journal entries into the actual published ethnography, a post Malinowski's diary self-reflexiveness which is characteristic of post-modern anthropological writing.

Although exhibiting the characteristics of a post-modern work, remnants of the influence of the modern period can still be seen in Connell's ethnography as well. There is still a touch of the empirical scientist seeking the shopping list of cultural features when she writes "on the days before I went [to interview informants] I prepared various subjects—for example, caste, religion, kinship or education" (1991). One is left to wonder why she included some cultural features while ignoring others.

Subjectivity and the limitation of ethnographic authority: It is the third book under review (Desjarlais 1992) which exhibits the strongest markings characteristic of the post-modern era. McGee and Warns have stated that it is a presupposition of post-modern thought that,

because we cannot separate our ways of knowing from our language and culture, it is impossible for us to interpret the world in a truly detached, objective manner. We all interpret the world around us in our own way, based on our language, cultural background, and personal experiences (1996:480).

Desjarlais seems to begin his work with this presupposition of his own subjectivity. Not only is the ethnographer's experience subjective because of his/her own personal background, it is also subjective because of his/her part in the system being studied. He writes:

I want to stress that the ethnographer's vision is both structured and hindered by local systems of knowledge. The field research connects with the same communicative pathways that her¹⁹ informants use; her blindspots and insights form part of the cultural cybernetic, her "subjective position"²⁰ influences the interpretation of local sensibilities, and she is affected by similar cultural paradoxes and pathologies of knowledge. The anthropologist becomes part of the system being studied (1992:24).

Therefore, even after becoming a Yolmo shaman himself, any conclusions drawn by the ethnographer must be considered but a mere approximation of the Yolmo shaman's true cultural experience. Desjarlais writes:

All this suggests that my trances did not involve a template that recorded, like a photograph, what Yolmo shamans experience of trance. Instead, my memory of the trances

should be taken as a sensory transcript of a conversation between cultures, with my experiences marking the crossover between American and Himalayan ways of being. The trances thus reflected more my idiosyncratic attempts to conform to and make sense of Yolmo society than it did any Yolmo intimacies (Desjarlais 1992:17).

It would seem that this work conforms to the image of post-modernist thought which has been characterized to "insist that there is no definitive understanding of a culture, just various readings set in personal, social, and temporal contexts" (McGee and Warms 1996:499). That is not to say, however, that there is, therefore, no value in studying another culture from a post-modern point of view. McGee and Warms (1996:482) have commented that a "moderate post-modern position offers significant insights to anthropologists." It seems that Desjarlais tries to encompass this more moderate post-modern position suggesting that although his experiences "never escaped the prism of [his] own cultural reality," his "comprehension of Yolmo society gradually developed in the months after the initial trances, [his] experiences of trance, patterned by the context in which [he] found [himself], slowly began to compare more to what the shamans seem to experience" (1992:18). Even so, Desjarlais seems ultimately plagued with the task of "translation" when he writes:

But I hasten to note that translation of this sort [by this he means the translation of Yolmo experience via his ethnography) remains forever uncertain. Like the "shamanistic" visions, my rough map of Yolmo experience is hedged in by the limits of my purview, and so lies at best in a no-man's-land, betwixt and between cultures (1992:34).

It seems that, due to the constraints of self, the anthropologist's ethnographic authority is self-limiting. He/she is no longer able to speak for others about their culture, but is resigned to become as much a part of the community as possible and present ethnography as nothing more than his/her own self portrait as a member of that community.

A growing agency: One can also see the importance given to the concerns of the informants in Desjarlais' work. He even discarded traditional models of anthropological inquiry (i.e. life histories, clinical data, residence patterns, and personal narratives) because he considered these methods to be inconsiderate of the local value placed on privacy (1992:25). This concern for the rights of the informants as well as his withholding of the claim to

speak for the natives (characteristic of the earlier works) are both examples of the growing importance given to agency in recent ethnography. It must be noted, however, that due to the post-modern approach of this work, the voices of the people are still not heard. The ethnographer can only relate his own experience, therefore, unless a Yolmo writes a book, their voice still remains silent. It seems that this may be a paradox created by the desire to hear native voices in our work, yet to believe that, because of our subjectivity, we are unable to even represent their voices in our ethnography.

The remaining importance of history: The remaining influence of Boas is strongly felt in Desjarlais' text. He has effectively incorporated history into his ethnography pointing to the strong influence of Tibet upon the Yolmo Sherpa religion, as well as the strong influence of Indo-Aryans upon their language, customs and politics (1992:5-7). Attention is given to the Yolmo Sherpa's place in a wider Nepali social system (1992: 10) and attention is given to the ethnic diversity which is a growing reality among the Yolmo Sherpa (1992:12). This same sense of history is totally lacking from Connell's (1991) book and is only minimally represented in Stone's (1988) work. The inclusion of history adds a depth and richness to ethnography that would otherwise be lacking, and it is good to see the valuable contributions of past anthropologists being incorporated into post-modern anthropology.

Still romantic: The sense of romanticism noted in both of the earlier periods is carried on strongly in Connell's book. She states in her introduction:

Like most anthropologists I imagined being somewhere remote. I was romantic about field-work to the extent that I wanted to immerse myself in a traditional culture, one that was still relatively untainted by modern and Western influences. I was also keen to be somewhere that hadn't already been overrun by anthropologists—I wanted a patch of my own (1991:3).

Connell chose Jumla, a small district capital in the far west. She "reasoned" that because Jumla is a ten day walk from the nearest road and only serviced by a small aircraft twice a week, the impact of modern society would have little bearing on the lives of people one or two days' walk away" (1991:3). Granted, there is far less Western influence in Jumla than in the capital city of Kathmandu, but there is a large Western run technical school in Jumla

staffed by western missionaries that has a large regional impact. In fact, in 1990 I stayed in a village one day's walk (up the same river valley that Connell had visited) from Jumla with the family of one of the students from the technical school. And while in Jumla I had a coke and saw a boy in Jumla bazaar sporting a Michael Jackson tee-shirt. Jumla is still a remote place by Western standards, but the impact of Western culture is understated in Connell's work perhaps reflecting her romanticism. Connell also states:

As to other anthropologists: from what I could gather there hadn't been many. The few who had worked there for any length of time had been researching high caste Hindus—Brahmins, Chhetris and Thakuris (1991:3).

Again, the place is not overflowing with anthropologists, but a significant amount of work has been done in the region, including work done by Dor Bahadur Bista, the most famous Nepali anthropologist. It also seems a bit romantic after having stated that there was a food shortage in the district (1991:5) and having witnessed a child dying of malnutrition (1991:9) to declare:

For all its hardship, life had a basic logic that we've long since lost in the West. I loved the absence of shops and advertising, the purity of children who'd never watched television, the great pleasure of eating different foods as they ripened with the seasons—the first wild greens and strawberries, a rare bowl of milk in the summer—as opposed to our own processed and preserved permanent supplies (1991:16).

I too, enjoy these elements of rural Nepali life, but I hate the fact that the infant mortality rate in the Jumla district is nearly 40 percent. It seems that a bit of the idealism present in the earlier ethnographies of Nepal (that of Nepal as an untouched and pristine land) has seeped into the writings of Connell.

Conclusion

The ethnographic works reviewed from the three periods have added much to our understanding of the history and cultures of the people of Nepal. But they have done more than that. They have offered us a glimpse of ourselves as ethnographers. We are all born into "a time," an anthropological "era," influenced by what has come before and shaping what will follow. These ethnographic writings have revealed to us as much about the times in which they were written and the perspectives of their authors as they have,

perhaps, about the subjects they attempt to describe. Through these three periods we can follow several major theoretical shifts in anthropology. The slowly developing attitude away from ethnocentrism toward cultural relativity and a respect for other ways of life. We can see the development of the anthropological "other" from specimen of inquiry to subject with a name and a face (yet without a voice) to research informant or cultural tutor whose concerns can actually shape the form of our research. We can track the move toward more "scientific" approaches in anthropological fieldwork and, finally, to a questioning of our ability to even do objective ethnography.

Several current anthropologists have suggested that the ethnographies we produce are mere copies of paintings, part reflection of the reality we see and part personality of the painter. This post-modern perspective is useful for understanding the different forms which the ethnography of Nepal has taken over the centuries as well as helping anthropology as a discipline come to better understand the impact that the times have upon ethnography. The more pessimistic among us have suggested that like copyists of an ancient Roman painting, we hope to create a veracious image of the original yet only a lifeless copy emerges in ethnography, lacking the spirit of the original. The more sanguine among us understand that we cannot reproduce the "original" but that our ethnographic attempts can, through careful scholarship, be a good representation and close approximation of the original. When I buy a reproduction of a Monet impressionistic painting I understand that it is not the original²¹ and yet I hang it on my wall, because although it is not the original (I can't afford that on an anthropologist's salary), it still is aesthetically pleasing and enjoyable. I understand that it is not an exact representation, rather it is influenced by time, perspective of the artist, etc., but I still enjoy it and recognize it as a Monet. Likewise, the cultural experience may not be 100% translatable through our ethnographies, but our attempts can still produce good representations and close approximations which, although they are understood only to be "copies" of the original, can still be informative and enjoyed.

Whatever the "truth" may be, we have learned much about ourselves by looking back and this has shaped how we see things today and will also influence how people see things in the future. There is much to be learned from such an endeavour.

Notes

1. An attempt to civilize the "natives" by teaching them to appreciate the benefits of civilization.
2. This spelling is often used in the early work. The current spelling is Nepal.

3. It was from the tiny hilltop kingdom of Gorkha that Prithvi Narayan Shah arose to conquer the surrounding kingdoms and finally the three kingdoms of the Kathmandu valley unifying Nepal as a single kingdom in 1768.
4. Although the journey was billed a political mission the envoy included scientists who carried out various experiments and even an artist. This envoy, and the manuscript it produced, mirrors the British Enlightenment expedition of Captain Cook to the South Pacific around the same time.
5. It should be noted, however, that this is an edited work focusing mainly on language, religion and culture. Hodgson contributed over 170 articles to various scholarly journals (only 19 are presented here). Over half of these dealt with the zoology of the region. He also wrote on geography, education and military topics (Hodgson 1874: endmatter pg5*- 10*), many of the same topics covered by Kirkpatrick.
6. In 1810, the British, bothered by further expansion of Nepal into British territory in India went to war. The war lasted six years and was devastating to Nepal whose borders shrunk dramatically to the British. As a condition of the Treaty of Friendship which ended the war, a single British officer was allowed residence in Nepal although he was forbidden from travelling outside of the Kathmandu valley.
7. One of the philosophical debates of the Enlightenment was whether human society had degenerated from a Golden Age or was developing upward through evolutionary stages. The enlightenment thinker J. Rousseau, expressing a belief in the former, concluded that primitive man was "noble" and his society had degenerated through time. Opposed to this view were Thomas Hobbs and John Locke who, although they disagreed about the exact nature of primitive man, argued that primitive man was "savage" and his societies needed to be controlled and directed toward morally superior civilization.
8. The poor conditions encountered by Kirkpatrick and Oliphant were more likely a product of war not moral inferiority. At the time of Kirkpatrick's visit, Nepal was emerging from an era of war. Only 20 years before Prithvi Narayan Shah (the 1st king of modern Nepal) had conquered all of the small feudal hilltop kingdoms which Kirkpatrick was now passing on his way into Kathmandu. Certainly the remnants of war were still obvious.
 Oliphant was traveling in Nepal 60 years later, only 34 years after the Nepalese War which was devastating for Nepal. History would better account for the poverty, but moral inferiority would provide a better justification for colonial expansion.
9. Although Hodgson does not address the military formidability directly in this book, it should be remembered that he wrote many other essays on this (Hodgson endmatter 5*).
10. This treaty brought an end to the Nepali-English war of 1810-16. The treaty was really a loss for both sides. Nepal lost much of its territory to the British and the British lost many troops and failed in their attempt to completely conquer Nepal. Interestingly enough, part of the settlement

- gave the British the right to have a single "official resident" stationed in Kathmandu. This position was filled by B. H. Hodgson from 1820-1843.
11. A generic term given to mean soldiers of the Magar, Gurung and Khas tribes who gained fame fighting for the King of Gorkha.
 12. The ecological approach gave primacy to those features most closely associated with subsistence activities, or what Steward called the "cultural core" (McGee 1996:221).
 13. Cultural materialism, which became a dominant theory in American anthropology by 1960, posited that technology—including subsistence strategies—determines culture.
 14. McGee (1996) has stated that "Boas believed that to explain cultural customs, one must examine them from three fundamental perspectives: environmental conditions, psychological factors, and historical connections, of which history was the most important" (1996:128).
 15. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1971) provided us with one of the first, and perhaps the most famous, definitions of culture. To Tylor, culture is "that complex whole, including knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man [sic] as a member of a society.
 16. Modernism is a term borrowed from literary criticism and art and has been applied to the era of positivism and nationalism in anthropology (roughly between the 1920s and mid 1970s) (McGee and Warms 1996:480).
 17. In 1846 the shrewd army general Jung Bahadur Rana accomplished a military coup establishing himself as Prime Minister and reducing the king to a prisoner in his own palace in a puppet monarchy. He later declared himself king and turned his interests solely to the opulent development of his own family's estate. It was a period of time when, to quote one historian, "the rest of the country stayed frozen in the middle ages."
 18. The Yolmo (also known as Helambu Sherpa) are of Tibeto-Burman stock inhabiting the Helambu region, a high altitude area in central Nepal.
 19. I find it interesting that the author uses the feminine pronoun as the unmarked generic pronoun. This is not necessarily reflective of post-modernism, but certainly marks a sensitivity to political correctness which is absent in the earlier writings.
 20. Here Desjarlais is expanding the thesis of Pierre Bourdieu and Renato Rosaldo, two well known post-modern anthropologists who suggest that anthropologists are in fact, "positioned subjects" in the culture they are studying (Desjarlais 1996:24). The author's use of these post-modern sources in a supportive manner further mark this work as post-modern.
 21. Taken to its logical conclusion even the "original" is not reality, but only an interpretation of reality, a scene that Monet was observing (and some feel he should have put his glasses on first). If we accept that culture is not superorganic (to use Kroeber's term) but only resides in the minds of each individual member of that society (and their interpretations are varied), then that which we are "copying" is even more fluid than a Roman painting.

The copy we produce may truly exist only in the mind of one member of the society: In our case, the ethnographer. I would contend, however, that if we have done good work, members of that society would recognize the ethnography as a good representation and close approximation of their culture and it can be as enjoyable to them and the outside world as the Monets gracing our walls are to us.

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