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Spatial Memorializing of Atrocity in 1857:

Memories, Traces, and Silences in Ethnography[1]

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Introduction

This paper explores the conjunction of memory, history and ethnography through an exploration of monuments. Memory here is regarded as a social process that incorporates multiple and often competing discourses of events, as framed in relationships of power. Memory may be silenced; it may be reconstituted; it is always framed through the multiple discourses of cultural signification and meaning. The present study interrogates the concept of landscape as a center or focal point of memory of places associated with events deemed significant, *les lieux de mémoire*, or "sites of meaning" (Nora 1989). In speaking of violence, these spaces comprise focal points for the testimonies of survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators. Such spaces may be centers for

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state discourses and for counter-discourses. Landscape is marked: this is where the Rani leaped to safety on her charger; *here* our hero fell; *there* is his grave or cremation spot; in *that city* is where my grandfather saw fifty Indian men strung up on a single tree during the war of 1857.[2]

The present work is part of a larger project that investigates the relationships of memory, violence, and the war of 1857. This project focuses on memorial landscapes and the transformations of memory of violence associated with these landscapes, roughly from the period of the war until 1960. Through the subsequent decades, new social movements, commoditization, shifts in state policy, and generational change gradually transformed the locus of memory. Narratives especially associated with British-built monuments become those supportive of the project of empire. The story of Indian monuments, however, appears to suggest a different basis for, and trajectory of, memorialization.

In this paper, I address questions of how ethnographic approaches may inform the understanding of spaces of memorialization. In this, I will consider two spaces of memory, one British, and one Indian. Recently it has been fashionable to speak of the détente between history and anthropology; I favor this dialogue. Yet "doing ethnography" is not—a popular accounts would have this—simply adding subaltern, gendered, or marginal discourses to social science discourse, nor is it just "reading across the grain," although this may be a useful method filtering elite discourses for traces of subaltern perspectives. Ethnography is emphatically not a condign solution to the

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2 The Rani of Jhansi supposedly leaped her horse off the battlements of Jhansi fort to escape attacking forces. Monuments mark the places where she died and where she was cremated. On the memory of the fifty executed men, John T. Hitchcock Papers [JTH], National Anthropology Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. Box 11 File 173. 17 "History."

question of whether or not the "subaltern" may speak—for it too reflects the biases, genres, and modes of presentation of its practitioners (Clifford 1988; Spivak 1988).[3] Ethnography and its subfield, ethnohistory, call for the integration of broad fields of discourse into analysis and in so doing, forefront questions of agency, of social relations, and the often taken-for-granted world views of multiple and diverse voices. It seeks to be comparative: even when the data, seemingly, draw from separate epistemologies of knowledge.

In the following discussion, the following terms are used: "monuments" are those natural or human-built physical features of the environment to which attach associations of the war of 1857. The monument may be a feature that is present at the site where memorialized events took place, and hence becomes an important signifier of these events. As will be seen, there are a host of cultural framings of the nature of monuments.

The second term used throughout is "war." I hasten to add, given how politicized this term proves to be with respect to the events of 1857, that this usage in anthropological practices reflects studies of the phenomenon in a variety of settings: state societies, non-state societies, pre-state societies, and those that are on the margins of state-level entities. Warfare is seen as collective violence in which armed groups fight other groups; it has many dimensions and diverse forms of participation (Ferguson 1995; Whitehead and Ferguson 1992). In the effort to talk about both British conceptions of the event—and these were by no means monolithic, particularly at the war's start, and those of their opponents, terminology needs generally to incorporate as generally as

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[3] Important in this discussion are the works by Bhadra (1988); Comaroff and Comaroff (1992); Cohn (1990); Dirks (2001); Guha 1988; Ludden (2001) and the articles in Ludden (2002). Also see Mathur (2000).

possible the wide range of meanings, intentions, goals, and understandings of the war by a variety of personnel with different relationships to this violence.

Lastly, “landscape” is the environment as mediated by human understanding and the practices associated with it (Lewis 1998:507; Harvey 1996:210-212, 304-306). The cultural system of meanings that describes an environment (the physical properties of a space) produces landscape. Landscape is a nexus of worldview, physical attributes, events, and memory that reflects an underling set of related symbols and meanings. Landscapes also are linked to tangible environments. This linkage is a property that in some cultural settings endows the landscape with particular authenticity in terms that which is being memorialized (Winter and Sivan 1999:37). Significant elements of landscape may be materially realized additionally through the objects associated with it, practices relating to death and memory, the cultural norms of behavior at sites of death, and the ways in which individuals encounter these sites (Halbwachs 1992). Social practices such as naming and the oral traditions associated with a space also link memory and landscape.

Regarding landscape as a culturally produced system of meanings provides an entry point for studying memories of the violence of 1857. This approach may help to unveil the post-war silences that so characterized Indian opponents of British rule, such as through the specifically Indian landscapes and monuments of the war (cf. Lahiri 2003; Narayan 1998; Rag 1998). Memorialization viewed in this light may provide clues as to how terror and mass violence are remembered or memory silenced in the context and formation of the colonial state.

This presentation first examines background to the study of memory, landscape, and monuments linked to ideas of death. It next considers the case of two memorial landscapes of the war of 1857: the Memorial Well garden in Kanpur, and the landscape of a village in Saharanpur district, Uttar Pradesh. One is well documented; the second conspicuously lacks this degree and type of documentation. Retrieval in this sense is fraught with difficulties. Each case is framed in terms of a very distinct set of ideas and expectations relating to death and to violence, but each of these framings must be seen in terms of their social histories over time.

A wide variety of sources have been consulted for this work: newspapers, magazines, journals, diaries, letter collections, books, essays, “instant” histories of the war, some produced while it was still in progress (1857-58), and the voluminous works produced over the decades following the war. Photographs, drawings, and paintings of sites provide a second form of evidence relation to the war’s landscapes. In the post-war period, growth of tourism to the war sites and of commodity production of objects for these tourists, such as guidebooks, postcards, albums, stereoscopic views, and travel writing reify the spaces and events associated with them. Inscriptions on monuments and memorial plaques provide yet another genre of meanings associated with these memorial landscapes. On the side of the British memorial landscapes, there is considerable documentation that is connected with producing narratives of the monument, its landscape, and the social relationships that surround it.

Documentation is sparse for non-British memorial landscapes. Post-war politics would make it difficult for opponents publicly to build memorials in plain view of the conqueror. These “sightings,” I must candidly admit, are at this stage of the project very

much a work in progress. In the search for such monuments, I have turned to a largely untapped source, that of ethnographic research in north India carried out up to 1960. Most of this material was collected from the 1920s to 1960—almost within the tail end of living memory of the war or of hearing of first-hand accounts of the war. Many of these works—which were not produced in the expectation of studying history—describe spaces that were the war zone and often very close to places where, historical records say, terrible things happened. Many of the English-language narratives of the war produced in 1857 were self-conscious about their authors' desire to record the event. Most of the mid-twentieth century ethnographies, in keeping with that era's low level of interest in history, have little to say about 1857. The war enters the ethnography almost despite the ethnographer's disinterest. I shall return to this topic later in this presentation.

War, Landscape, and Memorialization

Almost from the start of the Indian war of 1857 there were questions as to how it would be recalled.[4] The initial months of the conflict saw public debate over the war's meaning and conduct of combatants. Many of these authors expected that their testimony would be part of the great public memory of the war. Later, the victors constructed monuments, both inside as well as outside India. The monuments of the Indian opponents to British rule faced an antagonistic state, which regarded them as subversive, particularly right after the war.

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[4] Among early overviews of the war that attempt to make sense of events —often compilations of materials published in newspapers and journals that include sometimes harsh criticism of East India Company policy and of the conduct of military commanders—are Ball (1859), Dodd (1859), Malleson (1857), Vickers (1858).

The war of 1857 was incredibly bloody. Persons writing at this time noted the hangings of dozens of persons, strung up on lines of gallows, mass shooting or bayoneting of groups of prisoners, and—most horrific—"blowing from guns," where prisoners were blasted into bits from the mouth of a cannon: a method of execution that sprayed body parts, blood, and viscera in all directions. Trees became gallows. Corpses were left untended by roadsides, tossed into rivers or wells, buried in makeshift graves, or hastily cremated. City neighborhoods, forts, towns, and villages were blown up, burned, and destroyed along the main thoroughfares of the fighting.

The war created a swathe of death that stretched inland from Bihar to Punjab, and south from the Himalaya fringe into central India. Travelers writing in 1857 noted bone yards of humans and animals where the worst fighting occurred, and corpses that had been partially dismembered by dogs, pigs, and wild animals. Human populations in the war zone fled away from the centers of fighting or, in some cases, strengthened their walls, armed their men, and attempted to defend themselves.[5] News of atrocities and of mass death flashed across the countryside.[6] The level of violence swiftly escalated into a war of no quarter. Prisoners taken in fighting were systematically executed, as were those who surrendered. Military commanders carried out summary justice: capture, a pro-forma trial, and execution within a few hours or days. High profile victims' remains were put on display: carried about on pikes, propped up in prominent places, or left swinging in the breeze on gallows.

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[5] For examples, see Chunder 1869 (324-325, 365); Norman (1902: 103, 144, 291); Robertson (1859: 159); Sherer (1974: 61).

[6] See the *Calcutta Review,* "The Indian Crisis of 1857," p. 384 for a graphic account of sexual violence against British women..

The mass deaths of British women and children at Kanpur had an enormous impact on British views of the war. Sensationalized images of the events at Kanpur stirred British anger against Indians.[7] In Kanpur, arriving contingents of British troops would be taken to visit the well site. This experience, many testified, seared into them a rage against their opponents.[8] Memory of the Kanpur tragedy would be seminal in the conduct of the war, and central to accounts of it written in the succeeding decades. Even as the news of the disaster at Kanpur was arriving in Calcutta, there was a feeling that this space above all should be memorialized.

On August 3, 1857, shortly after hearing word of the mid-July discovery of the mass killing of British women and children at Kanpur, Lady Charlotte Canning (1818-1861), wife of the then-Governor-General declared that:

> "… There were fifteen young ladies in Cawnpore, and at first they wrote such happy letters…. Poor, poor things! Not one was saved! I want that well where they were all thrown down to be consecrated, with the ground around, and a plain monument put over them. C. [Canning] would do it—a *chapelle expiatoire.* I must think of a design, or—ask Lou [her sister] quietly to make me one."[9]

Overall, the study of war monuments features the dynamics of representation and the process of memorialization, primarily in European and North American settings (Eng and Kazanjian 2003; Winter and Sivan 1999). Colonial settings have received less attention. The state is implicated particularly with respect to the complex interactions of

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[7] For early British responses to the events at Kanpur, see Shore (1858) and *Calcutta Review*, September 1859. Recent studies have examined gender issues related to this and the war generally. See Blunt (1999); Paxton (1999); Robinson (1996); Sharpe (1993); Tuson (1998).

[8] For descriptions of encounters with this well, see… REFS

[9] Journal letter of Viscountess Canning, quoted in Hare (1893a: 258).

groups in the conception, planning, design, execution, use, and subsequent histories of memorial sites (Anderson 1983:9-10; King 1998). War monuments in particular embody nationalism and the idealized characteristics of the nation (Hoffenberg 2001; speck 1996). Memorials thus are never simply about any particular war or exemplary personality associated with it, but also about national and imperial identities. Yet regime change and the rise to power of formerly subordinated groups often transform memorials. Statues topple, new signage appears, and people recast, reframe, and rework their memory narratives (Golden 2004). An example of this treatment of memorials appears in Japan: from the seventeenth through early nineteenth centuries, the Japanese state attempted to destroy memorials to the leaders of peasant protests. Peasants often resorted to subterfuge, misnaming or disguising shrines. After the 1868 Meiji restoration, these monuments became valued symbols of early peasant democracy (Walthall 1986).

In the context of the monument and the landscape, memory may be a valued form of social or symbolic capital, for memory provides the ideological link of shared (or rejected) values that position one group or individual with respect to others (Schwarcz 1994:47). As such they also may be sites of contested representation, as competing groups seek for their ideas to be realized in the monument and its landscape.

The study of memory and violence is a second focus of investigation, generally regarded in terms of the relationship between individual memory and collective forms of representation (Winter and Sivan 1999:10-16). There is much overlap between studies of violence generally concerned with memory, and the memorialization process, particularly from the standpoint of victims. Over time, the testimony of survivors, witnesses to violence, and perpetrators also become forms of memorialization (Sanders 2003;

LaCapra 2001:23). One question these studies ask is, how does subjective experience of trauma transform the flow of memory? Trauma also involves the cultural mediation of memory, and the forms through which it might be expressed or silenced.

Yoneyama (1999) takes this intergenerational reconstruction of memory further, to look at gendered, occupational, and ethnic differences (Japanese vs. ethnic Korean) in the relationship of subject positionality and the social construction of meanings attached to Hiroshima's memorials of the atom bomb attack. Women's positions within social networks, the cultural framings of discourse of violence, and the multiple forms through which memory may be expressed have been explored with respect to Delhi women's experiences of violence (Das 1990, 1997). Studies such as these point toward the possibilities for constructing a "cultural poetics" of both violence and memory (Whitehead 2004). Cultural rules (themselves often a matter for contestation) establish the meanings and boundaries of the memory of violence (Hinton 2002; Strathern, Stewart and Whitehead 2006).

The British memorials of the 1857 war in India represent a transitional moment from the former practices of monument construction, largely initiated by small groups of elites, to the production of monuments through general public participation (King 1998; Whaley 1980). The dead of wars become mourned not simply as family members, but as sacrifices to the achievement of goals by the nation-state. Some monuments, such as Kanpur's Memorial Well monument (1863) were essentially the projects of a few highly placed individuals. On the other hand, the All Souls Church, built within a few years in

that same city as a memorial of the war (dedicated 1875), was supported by groups in Britain, British India, and even Indian princely states that allied with the British cause.[10]

Western cultural sensibilities of memorial landscapes regard these special points of contact between the living and the dead. The places and material objects associated with death attach to memory in special ways (Hallam and Hockey 2001). Ground is “sacred,” even if unconsecrated, because of the presence of human remains or former scenes of violence. An important element of this, developed since the latter nineteenth century and the growth of the garden cemetery movement, is the spatialization of death: it should confer on the interred dead a final resting place (Cannadine 1981; Palgi and Abramovitch 1984; Sears 1989). The spaces where graves are found cannot casually be touched for, say, excavation, removal of contents, and new construction. These practices underscore a sensibility of timelessness with respect to the material remains of death and of the landscape itself.

This cultural illusion that time should not operate in these memorial sites is emphasized by their use of space, by visual markers, and by the employment of symbols and rhetoric that suggest a seamless link between the present time and an imagined past. Earlier in the nineteenth century, neoclassical forms suggested Roman antiquity. By the 1850s, Gothic architectural features also suggested this connection. Unfortunately, these efforts to keep time at bay confront physical processes of decay. Reconstruction or preservation may become necessary (Farmer 1999). This process occurred at Lucknow, where the British Residency—venerated as a site of resistance to Indian besiegers in 1857—had to be shored up soon after the war’s end to prevent it from collapsing on

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[10] For other studies of monuments, see Lahiri (2003); Llewellyn-Jones (1985).

visitors. Modifications to sites can generate their own dynamic, as later generations may undo earlier reconstructions and seek to create a more satisfactory version of the original space.

Whereas the Western concepts of sites often concern themselves with authenticity linked to the physical configuration of the site, which must be as "original" as possible to its state at the moment of the commemorated event, Indian concepts of time and space may see such concerns differently. In Hinduism, time flows through a series of ages (we are in the darkest one, the Age of Kali), even as past time is immanent in the present: as time recedes, it recapitulates itself (O'Flaherty 1984:242-243). It is impossible to "freeze" time. Spaces associated with the deaths of significant individuals may become sacred in the context of the continued presence of this individual's intercession with others: it is this relational aspect that infuses the landscape with memory, not its physical properties.

Landscape is inescapably connected to the social lives and deaths of its people. Landscape is incandescent with the dead: those who are virtuous and protective, such as ancestors, who are deified as *pitrs*; and also, local heroes and those who become angry or demanding ghosts, such as those of women hungry for the souls of children and of men without heirs. Those who died violently could become dangerous ghosts (Bayly 1981: 155; Knipe 1989; Freed and Freed 1993). Religion scholars talk about this element of landscape as part of India's sacred geography. It includes aspects such as the orientation of objects to one another; tutelary deities; ancestral goddesses; border-protecting deities; and saints, whose attachment to persons and to place may call them forth at times of danger (Cort 2007; Fuller 1992: 39-50; Minturn 1993:161-162).

Monuments include *chattris* (cenotaphs), small domed structures supported on four carved pillars on a platform. Royal cenotaph complexes could be complex and incorporate dozens of chattris. Others might erect a simple stone slab with a carved relief. These monuments recalled different types of persons and deaths. The memorials marked those who died through heroic sacrifice: a warrior, a *sati*, holy men and women. In places where these dead manifested, through spirit possession of an individual or through dreams, the monument might grow into a substantial shrine where people brought offerings and prayers. Around Varanasi, diverse types of dead—Hindu and Muslim alike—were honored with shrines. Those whose deaths occurred in fighting might become *Bir Babas*, warrior-deities to be venerated (Coccari 1989).

Muslim funeral rituals include burial of the dead and subsequent ceremonies, particularly the feast held to mark forty days after the death. Saints' death anniversaries are commemorated, sometimes with special prayers, worship through song, and distribution of alms. In 1853, traveler Bayard Taylor (1855:135) found the graves of saints and Mughal notables were covered with elaborate, embroidered cloths, and decorated with wreaths. Certain elements, such as commemorative feasting, erection of memorial stones, and creation of charitable institutions, done in memory of a family member, are broadly shared understandings and practices. There should be a mourning period, connected with rituals that eased the passage of the soul to the afterlife. The complex of beliefs relating to ghosts, its embodiment in spirit possession, and construction or elaboration of built spaces associated with these ghosts may, in this sense, constitute memory.

Those who live on the land share in its transcendent supernatural qualities, by virtue of consumption of its products and by contact with it. Land's generally beneficent character is disrupted by contact with death and blood, for blood is a dangerous, ritually polluting substance (Babb 1975: 204-205). Bloodshed does not sanctify, in the Christian hermeneutical sense of sacrifice and ultimate redemption, as recapitulated for example in Abraham Lincoln's "hallowed ground," or Rupert Brooke's nostalgic space that is "forever England" (Lincoln 1863; Brooke 1915).

The "Memorial Well" at Kanpur

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the "Memorial Well" monument in Kanpur had the aspect of a mannered, formal landscape. Clipped lawns and hedges bordered trim pathways. Trees and bushes associated with European symbols of death were planted nearest the memorial, while a border of taller trees, obscured the view of the city beyond. The setting could be an English country vista. The *Imperial Guide to India* noted of this landscape in 1904:

> The **Memorial over the Well** is one of the most beautiful monuments in existence. It stands in a lovely garden, within which so many awful scenes were enacted. Over the well is a most lovely 'Angel of the Resurrection' in white marble by Marochetti (given by Queen Victoria). Over the arch is written 'These are they which came out of great tribulation,' while, round the wall, marking the circle of the well, is a longer inscription detailing the iniquitous massacre by Nana Dhundu Pant. Around the well is a beautiful Gothic screen designed by the late Sir H[enry] Yule, R.E., C.B. In the garden, to which Europeans and the caretakers alone have access, are other tombs, including those of women and children of the 6th Battery Bengal Artillery and the 32nd Foot (now the 1st Batt. Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry" (Murray 1904:111).

This word description presents the "Memorial Well" in timeless array, connected to key tropes of empire: the Queen, Christianity, the military, a romantic past of the British people, and the subjugated: "iniquitous" natives, excluded from the site and the properly domesticated natives, who care for the site. The monumental landscape takes the form of a garden cemetery, with its plantings of cypress, its Gothic monuments, and its iron-fenced cemetery space.[11] These visual cues link the Memorial Well garden to the fashionable suburban cemeteries of the British Isles and to its cathedral spaces. Images of the Memorial Well Garden from the mid-1860s underscore these themes by framing shots through foliage, viewed as a space whose only distant intrusion on the skyline is—a church steeple. This does not appear to be India, save for the crouching figures of the gardeners.

The Memorial Well Garden is one of the best-documented memorial landscapes of the war of 1857. Written descriptions, drawings, and photographs of the site document it from the discovery of the disaster here on July 17, 1857, through its reconstruction following Indian independence. A watercolor sketch of the space shortly after the discovery is based on an original drawing—that was also the basis for engravings that disseminated the image to a mass market. The viewpoint is from inside a room, looking out through an arched doorway into a courtyard. In the near foreground there are several articles strewn about, including a thick book (resembling a Bible), a clay water pot, and tiny shoes. Several food vessels are shown abandoned here and there. No blood is

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[11] Layout and design features are documented in a series of photographs by Samuel Bourne and by others taken in the mid-19th century. See Samuel Bourne 1865 "The Memorial Well, Cawnpore." Photo 11 (45), 1145, Album of Photographs, mostly by Samuel Bourne, in the Oriental and India Office Collection, British Library, and Unknown, ca. 1880s, "[Distant View of the] Memorial Well, Cawnpore," Bellew Collection of Architectural Views in India, Photo 50/2(95), 50295. Oriental and India Office Collection, British Library.

shown, but stained areas on the earth suggest gore. The caption makes clear the painter's views: The House (Native) in which OUR WOMEN were SLAUGHTERED by order of the NANA on 16th July 1857. From a drawing on the spot by Lieut CRUMP. RA.[12]

This description is a model of rectitude, contrasted with prose descriptions of the scene. Quoting from an who was at well in 1857…..

> " '…next morning we entered the town straight to where we heard that 175 ladies and children were confined, but on our arrival there, awful, awful to behold, there were all their clothes &c., strewn about the blood-stained ground. The place was a paved court-yard, and there were two inches of blood upon the pavement….and sowars entered the place where the poor victims were, and killed all the ladies, and threw the children alive as well as the ladies' dead bodies into a well in the compound. I saw it, and it was an awful sight. It appears from the bodies we saw, that the women were stripped of their clothes before they were murdered.' " (Vickers 1858: 128).

Prose descriptions linger over the traces of bodies: hair, clothing, blood. The language is infused with gendered images of violence "There lay the hapless mother and her innocent babe; the young wife and the aged matron ; girlhood in its teens, and infancy in its helplessness" (Ball 1859: 377).[13]

The site of the well was photographed several times in early 1858, after it had been reclaimed by Indian forces and then recaptured by the British in late November, 1857. What is clearly the oldest photograph graphically depicts the broken ground of a

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[12] This drawing is Lieut. Crump and Miss More, 1857, "Scene of Massacre at Cawnpore," Add. 37153, British Library. Lieut. Charles W. Crump, Engineer, of the Madras Fusilliers, was killed a few weeks later at Lucknow.

[13] For example, the "two inches of blood," clothing, and "naked bodies" of women appears in the report of this event in the American *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 1857, p. 834. (November, 1857, "The East," pp. 833-834. The next five decades saw many retellings of the events here (see for example Bennett 1913, Lee 1890, Shepherd 1980 [18__], Thomson 1859, Trevelyan 1865. Mukherjee (1998) discusses the struggle at Kanpur.

war zone.[14] On the right, a tangle of dead branches frames the photograph. The well is in its center, apparently open on top, and is protected from animals by a makeshift fence of posts and horizontal poles or rope. To the left side of the well stands a small memorial stone, the Celtic cross that was erected by men of Havelock's force soon after they arrived. This is inside a small square picket fence. No people are visible in the photograph. In the distant background, across the tumbled ground, appear buildings and trees. The second photograph, places the Celtic cross is in the foreground.[15] Behind it is the well, now protected by a sturdy wooden fence. The ground is smooth, and the space between the cross and well is bare. Many feet have walked between the cross and the well. A tree in leaf stands in the rear and to the right, in front of a tent and a small house. There are no humans present and the well and structure appear to isolated from the distant trees and houses.

Later photographs show the site after construction of the Memorial Well garden. By then the house at the site had been demolished, and the Celtic cross relocated away from the structure built over the well. The two constant elements in these photos are the well monument and the tree, which survived the war and grew to some height in the succeeding decades. The Memorial Well garden was a project originally of the Governor-General's wife, Lady Canning. She extensively discussed the design with Sir Henry Yule who, along with others completed the Memorial Well garden after Lady

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[14] Murray, John (1857-58), "The Well and Monument, Slaughter House, Cawnpore." Photo 52(36), 5236, in Murray Collection: Views in Delhi, Cawnpore, Allahabad and Benares," Oriental and India Office Collection, British Library.

[15] Tytler, Robert and Harriet, 1857-1858, "The [Bibighar] Well, Cawnpore. Photograph 193 (21), 19321, Oriental and India Office Collection, British Library.

Canning's sudden death in 1861 (Hare 1893:168).[16] She was part of Queen Victoria's circle and the choice of the fashionable sculptor Carlo Marochetti, who at the time of the commission was working on Prince Albert's mausoleum at Frogmore, and had completed work for Lady Canning's sister, reflects Lady Canning's social network.

The Well Memorial garden may be in India, but it could just as well be in Britain. The central figure in the Well Memorial is an angel who holds two palm branches. A cross rises up behind the angel's head, which is downcast. The palm branches, and placement in the setting of a tomb, make it clear that this is an angel of victory, the Christian victory over death. Yule certainly made this connection in a poem written two days after Lady Canning's death.[17] The iron gate to the Memorial Well monument reputedly was made of cannons captured from the enemy. No individual victims are named on the monument itself. The landscape is empty of the signs of violence that feature in prose descriptions and early photographs of the site.

The space becomes a shrine to nationalism and to imperialism, with its trophies, its Christian symbolism of death, and its mimicking of landscapes in the metropole. Disturbing elements, such as Indians, were allowed only with special permission, or as the gardeners and water carriers who kept the grounds lush and green, in what contemporary visitors otherwise describe as a dry and dusty city. The Memorial Well garden fits easily into the genre of monuments that can be seen as messages for and to the British community, and were about its view of its enterprise in India (Groseclose (1995).

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[16] Sir Henry Yule of the Bengal Engineers (1820-1889), served as the Secretary, public works. He and Lady Canning traveled together prior to her death, and he was responsible for the design of her tomb, at Barrackpore (Refs – Hare).

[17] Sir Henry Yule's *Memoir* (Francis 1903) records a poem that he wrote two days after Lady Canning's burial in which he explicitly referred to "victorious palms."

Yet, the well could not escape its wider constituency: on the eve of independence, Kanpur city residents massed to enter the garden and take down the memorial. It was eventually removed. The site today looks very different.

This particular case can be situated with respect to its primary forms of documentation (photographs, drawings, holographic documents) and to the ways in which it was described over time. These make clear the cultural specificity of meanings and intentions associated with the well. It is possible, also, to exhume spaces of difference: seeing views of the space change over time; according to the social position and timing of a person's visit. There is evident a cultural framing of terror, death and atrocity in this landscape.

Rankhandi

The second landscape of memory is that of Rankhandi, a village in Saharanpur district, three or four miles to the south of Deoband, site of the important Islamic center of learning. Rankhandi was studied by American and Indian anthropologists as part of the Cornell-Lucknow University Project instituted in India in the early 1950s. The purpose of this project was to provide a thorough basis for understanding the conditions in rural areas, which would help in the planning of development efforts. The studies instituted by this project included locations elsewhere in Uttar Pradesh, but Rankhandi was clearly the foremost study site in terms of the numbers of investigators who worked here.

At this point, few other Americans had conducted ethnographic research in India. In the 1920s, the American missionary couple of William and Charlotte Wiser carried out a study in Karimganj, just north of Mainpuri (Wiser and Wiser 1971). Starting in 1947, Morris Opler, known for his studies of native Americans of North America, conducted research in Jaunpur district at a location that was also studied by Bernard S. Cohn from 1952-53. McKim Marriott worked in a village of Aligarh district also, at this same time. The Cornell-Lucknow University Project, headed in the United States by John T. Hitchcock, included many graduate students, who got their first ethnographic research experience in Rankhandi. Many of these young scholars subsequently went on to distinguished careers in South Asian anthropology.[18]

American anthropology right after World War I was characterized generally by a holistic, asynchronic approach, that focused on identifying key elements of social structure: in the Indian case, this meant caste and religion. Descriptions were phrased in the "ethnographic present," which in practice could be either the period contemporary to the participant-observation based field research of the ethnographer, or the ethnographic present might be set in "traditional times," usually—so far as these studies define what this means—some twenty to fifty years before the ethnographer's arrival. The basic unit of analysis was a large, multicaste village, conceived as a relatively static and self-contained unit. The prevailing theoretical model, structural-functionalism, encouraged investigators to focus on integrative and cooperative elements of rural life. This approach later was subject to a sustained criticism for its limitations (Inden 1990).

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[18] A list of the scholars involved in the studies in Rankhandi, based on the collection of notes in John T. Hitchcock archives at the National Anthropological Archives in Washington, and on published works includes, besides Hitchcock, S.C. Dube, John Gumperz, Pauline Kolenda, J. Michael Maher, Leigh Minturn, Rudra Datt Singh, and Robert T. Smith.

The goal of anthropological holism meant collection of data on as many different topics as possible, relating to culture and social life. In addition to genealogies and family histories, so important to producing a picture of social organization, the investigators also included interviews with their informants on village history. This was emphatically not an era of strong anthropological interest in history. In the published accounts of the "village studies," as this work collectively was known, data in this category appears mainly in, first: founding account(s) of "the village," as the unit of analysis came to be known; second, stories associated with the origins of the different caste groups in the village; and three, a striking incident in the days of the senior men's youth. These are largely perfunctory elements of description and are not further theorized. Landscape does much better, as ethnographers snapped photographs and mapped land uses; the locations of significant spaces, such as the neighborhoods occupied by different social groups in the village; and other significant features of the built environment, such as shrines and tombs.

Mention of the war of 1857 is minimal: a local ruler, whose head was displayed after he was executed; a man from Rajasthan who came with a mutinied army unit, made friends, settled and established a family; a deity, who protected villagers from harm; and the mass hangings of men (see Fox 1969: 74; Freed and Freed 1998; Opler 1956:7; Singh 1962:37). The possibility of following up on these statements is complicated by the American anthropologists' convention of using pseudonyms for these spaces.[19] One must know how the location is known in government records, maps, and

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[19] Many Indian scholars, in contrast, did not adopt this convention. In at least one case of publication by an American scholar, materials on a village were published under its pseudonym, in one publication, and under its real name, in another.

other sources in order to trace it. Where pseudonyms have been used, the village's identity has to be "outed."[20] The process sometimes brutally uncovers artifices of ethnographic writing.[21] In the best-case scenarios, the anthropological village suddenly emerges as a space known in other records and databases, permitting a dialogue between these different types of knowledge.

In writing about the different shrines in one village, the investigator noted:

"In a clearing in Khalapur stands the Piir, the mogul tomb of a saint named Darga. Both Hindu and Muslim villagers belief that Darga protects the village. One legend says that during the Indian rebellion of 1857, Darga appeared on his horse, wielding a sword, and prevented the British troops from entering Khalapur." (Minturn 1993:183; see also Minturn and Hitchcock 1966).

"Khalapur" is Rankhandi. Rankhandi, was "outed" on the Internet by a resident who is proud of his community's contributions to the Cornell-Lucknow University anthropological study, known later as the Cornell-India project.[22] Rankhandi's propinquity to Deoband links it to events of 1857. Here, British forces chased down, captured, and executed suspected enemies, commandeering food and supplies from villages along the way. In 1857, Saharanpur town thirty miles or so to the north, was home to the headquarters of the just-completed Ganges Canal project, location of a well-known Botanical Garden, and, since 1835, site of an American Presbyterian mission

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[20] The practice of using pseudonyms is heatedly defended by most anthropologists with whom I have raised the issue. They cite dramatic potential for harm, even if the data in question are 50 or 75 years old and all the persons involved in collecting or sharing information are dead. Other anthropologists feel equally strongly that ethical scholarship includes transparency.

[21] The most evident of these conventions is the portrayal of "the village" as a relatively isolated entity.

[22] See the entry for "Rankhandi" on en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rankhandi. Field notes for the project in the National Anthropological Archives uniformly refer to the site as Rankhandi.

(Atkinson 1875: 126, 191). Western sections of Saharanpur District had become irrigated in by 1830 with reconstruction of the eastern Jumna [Yamuna] Canal, and the eastern sections of the district were newly receiving waters from Ganges Canal, opened in 1854 (see Stokes 1969). The district was undergoing land settlement operations in 1855. Rankhandi's postion near the road between Saharanpur, in the north, and Meerut, to the south, is also germane to its experiences in 1857.

English-language war narratives of the region mentioned several events in the vicinity of Rankhandi. The most dramatic was the burning of villages on the east sides of Deoband as retaliation for these villagers' alleged attack and looting of the market (Atkinson 1875:267).[23] Atkinson also mentions that some of the prime suspects belonged to the "Pundir" Rajputs: these happen to be the dominant subcaste of Rajputs in Rankhandi (Minturn and Hitchcock 1966).

The ethnographic data collected by the team of anthropologists at Rankhandi in the 1950s included several mentions of 1857. There is a cluster of stories about the personality of the Piir (the Muslim saint, whose shrine is here), who protected Rankhandi in 1857. Other stories, somewhat contradictory, are set in the period of the war. Some stories included more detail than others. Some evidently conflated events told as separate narratives by other informants. The two oldest persons who told their stories gave their ages as 93 and 80, respectively, both men. It is clear also that these stories reflect their tellers' different social position, and his or his kin groups' relationship to the events being told.

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[23] There are also contemporary reports of Deoband in Robertson (1859:__) and … REF

Stories of the Piir, who saved Rankhandi from the British in 1857, include many different versions. He is referred to as the Piir ("Muslim saint"), as Darga (literally, "tomb of a saint"), and as a "fakir" (Muslim holy man). The field notes are all typed in English and other terms of reference are absent. The founding myth of the Piir's relationship to Rankhandi consists of a miraculous story. A traveling merchant attempts to deceive the Piir by telling him that he is taking salt, rather than the more valuable sugar, to market. When he arrives at the market, he opens one bag—and discovers salt! Contrite, he returns to the Piir, who magically restores the sugar. In gratitude, the merchant builds the Piir's tomb with profits from its sale. This is a conventional legend of attempted trickery revealed.[24] Some versions state that the Piir is from the Himalayas. In one version, the merchant sells the sugar in Meerut to the British, where he makes an outrageous profit.[25] Other narrators insist that the Piir came to Rankhandi six hundred years earlier, around 1350.

The Piir is very much a personality who acts like a protective village deity, such as a Bhumiya, an earth guardian or a family guardian deity, even though none of the villagers claims descent from him and most are Hindus (Cort 2007). The Piir is proud of his perquisites, quick to punish the villagers with a hailstorm or damage the rival Shiva temple (Minturn 1993:183). Usually, he is known for keeping hailstorms and epidemics away from Rankhandi. Newlyweds pay homage to the Piir. Boys are brought to the shrine for their first tonsure ceremony. The Piir also is very active: he appears to people

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24 ID Tale Type of this? Almost certainly a version of a well-known folktale REF

25 JTH Archive, Box ____ File 77/78 Religion. 02/11/56.

in dreams, and is especially present in Rankhandi on Thursdays. The Piir is honored with an annual festival. (Minturn 1993:184).[26]

The story of the Piir appearing in ghostly form, clad in blue, on a blue horse, to stop the British soldiers from burning down Rankhandi during the war, is within the range of expectations of how protective deities should act in times of danger. He was known to do this on other occasions, too, as when he blocked the road with snakes, scorpions, spiders to keep the police from arresting a village leader suspected of murder.

In fact, if the Piir protected Rankhandi in 1857, the villagers probably needed it. Stories told in 1954 and 1955 noted that they burned down their neighbor village of Ghauloli and stole its cattle: the narrator insists that they got away with this, because they had British backing! One woman noted that her family used to have an old spinning wheel and a grain pounding stick, which an ancestor looted from the neighbor village. [27] Although one senior story teller (Rajput in his 80s) assured the investigators that, even though there was a rumor that the British were going to force them to eat leather—they did not oppose the British because here, the zemindars had been given one-third of the land. Who are the givers, and who the recipients, unfortunately are not specified in the notes.

On the other hand, a member of a much lower-ranking caste, recounted that the British aimed a cannon at the village, but that it failed to go off, because of the Piir's

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[26] in JTH Archive, Box 18, File: "Piir".

[27] This incident is recounted in JTH Archive, Box 18, File: "Piir".

intercession.[28] One long, complex story linked Rankhandi with the war. This story, by a man to be 97 years old, tells of the relationship between the Muslims and Hindus of Rankhandi.

In this story, a handsome young Hindu Rajput boy named Kunwar became a protégé of the "Nawab of Lucknow," who brought the boy up as his son and then in time, gave him an estate in "Bandaa" [present-day Banda?] district. Family members in Rankhandi wanted him to return to Hinduism, but he said he had no faith; he married a Muslim girl from Meerut district. He had eleven sons—six with a concubine, and five with his wife. After his death, his eleven sons joined with the effort "to make the Nawob [sic] Emperor of India by capturing the throne at Delhi for him. But the Nawob was captured and killed by the English."

After this defeat, the brothers escaped to Rankhandi—all but one, who helped a "beautiful English woman." She, the story says, became his mistress. Since the British didn't know where to find the ten brothers in the family's home village Rankhandi, they were safe. But they soon became poor and had to work for a living. The person who told this story in January, 1955 is quoted in field notes directly as saying " I can remember this very well. When they began to work as laborers." [29]

In time, the ten brothers were able to buy back some of their land. Meantime, the eleventh brother, called Ramzaan Ali, and the Englishwoman went to the committee in Lucknow that was deciding who should be punished and who should be rewarded. Ramzaan Ali's aid to the Englishwoman brought him the reward of eleven rent-free

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[28] It is unclear from the notes if this occurred during land revenue collection operations, which were customarily supported by troops, or during the war.

[29] This story is recounted in JTH Archive, Box 11 file "Family History," 01/07/1955.

villages. The Englishwoman went home to her husband. Ramzaan Ali's family also still owned the estate in Banda district. And in Rankhandi? The story, I caution, could be interpreted as a charter of social relationships: Rankhandi's Muslims descend from these ten escaping men, the sons of Kunwar. But Kunwar had a brother, Subhaa—and he is the ancestor of an important lineage of Hindu Rajputs in Rankhandi.

Other interpretations also are possible, such as seeing the claimed link between the doings related to a small village, and significant events linked to India's freedom struggle and the achievement of independence in 1947. They are claims about rights to land—never an abstract concern to farmers, especially with the recently passed Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Bill (1949). The stories also suggest general attitudes toward the British: not hugely favorable.

What marks these different stories is their relationship to landscape. In the last story, Rankhandi claims relationships to specific spaces: Lucknow, Banda, the ownership of eleven villages (almost certainly a conventional, and lucky, number), the ownership of eighteen villages. These spatial relationships map onto claimed kinship relationships in the community. Space is kinship. The Piir's protection also is about landscape. In this case, the Piir indeed has a monument: quite a large and imposing one. The field notes state that it is approximately 25 feet on a side, and is built on a high platform with a dome.[30] This striking structure is apparently larger than all the buildings in Rankhandi, judging by photographs taken at the time. This shrine clearly provides a focus for memory, through the person of the Piir.

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[30] The single photograph I have found in the archive that possibly shows the tomb, is entitled simply a "shrine". Identification is pending. This structure has a dome capped by what looks like an inverted lotus. Four minarets mark the corner of the building. In the three large niches rise one above the other, on either side of the tall arched entry to the shrine.

Is it possible to push these stories to uncover what they might say of or about 1857? The voices are multiple, the accounts conflicting. Why are these stories told now to the ethnographers? How are they retailed, and if ethnographic records are to become historical records, how may we read or understand these as historical documents?

In the narratives, the positions of the narrators seem to be related to diverse standpoints. There are seeming points of convergence, such as family heirlooms said to be gained through looting the village next door. There are possibilities of tracking claims through records of land transfers. Spatial relationships are also linked to genealogical relationships, claims about land and power, places formerly owned and now lost. Kinship maps onto space; space maps into memory. Physical spaces, such as the Piir's shrine, may be amenable to further investigation.

The stories of 1857 that cluster in these spaces or that claim links to spaces, however, are embedded in a frame of understanding that does not resemble the imperialist narratives of the British monuments. They are stories intimately about homeland, about the quintessential links among ancestors, land, and kinship, relationships that constitute Rankhandi's people. And a story about homeland is a powerful thing.

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