Mass., 1989), the book contends that “Whereas the development of the public sphere in Europe was premised on the existence of civil society (Habermas wrote of the public sphere of civil society), in China it was the organs of publicity [like Shibao] that served as the impetus for the creation of the institutional infrastructure that constitutes a civil society” (emphasis in the original). This, it concludes, was “an important distinction between the course of Chinese and Western history” (11–12).

Despite the book’s overall excellence, there are three issues that need amplification or clarification. One concerns the unexplored implications of the finding, based on Japanese consular reports, that Shibao received financial support, as well as diplomatic protection, from the Japanese government. To what extent did such support and protection affect the editorial policy of the newspaper, particularly with regard to the several anti-Japanese agitations of the period? Another is the hazy distinction between the “officials” (guan) or “the government” (zhengfu) on the one hand and the monarch (jun) on the other. Shibao was unrelenting in its condemnation of the Qing government, but did such criticisms encompass the supreme ruler? The book at one point has a lengthy discussion that states explicitly that they did not, “at least until late 1911.” Thus, “The journalists portrayed the emperor as devoted to the welfare of the people and critical of venal and self-seeking officials” (147). Elsewhere, however, it quotes Shibao as describing a railway dispute in 1907 as “the first phase of the struggle between the emperor and the people” (186). A final issue concerns the extent of Shibao’s political influence. If, as the book states, “the Shibao journalists were among the first to express their support” for the Wuchang uprising on October 10, 1911, why did it take so long—three and a half weeks—for Jiangsu and Zhejiang, “the two provinces most closely linked to Shibao,” to declare their independence from the Qing (193–194)?

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Aryans and British India. By Thomas R. Trautmann (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997) 260 pp. $35.00

In the past few decades, the historiography of the beginnings of Indian civilization has become the subject of ever-hotter debate between indologists, historians, linguists, amateur scholars, and even politicians. The focus of this debate is the Aryan invasion theory, whereby the destiny of Indian civilization is explained by the arrival in South Asia of a group who called themselves Aryans, who spoke an Indo-European language, and who progressively expanded their domination over the indigenous peoples, presumably the Dravidians.

In Aryans and British India, Trautmann makes an original and useful point that bears on this debate; he directs our attention to the intellectual circumstances in which the invasion theory became a racial theory. Until
recently, the received version of the invasion theory assumed that the invading Aryans were racially “white” and the indigenous peoples racially “black.” On this view, the civilizational differentials and hierarchies obtaining in India thereafter are by implication to be understood as the product of the encounter between conquering “white” Aryans and “black” natives.

It is this racial theory of Indian civilization that, as Trautmann points out, “persists to this day” (4). “It is the crabgrass of Indian history,” as he puts it, and the purpose of his book is to uproot it (4).

The interest of Trautmann’s book lies in showing the origins of the invasion theory in general and its racialist component in particular. Trautmann’s contribution consists especially in recovering an unremembered and unexpected feature of the intellectual history of Britain, namely, that the British engagement with India, which began in earnest at the end of the Seven Years’ War, was constitutive not only of British Indological fields such as Sanskrit, but also, crucially, of British ethnology.

Trautmann demonstrates how the disciplines of British Indology and British ethnology ran together for more than half of the nineteenth century, until they parted ways on bad terms—ethnologists resorting to civilizational models based on racial parameters, and indologists inadvertently appropriating some of the ethnologists’ racialist formulations. The chapters of the book are arranged to follow this mutual relationship between British Indology and ethnology from the end of the eighteenth century onward, beginning with a period of Indomania inaugurated by the work of Sir William Jones and the Asiatick Society and continuing through a later period of Indophobia, in which Indomania became the target of attacks by such evangelicals as Charles Grant and such utilitarians as James Mill.

Through both the Indomanic and Indophobic periods, Trautmann shows, British Indology and ethnology worked in concert. The ethnology of the period, as conceived by James Prichard, used language as its main criterion for differentiating peoples. Only since the 1860s, with the appearance of works by such ethnologists as Latham and later Risley, has ethnology turned away from language as criterion and instead toward anthropometry as revelatory of essentialized racial categories. Nevertheless, the Indologists, too late deciding that language was not identical with “nation,” made a fateful accommodation with the new race science in order to preserve their conceptualization of the two great language families of South Asia, the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian.

Hence, the racialist version of the Aryan invasion theory arose from a blend of both good and bogus data with a pseudoscientific theory of race as constitutive of civilization. Trautmann’s implication is that once the racialist component of the Indian civilization model becomes evi-

1 Robert Latham, *Elements of Comparative Philology* (London, 1862); Herbert Hope Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1892).
dent—a faulty intellectual product of its own discordant historical context—it can finally and decisively be set aside.

What makes the book interdisciplinary is Trautmann’s juxtaposition of the history of philological Indology with ethnology. This is the strongest aspect of the work, since Trautmann can build on his previous studies of the history of ethnology, particularly British ethnology. The method of the book is primarily that of a text-based history of ideas; it assumes that a periodization and historical narrative can be constructed from the study of salient passages of such foundational texts as the writings of Jones, Grant, Max Müller, and so on. The validity of treating these texts as foundational is bolstered by a publication history, in which Trautmann recounts for these works the number of editions, reprintings, translations, and so on. Trautmann also tellingly refers to two public monuments, the statue of Jones in St. Paul’s Cathedral, and the inscription in the doorway of the old Indian Institute building in Oxford.

Trautmann’s is a less pessimistic approach to the history of ideas than other recent works about the British Orientalists. Indeed, Trautmann signals an additional purpose for the book in the opening and closing sections, namely, to problematize the recent historiography of colonial Indology as too heavily dependent on the “discourse analysis” of Michel Foucault and derivative thinkers. As Trautmann puts it, “Because the politics of knowledge fixes its gaze upon power, it tends to leave in darkness whatever falls outside the power relation—the world, in short” (228). Thus, the totalizing “knowledge–power” approach would have the undesirable consequence of eliding the entire corpus of Indological findings without reference to their content.

One drawback to Trautmann’s history-of-ideas approach is that intellectual developments in British Indology and ethnology are treated as if they were to be understood entirely internally. To be sure, Trautmann explains intellectual changes as caused by larger intellectual movements in Britain—the growing influence of the Scottish utilitarians, for example, or the publication of Darwin’s Origin of Species (London, 1859)—but specific developments in political or social history are largely excluded from this account. Most notably, Trautmann finds a great change in British attitudes toward India developing in works that have appeared since 1860. Yet, Trautmann makes no reference to the Indian Army mutiny and uprising that took place in 1857/58, which provoked bad feelings on both sides of the colonial divide and which many historians of India count as decisively influential for British attitudes about India for the next 100 years.

There is a great deal more to this important and eminently readable book. One of the many pleasures of reading it is the benevolent and temperate personality of its author. How Trautmann makes his reflective way through topics that recently have inspired only rantings and ravings, while managing to stay out of controversies to which he can add nothing useful, is a pleasure to behold.

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