

Why Study History?

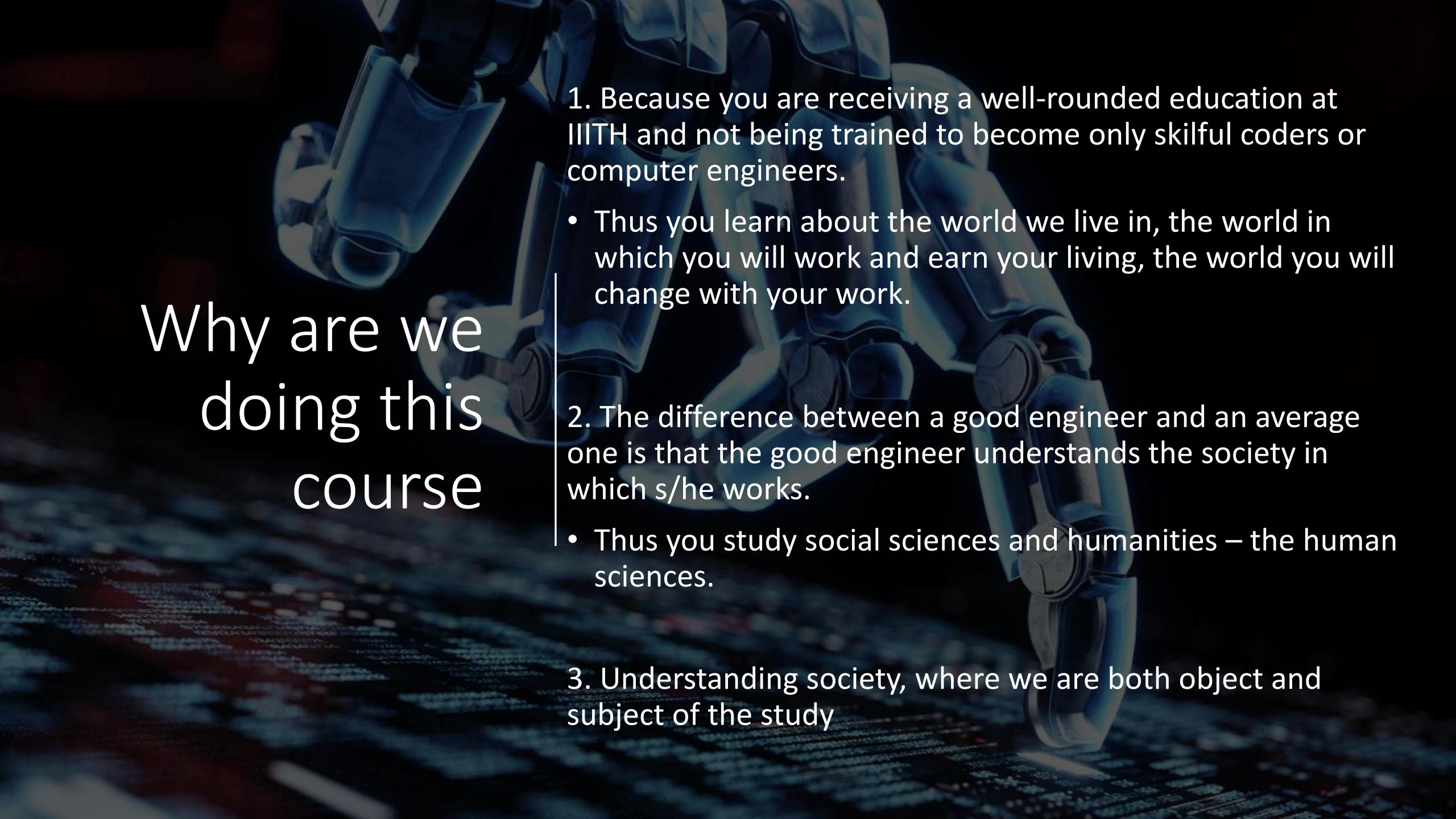
Also

What Do We Do When We Study History

History Module

Introduction to the Human Sciences

Spring 2022



Why are we doing this course

1. Because you are receiving a well-rounded education at IIITH and not being trained to become only skilful coders or computer engineers.
 - Thus you learn about the world we live in, the world in which you will work and earn your living, the world you will change with your work.
2. The difference between a good engineer and an average one is that the good engineer understands the society in which s/he works.
 - Thus you study social sciences and humanities – the human sciences.
3. Understanding society, where we are both object and subject of the study

Aims of the History Module

- What does it mean to think historically
 - How do we know what really happened
 - Does learning History help us understand today's world
- Main methods of doing history

Knowledge in the Pre-Modern World

- Not divided into **disciplines** like today
- All creation – animate inanimate – was considered emanating from the same divine source; interlinked in a divine plan
- Thus knowledge about the world was interlinked and there could not be a division...
- ...once we **know divine will**, we would know everything there is to know about the world, humans and everything else

EVERYTHING WAS THE WORK OF GOD OR DIVINE WILL



Heliocentric Revolution

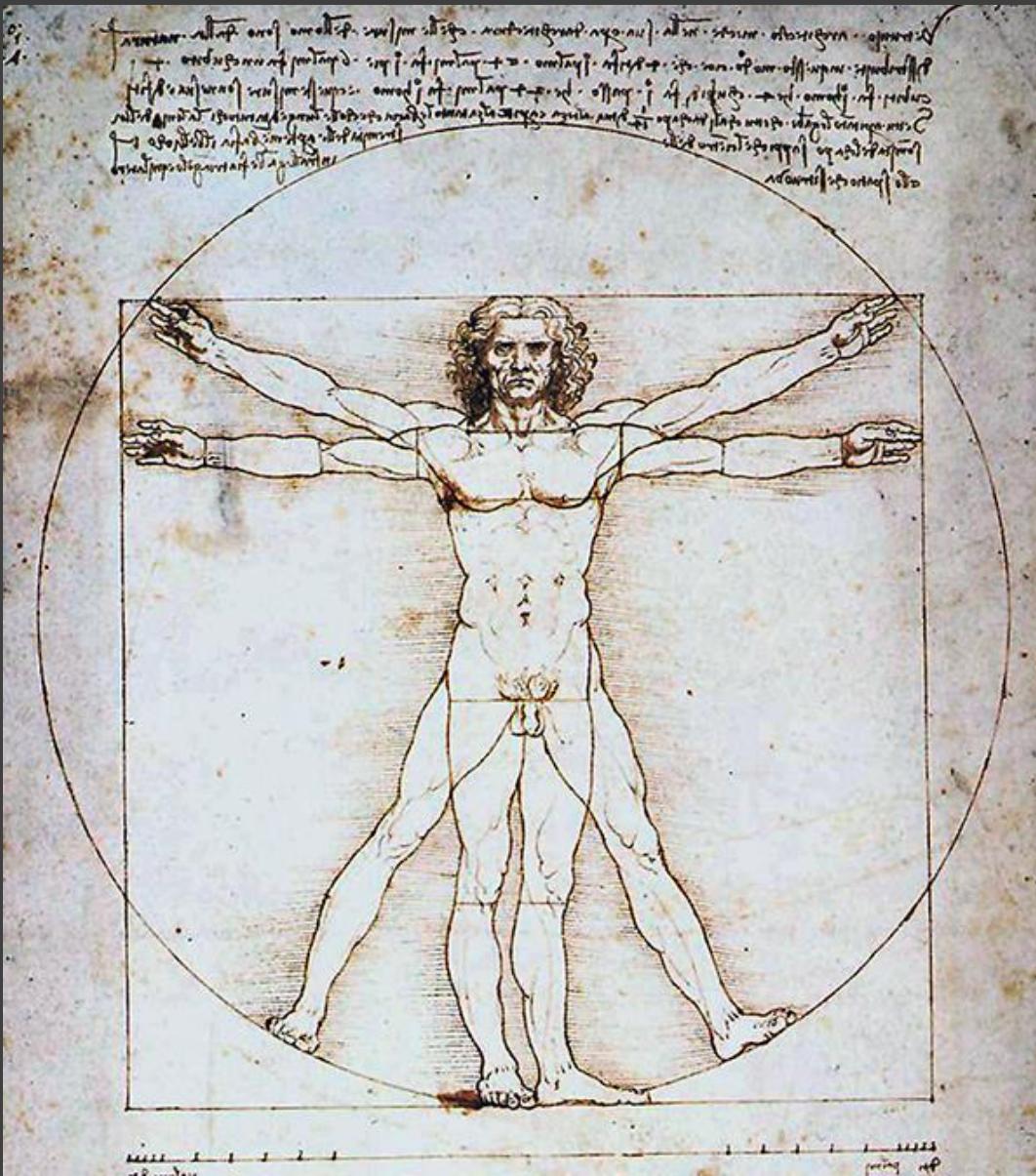
- Archaic knowledge systems held world to be the **centre of creation**
- The Sun, Moon and Heavens moved around the earth (which was flat)

MAJOR SHIFT

- Sun the centre of the solar system
- Earth merely one among many planets
- **Physical laws** same everywhere; **predictive power**
- Natural Sciences are **bereft of divine will**
 - Other than **first causes**



DE-CENTRING CREATION :: DIS-ENCHANTMENT OF NATURE



Centring the Human

- In Archaic society
 - Human action expression of Divine Will
 - History was story of God's actions; or **morality**
- MAJOR SHIFT
- Study (Hu)Man actions **Sui Generis**
 - Not as act of God
- Emergence of Human Sciences
 - Popularly called Humanities, Social Sciences
- Like Natural Sciences, **bereft of any divine will**

HUMANISM

IDEA THAT “SUBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE” IS HUMAN BEING

What Is History?

- History shifts from God's story to Man's story
- Study Human and Natural Causes of Past Events
- History is about both understanding and explaining...
- Human Actions
 - Need to find causes and their consequences
 - Theory of change

“History is preoccupied with fundamental processes of change.”

~ E. H. Carr, *What is History*

Where is History?

- Everywhere!
- Every Nation, Region, Community, Individual is made up of its Past
 - Every Action is done in time, which is a synonym for history
- We all work and live with a sense of History
 - What we were and who we will become
- Every Text, Material Object, Image, Sound, Relationship is History
- We are implicitly aware of History around us
- Make it Explicit!!

Explicit History

- Learn to find History everywhere
- Learn the protocols of doing history
- Learn what history can tell us....
- ... and what it cannot
- There can be No Objectivity, No Certitude
- Only levels of possibilities, degrees of probabilities

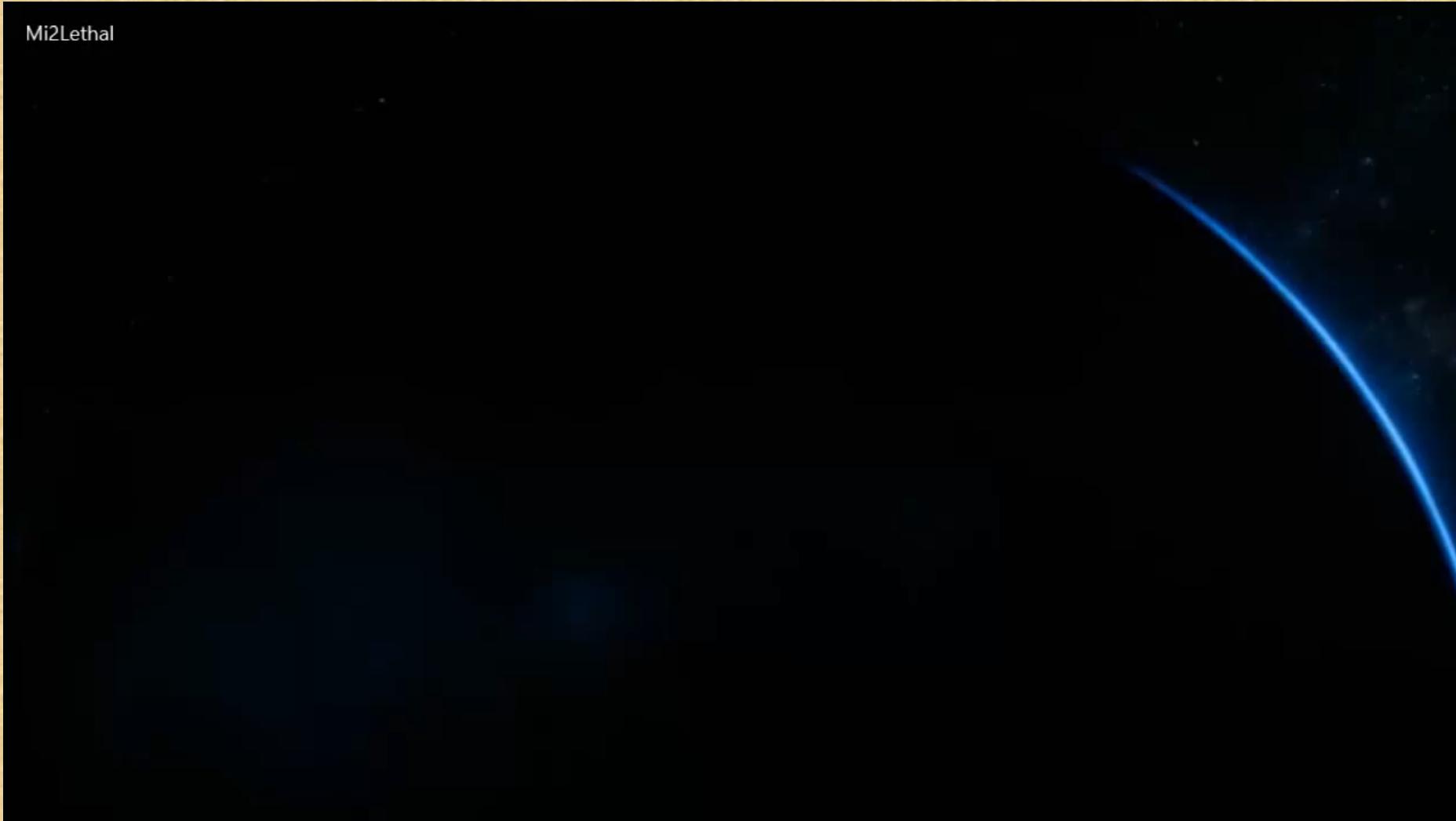
Framing Questions

- Who was involved
- What happened
- When did it happen
- Where did it happen
- How did it happen
- Why did happen

- Evidence which can be cross checked
- Methods which can be scrutinised
- Universal standards of verifiability and falsifiability

History of What?

Mi2Lethal



Tragedy of the Historian



**"Those who don't study history are doomed to repeat it.
Yet those who *do* study history are doomed to stand by
helplessly while everyone else repeats it."**

Historical Time

History Module
Lecture 2
Introduction to the Human Sciences
Spring 2022

Outline of Lecture

- What Time Period Does History Inhabit?
- What Are Historical Periods?
- Common Markers of Historical Time.
- How Do We Measure Flow of Time?
- Importance of Chronology.

Past is (not) History

- Past: Refers to Time which has elapsed
 - Everything that has happened prior to the present is Past
 - Amorphous; Hold-All Category
- History: Refers to a Story/Narrative About Something in the Past
 - Beginning and End
 - Common Thread or Anchor to the Narrative: “History of...”
- Past Exists, History is Created by Humans from the Past

Time Period of History

- History is the Story of Human Society
- Classical Definition is Story of “Civilisation”
 - Settled Life
 - Writing/Script
 - Arts and Philosophy
 - Cities and States
- Pre-History: Society Before Civilisation
 - Mobile Life
 - Oral Knowledge
 - Rudimentary Arts and Creations
- Broadened Definition of History: Story of Non-Human Subjects

Periods of History

- Historians always divide their Narrative into Periods
 - Archaic Periods linked to Religious Narratives
- Modern History is Divided into
- Pre-History
- Ancient
- Medieval
- Modern
- Based on Christian Periodisation; Secularised

Common Markers of Historical Time

- B.C. and A.D.
 - Before Christ, Anno Domini
 - 252 B.C. A.D. 252
- Secularised to BCE and CE
 - Before Common Era, Common Era
 - 252 BCE 252 CE
- Circa c.
 - Approximate date (c. 250 CE)
 - In B.C. / BCE years count down
 - In A.D. / CE years count upwards
- Decade = 10 years; Century = 100 years; Millennium = 1,000 years

Historical Eras and Ages

- Pre-Historic Period
 - Stone Age
 - Paleolithic (from c. 2,500,000 BCE to c. 3,000 BCE)
 - Mesolithic (from c. 25,000 BCE to c. 2,000 BCE)
 - Neolithic (from c. 10,000 BCE to c. 500 BCE)
- Historic Period
 - Chalcolithic Age
 - From c. 3,500 BCE to c. 1,000 : Indus Valley Civilisation and beyond
 - Bronze Age
 - From c. 3,000 BCE to c. 800 BCE: Indus Valley and Early Vedic
 - Iron Age
 - From c. 1,800 BCE to c. 100 BCE: Late Vedic Age Period / First Empires

Historical Eras and Ages

- Ancient Period
 - Indus Valley Civilisation; Vedic (Early and Late) Age; Mahavira and Buddha; Mauryan Empire; Saka and Hun Empires; Gupta Empire; Kushan Empire; Harshvardhan
 - Sangam Period; Cholas, Chera, Pandyas; Satvahanas; Chalukyas;
- Medieval Period
 - Another Long List with regional variations
- Modern Period
 - 1757: Coming of the British (Battle of Plassey)
 - Mughals, Marathas, Mysore

Historical Eras and Ages

- Most of these periods broken into “Early” “Middle” “Late”
- How do Historians identify these periods and sub-eras
 - Technology
 - Social Organisation
 - Strength and Spread of Empire / State
- Different Regions and sub-regions will have varying periods / eras

Problems With Historical Periods

- Universal Categories but Local Histories
 - Ancient – Medieval – Modern : Universal Categories
 - History is of a Place, Person, Dynasty, Event, Process....
- Problems of Fit
 - “Ancient” of China, India, Rome, France, Britain may not be aligned
 - What about History of USA? Or Pakistan?
- After “Modern” What?!
 - Modern is often seen as a universal period globally

Importance of Chronology

- Chronology is the Spine of the Historical Narrative
- Chronology is placing events in their order of occurrence in time
- Assumes an arrow of time
 - From origin to end
- Easy to overlook chronology and periods of time
 - Beginning and end of Indus Valley Civilisation = Two Millennia
 - Emperor Ashoka is closer to us than the establishment of Harappa / Mohenjodara cities
 - Satvahana Empire lasted from c. 200 BCE to c. 300 CE = 500 years
 - 500 years before today there was no Mughal Empire in India

Historical Time

- Easy to forget how time moves
- Large chunks of time are difficult to imagine
- Spend time consciously thinking of historical time and periods
- Use the comparative method to get a sense of historical time
- How does recognising historical time change your perception of the world?

Change and Causality

History Module

Lecture 3

Introduction to the Human Sciences

Spring 2022

Four Foundations

1. Chronology
2. Change and Continuity
3. Causes, Correlations, Consequences
4. Critique of Sources

Change and Continuity

“Change is the only Constant”!

- Change means the difference / alteration / transformation of the subject being referred to...
- Historical Change refers to alteration over time of the thing being studied
- Things Change. Constantly.
- However, somethings do continue too
- History is a dialectic between Change and Continuity

Categories of Historical Events

- Unlike other disciplines History is all encompassing
- Therefore we need to Categorise History into sub-disciplines
 - Political: Relating to Governments; States; War; Diplomacy; Power...
 - Social: Relating to Relations and Networks of Humans; Everyday Life at home and work; Corporate Life; Community Life...
 - Economic: Relating to Production, Distribution, and Consumption; How Livelihood is gained; Trade and Finance...
 - Cultural History; History of Technology; Intellectual History; etc.
- Change and Continuity work differently in these sub-disciplines
 - Which Category / sub-discipline is being studied
 - Draw on the main ideas and practices of that discipline

Identifying Change

- Important to establish Baseline
 - Time Period, Historical Agents, Institutions, Economic and Social Conditions
- What was the situation before “This” occurred?
- What has changed in “This” and related “Things”?
 - Degrees of Change
 - Manner of Change
 - Change in Content
 - Change in Form
- Every Historical Event is a Change in extant conditions
 - What Changed and What Continued?

Continuity

- What has not changed
 - Or changed negligibly compared to our main subject of research
- Change is visible only when measured against Continuity
- Neither of these two are absolute
- Only relative
 - To the time frame and context used for the research
- Thus, What has Changed and What has Continued is a function of the Research Question the Historian Asks
 - What happens to Objectivity?

Causes of Change

- Historical Change does not happen without Reason
- What causes Change and hinders it?
- Meaning of Cause
 - Reason; Motive, Basis
- Historical Events / Actions occur on the basis of prior events / actions
- Historians' job is to identify which prior events/actions are causally related to the event/action under study
- What Motivated the Historical Actors involved in the event/process?

Two Types of Historical Causes

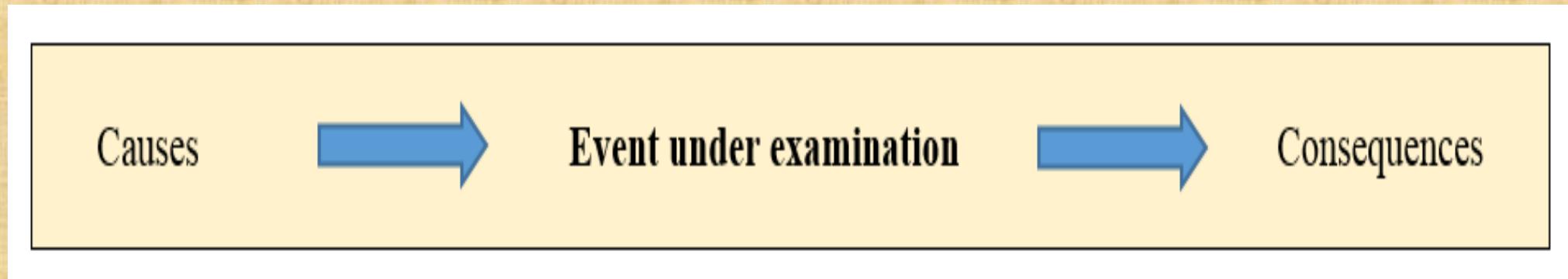
- Immediate Causes
 - Short Term (Days, Months, Years)
 - Can be directly linked to the Event / Action under study
- Distant Causes
 - Long Term (Years, Decades, Centuries, Millennia)
 - Difficult to link directly (Butterfly Effect!)
- Important to Distinguish Causes from Correlations
 - Which may have similar causes (sp. Long term)

Causes v/s Correlations

- Occurrence in time-space proximity does not imply causation
 - Would the event under study not have happened if the causal event had not occurred?
- In Statistics Correlation \neq Causation
- In History the relationship is complicated!
 - Events and Process happening in parallel often throw light on each other; even when not causally related
- Causes lead to Consequences

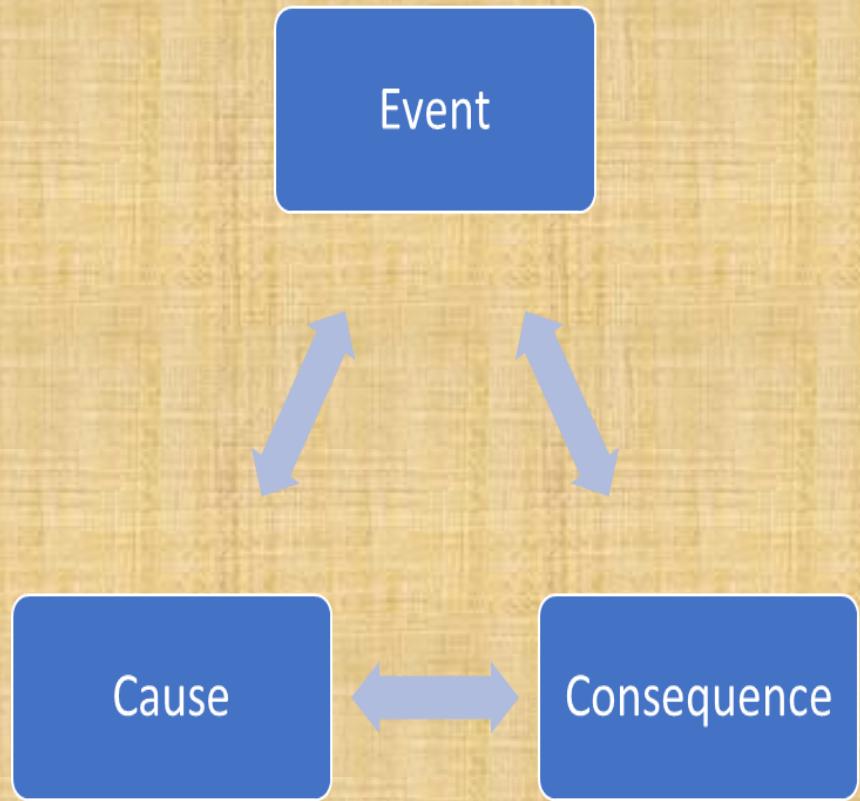
Consequences

- Every Event/Actor studied is embedded in a flow
 - Process
- Thus, just like each event / action is caused, it has consequences
 - Impact on chronologically later events
- Like causes, consequences have
 - Short Term
 - Long Term



Consequences

- Like causes, consequences have
 - Short Term
 - Long Term
- What later events were directly related to the researched event
- What changed
- and How



Corroboration

- Care about identifying and evaluating
 - Causes
 - Correlations
 - Consequences
- Helps us to ground our historical account on grounds which allow
 - Verification
 - Corroboration
- Making Practice of History a bona-fide academic study of the past
 - The qualifier “scientific” can now be prefixed

Not Yet!

- To make History methodologically
- Scientific and
- Rigorous
- We need to establish facts on which events, actions, processes, etc are described
- That requires “source criticism”
 - Next Lecture

Source Criticism

History Module

Lecture 3

Introduction to the Human Sciences

Spring 2022

What are Historical Sources?

Historical Sources are...

1. Documents
2. Artefacts

...from the past which contain information about that time period

- Historian has to find relevant information specific to her research topic from that source
 - Trade Stats may give info on War
 - King's Hagiography may give info on crop cycles, or faultlines of power
 - Old, broken buildings may give info on social hierarchies, or marital conditions

Why “Criticise” Sources?

- Critique is the way we understand reality in all forms of knowledge
- Break down appearance into its constitutive elements
- Interpret and evaluate each of these elements
- Identify levels of reliability
- Gives us relevance and usefulness of information in source
- Allows us to write accurate history

Steps of Source Criticism

1. Comprehend
2. Analyse
3. Interpret
4. Evaluate
5. Use the Source as information for History

Comprehend a Historical Source

- Ability to find information and meanings
- Explicit information
 - Accuracy
- Meanings of words, phrases and ideas changes over time
 - In what meanings were the words used in the source?
- Take down all the information given
- Sift the facts from opinions
- Implicit information is trickier but more important
 - Tease out through analysis

Analyse a Historical Source

- Information which source explicitly provides (Comprehension)
- Origin
 - Who created the source
 - What kind / type is it (Text or Artefact; Photo/Image/Film; Published/Unpublished; pottery, clothing, furniture, machinery, buildings..)
- Point of View
 - Whose perspective was the source created from; which other PoVs exist there
- Context
 - When was it created, what else happened at that time
- Audience
 - Who was the intended audience of the source
- Purpose
 - Why was the source created; motive behind it.

Example of Analysis of a Historical Source

Example analysis paragraph:

This letter was written by John Smith to record the events of the battle for his family at home. It is from the perspective of an Australian soldier who had just experienced the Gallipoli landing on the 25th April, 1915, and specifically mentions “running like hell” for survival.

Colour key:

Information

Origin

Perspective

Context

Audience

Motive

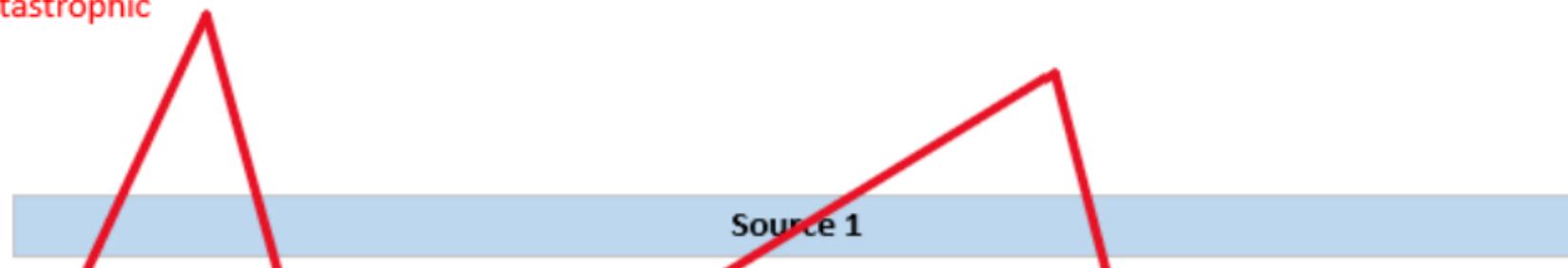
Interpret a Historical Source

- Identify the ‘hidden’ (or less obvious) meanings
- Get information which is indirect
 - List out the assumptions and common knowledge of the source
 - What information is highlighted
 - What is underplayed, or absent
- How can we read the text in unintended ways
 - To gather new facts

Example of Interpretation of Historical Source

The main message: Caesar's army was unprepared for an upcoming battle and it was expected to be a catastrophic

Caesar's soldiers were starving due to lack of food. They had to improvise but men still died.



"Caesar's army was facing disaster. His soldiers were forced to make bread from local weeds, which did little to sustain them, and many still succumbed to malnutrition during the frequent snow falls. The situation was so bad that Caesar had to post sentries to capture anyone who tried to sneak away from the army camp at night. We are told that more than two dozen men were punished for attempting to do so. Either way, the Roman forces were not ready for a full-scale battle the following day."

Many soldiers tried to escape from the army, or perhaps switch sides

Jones, K. (2014). *Showdown in the SPQR*. Mystery Press Assoc., pg. 100.

Summary of the message:

Source 1 implies that Caesar's army was significantly unprepared for an upcoming battle. The two primary concerns mentioned was starvation caused by lack of appropriate food, as well as desertion by soldiers trying to escape the army camp at night.

Non-Textual Sources

- Material Sources
 - Household Goods
 - Clothes
 - Public Goods
 - Machinery, Weapons
 - Buildings
 - Rivers, Lakes, Roads, Bridges...
 - Nature
- Non Material Sources
 - Oral Traditions
 - Visual Cultures

Evaluate a Historical Source

- Reliability
 - How dependable is source information
 - Does it corroborate other sources or contradict them
 - Explicit
 - Implicit
 - Authenticity (Even inauthentic/fake sources have a story to tell)
- Usefulness
 - How does it Corroborate or Contradict our Historical Narrative
 - What all information does it carry

Everything is a Source

- All Texts and Artefacts from the past are sources of history
- None of these can be used as a Historical Source, unless...
- ...it has been critiqued
- “Source Criticism” establishes Facts!
- Facts are the bedrock of the Historian’s Craft

History of the Fact

Introduction to Human Sciences

History Module

Aniket Alam

2022



What is a Fact?

- A thing that is known or proved to be true
- Information used as legal evidence, as report or news
- Synonyms: Reality, Certitude, Actuality
- Antonyms: Lie, Fiction
- The truth, without any interpretation
- A good fact is devoid of interpretation, perspective, opinion....
- A good interpretation, opinion, perspective should be based on facts!

BUILDING BLOCKS OF KNOWLEDGE

Deductive Method

- From first principles to facts
 - Divine Law => Action
 - Theory => Practice
- How to determine validity of *a-priori* assumption (first principle)
 - Danger of Choosing Facts to suit Theory (cherry picking)
- Modern method
 - Verifiability
 - Falsifiability
- Marxism, Structuralism, Systems Theory
 - Danger of Determinism

Inductive Method

- From facts to generalisations to theory
- No certainty, only degrees of
 - Probability
 - Possibility
- No *a-priori* assumptions
 - Moves from observable facts to general condition
- Cause and effect are not pre-determined
- Confirmation bias, available information bias
 - Difficulty of explanation

Importance of the Fact

- Whether Deductive or Inductive, knowledge about the world has to be tested on reality, on data which has certitude, actually happened events
- Reason is also dependant on Facts

Birth of the Fact: Ancient Greece

- *Historia* : Inquiry, Finding out
- Herodotus
 - Wrote on the history of the wars between Greece and Persia
 - Collect evidence, ask witnesses, systematic narrative of events
- Thucydides
 - History of the Peloponnesian Wars (between Athens and Sparta)
 - Evaluate evidence, neutral position, cause and effect
 - Realism : Evaluate behaviour and outcomes by emotions and self-interest
- Fact based History was forgotten in favour of **Revelation**

Fact rises again

Ibn-e-Khaldun (1332 – 1406)

- *Kitab al-Ibar*
 - History of the world
 - Muqadimmah (Introduction)
- Principles to evaluate evidence
- Categorised errors and mistakes in historical investigations
 - Partisanship, beliefs, lack of context, lack of knowledge
- History is a “New Science” to gain knowledge

Fact wins the Battle

Edward Gibbon (1737 – 1794)

- Made distinction between Primary and Secondary sources
- Primacy of Primary Source
- Historian's aim: Objectivity
 - But also a lesson from history
- Church and Christianity secularised
- Massive backlash
- *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (b/w 1776-88; 6 vols)

Fact is Crowned King of History!

Leopold von Ranke (1795 – 1886)

- Facts, and only Facts
- Banish Interpretation
- Only Primary Source
 - Interrogate the source: how, where, who
 - Build credibility of facts
- History of the Catholic Popes:
 - “tranquil, objective treatment”
 - “without rancour, without enthusiasm”

How to find Facts

QUESTIONING THE SOURCE

- When was the source (written or unwritten) produced?
- Where was it produced?
- By whom was it produced?
- From what pre-existing material was it produced?
- In what form was it produced?
- What is the evidential value of its contents?

Empire of Interpretation Strikes Back!

- Facts are not value free
- Facts do not exist outside of our seeing
- Our act of seeing, aka recognising, creates the fact
- What is fact made up of (constituted by)
 - Smaller facts, or
 - Perspective, Interpretation, Seeing
- Which facts we select, out of the universe of all facts, is determined by our assumptions and interpretations, and in turn determines our thinking

What then is a Fact?

- There can be no Neutral, Objective Fact
- An act, thing, event is recognised as such only within the world of meaning created by humans
- Thus, all facts are created; constituted by human actions
- That does not mean facts have same evidentiary value as fiction
- Rather, facts exist as human creation
- Fact can be objective and impartial
- Possible to distinguish between fake, erroneous, and genuine Fact

How to Find and Preserve Facts

- Evidence which can be cross checked
 - Methods which can be scrutinised
 - Open and accessible standards of verifiability and falsifiability
-
- Facts change
 - Importance of Facts change
 - New Facts emerge and old Fact die

What is History?

“History is preoccupied with fundamental processes of change.”

~ E. H. Carr, *What is History*

A CONTINUOUS, SYSTEMATIC NARRATIVE OF SIGNIFICANT PAST EVENTS

- Facts:
 - What happened? When did it happen? How did it happen? Where did it happen? Who was involved?
- Interpretation:
 - Why did happen?

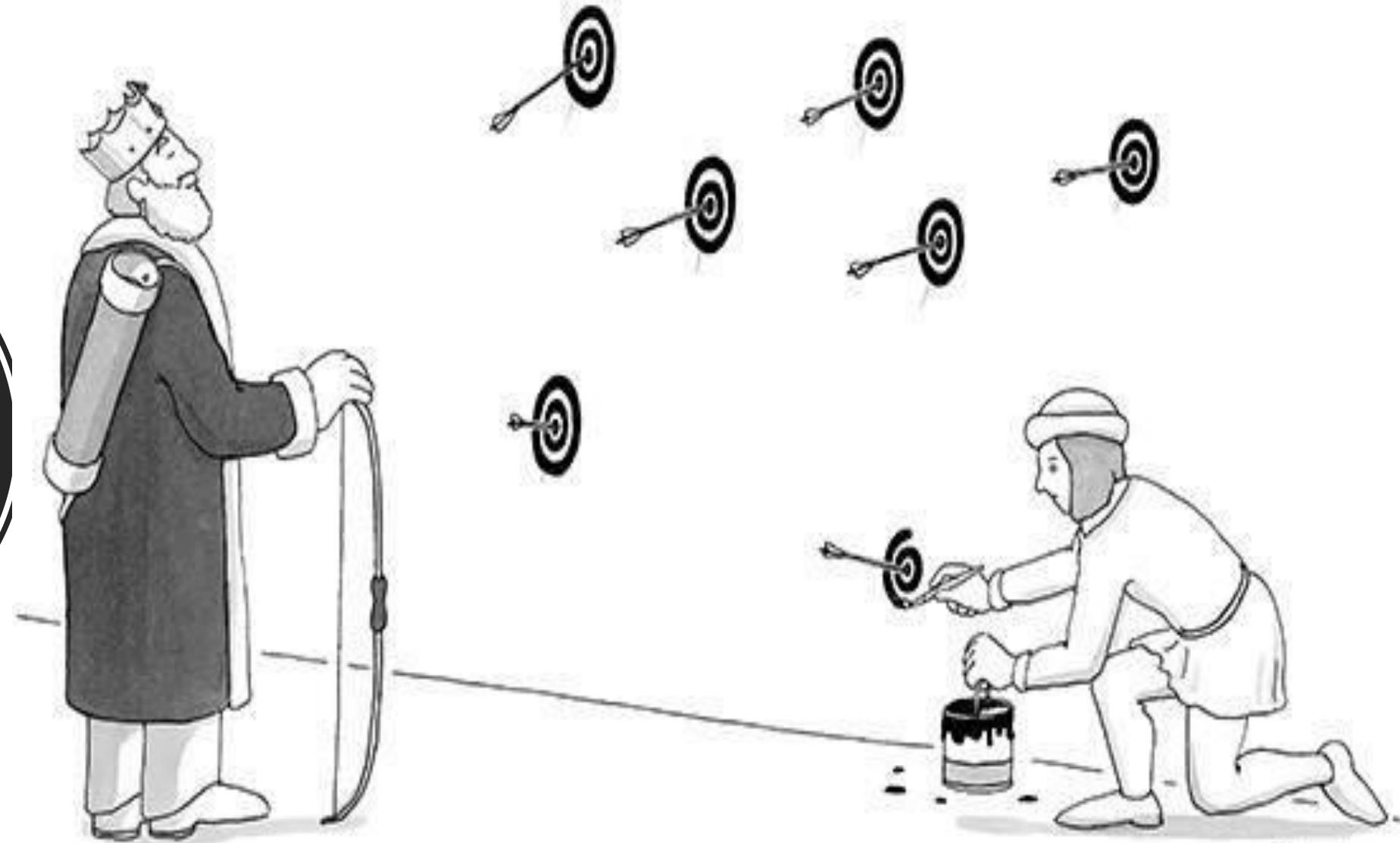


*"It doesn't mean a thing, but boy, will it drive them
crazy a thousand years from now!"*

False Facts

- Historians all too often misread the meaning and intent of facts of the past
- There is always *another* interpretation possible

Deliberate
Errors



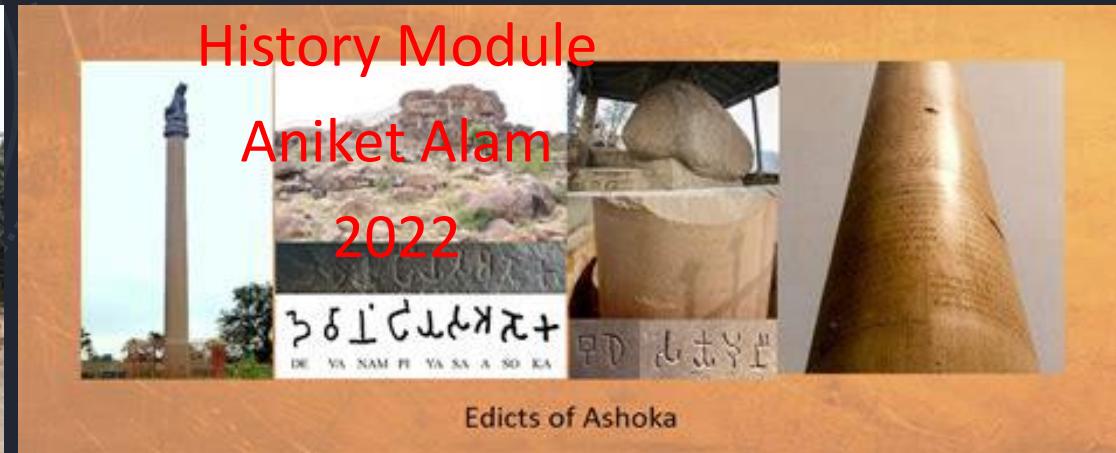
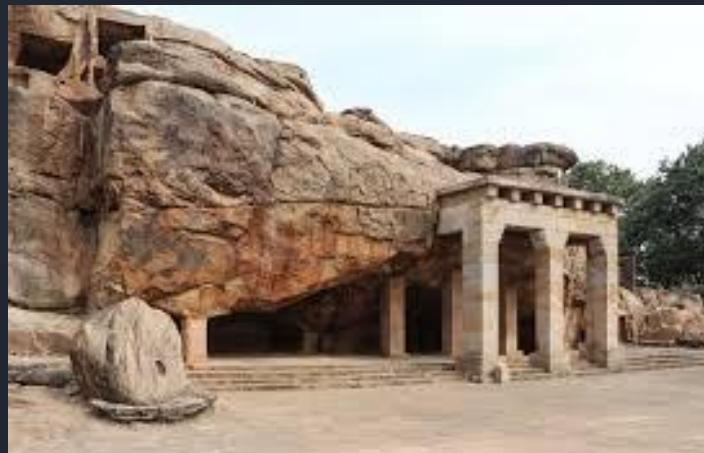
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History in India



Introduction to Human Sciences

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Itihas

- The Myth of the Eternal Return
- Revealed, not rationally investigated
- **Shruti** : Oral traditions; Authoritative but Authorless
 - Vedas, Upanishad
- **Smriti** : Written; Author known but text derivative, inexact
 - Mahabharata, Ramayana, Puranas, Dharmashastras, literature
- Massive cosmological cycles; no distinction b/w human and divine
- Itihas (history) is predestined

Buddhist Traditions

- Original state
 - Process of decay : desire (food and clothes); attachment (property); family; government
 - King elected to maintain order; pay taxes for this
 - Cosmological but republican influences (elements of modern theories of history and politics)
~~ ~
-
- FEW TRADITIONS OF HISTORY WRITING DIED OUT AND MERGED INTO MYTHOLOGY
 - TWO HISTORICAL TRADITIONS REMAINED
 - FAMILY GENEALOGIES AND COURT CHRONICLES

Orientalists

- Thought highly of Indian society, economy, culture
- Conquerors! But eager to study India's philosophies and histories
 - Collected Material Artefacts, Texts, Oral Traditions, and Customs
- Asiatick Society formed by William Jones (1784, Fort William Calcutta)
 - "...enquiries will be extended to whatever is performed by man or produced by nature."
- H H Wilson, 1808, Indians made members
- Asiatic Society Bombay, 1805
- Dominant perspective till 1820s

Liberals and Utilitarians

- James Mill, *The History of British India*, 1806 to 1817
 - Never set foot in India, knew no India language, *thus* claimed objectivity
- Thomas Babington Macaulay
 - Minutes on Education
 - Legal Code
- Argued Indian society and culture were brutish, savage, backward
- British Rule had a moral mission: Make India Modern / Civilised
- Based on a vision of Equality and Liberty of (hu)Man

British View

- PERIODISATION: Hindu, Muslim, British
 - Hindu India from beginning of history to Muslim invasions
 - Muslim India from 10th – 11th centuries till establishment of British Rule
 - British India as modern and progressive
- 1857: Victory of Conservative Liberalism
 - Entrenched a deep fear of Indians AND sense of British superiority
 - Gazetteers and Settlement Reports
 - Census 1872; then 1881
- THREE AXIS: Religion, Race (Caste) and Language

Important Milestones

- Brahmi and Kharoshti script
 - James Princep
 - Devanampriya Piyadasi
- Archeological Survey of India (1861)
 - Alexander Cunningham
 - Buddhist traditions, Ashoka, Khajuraho
- History Departments in Calcutta and Bombay University
 - Indian History and “Indology” in English, German and other Western Universities
- Mohenjodaro and Harappa
 - Known since 1856-7, bricks used for building railways
 - 1921-22: full discovery of the two cities
- National Archives of India
 - Imperial Records Department (1891)
- Indian Historians
 - R.C. Dutt
 - Jadunath Sarkar
 - D.D. Kosambi

Main “Schools”

- British / Colonial
- Nationalist
- Marxist
- Subaltern

Differences

- **PERSPECTIVE ON HISTORY: WHAT HAPPENED, HOW AND WHY**
- **METHOD OF DOING HISTORY: WHICH SOURCES, THEIR INTERPRETATION**

British / Colonial History of India

- Claimed there was nothing called India or Indian
 - Convenient geographical moniker
 - Too many disparities, no unity
 - Empire, not a nation or culture
 - Each community, group, region and caste had separate history
- Identified Oriental Despotism, and Village Community
- Claimed British Rule was *agent* of change as well as unification
- Claimed Indians do not want independence but place at high table
 - Only the elites and not the masses
 - Not nationalism but self-interest: “seditious babu”
- “Cambridge School”
 - John Gallagher, Anil Seal, Gordon Johnson, P J Marshall, D K Fieldhouse

Nationalist History

- India had History and a tradition of History writing
- Stressed the greatness of UNIFYING EMPIRES...
 - Ashoka, Gupta, Kushan, Mughal
- ...Unifying ideologies
 - Vedas, Buddhism, Shankaracharya, Bhakti
- Sought CAUSES FOR CONQUEST
 - by British or Mughals depending on political tilt
- Worked to write ONE Indian history
- Romesh Chunder Dutt; Jadunath Sarkar
 - Mughals, Rajputs, Shivaji, Bengal, Economic History, Sanskrit sources
- Jawaharlal Nehru
 - Discovery of India
- Romila Thapar, Bipan Chandra

Marxist Historians

- D. D. Kosambi
 - Materialist analysis
 - Laid down the scientific tools for studying history
 - Example of how to use physical and literary sources
 - Attempted to question British periodisation
- R. S. Sharma, Irfan Habib, Sumit Sarkar, K. N. Panikkar...
- Identified economic and social foundations of Indian History
- Fore-grounded class struggle and role of common people
- Freedom Struggle against both British Rule and Indian oppressors
- India became a nation in and through its freedom struggle

Subaltern Studies

- Post-Structuralist, Post-Colonial
 - Influenced by Antonio Gramsci, Edward Said, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida
- Based their interpretation on the Elite – Subaltern divide
- Read sources “Against the Grain”
 - From Absences, Silences, What is sought to be denied or erased
- Stressed “Autonomous world” of Peasant/ Tribal / Women...
- Claimed “Indigenous World-view”; non-colonised
- 1981, *Subaltern Studies* Volume I (total 13 till now)
- Spread from India to the world
- Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, Gyanendra Pandey, Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Dipesh Chakravarty, David ...

History in India Today

- New Directions of studying environment, technology, mentalite
- New methodologies using computational tools
- Oral Histories
- New Sources and Archives
- History is the most political of disciplines!

Some Historical Milestones

Introduction to Human Sciences

History Module

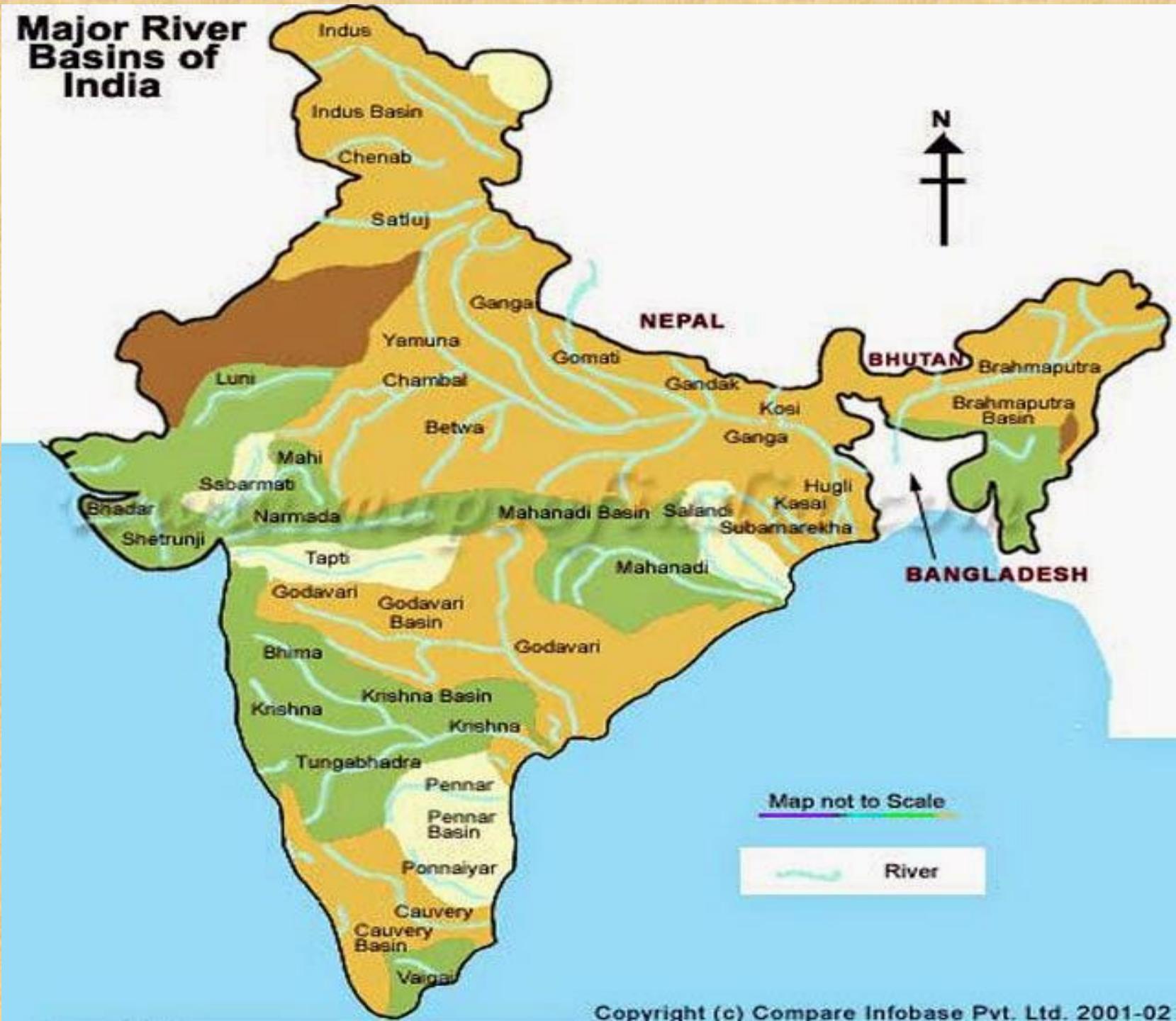
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River Basins

- Each river basin sustained life
- Self Contained
- Not just water
- Historical units
- Divided by
 - Mountains
 - Forests

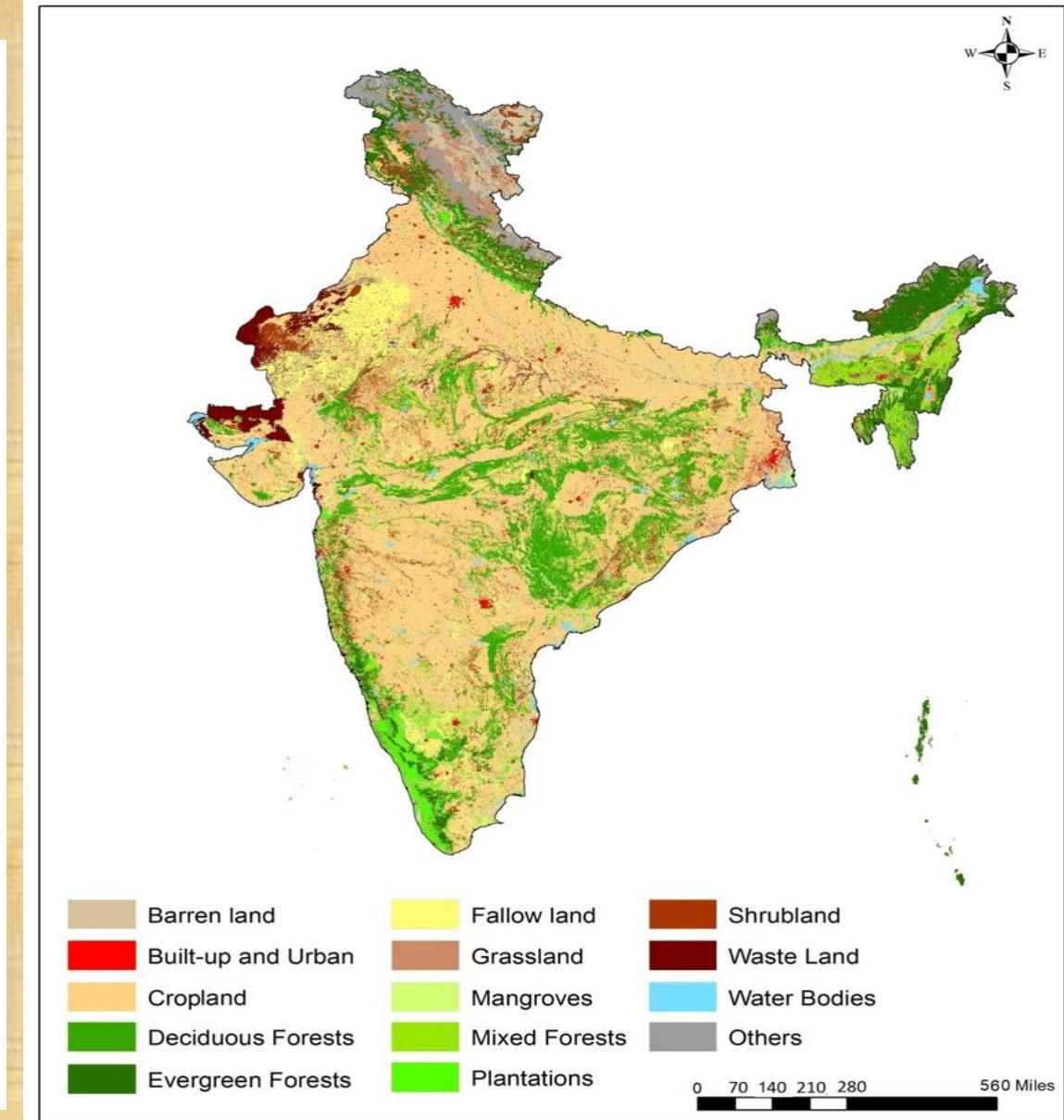
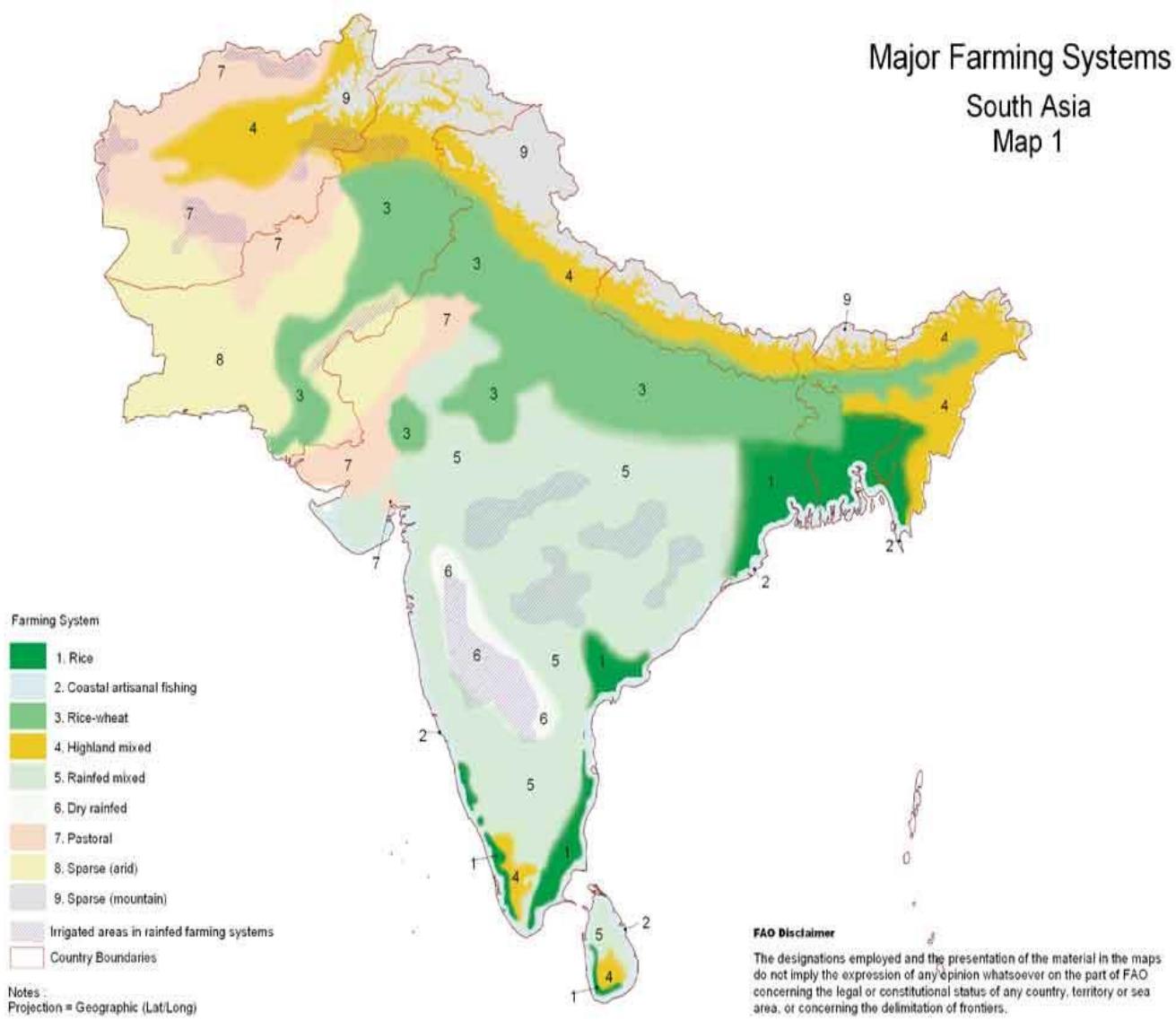


Mountains and Rivers

- Notice the size of the Indus and Ganges plains
- River Valleys sustained stable agriculture, manufacturing, trade, cities, and States
- Mountains a barrier to State formation



Forest, Agriculture and Land Use



River, Field, Forest, Mountain

- Conflict between Forest and Field (Agriculture)
- Complementarity between Forest and Field
- River as life sustaining and uniting
- River as life threatening and dividing (border)
- Mountains as protectors, as landmarks, as boundaries

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THESE FOUR HAVE
DEFINED INDIA'S PAST

Movement and Stability



- Human movements within the Indian Sub-continent
- First humans (hominds) traced back 1.5 million years (if not more)
- Ancestral North Indians and Ancestral South Indians; Tibeto-Burmese; Austroasiatic
- Present day human populations dated to 50,000 to 75,000 years
- Populations grew in places with river, field, forest, mountains
- Settled agriculture spread to river flood-plains only 2,500 years ago
- Settled and nomadic populations: a constant dialectic

Migrations and Travel

- Endogamous communities emerged with settled agriculture
- Yet constant movement of people
 - In search of better conditions
 - Escaping State power
- Trade emerged with settled populations and States
 - Exchange of commodities based on mobile populations
- Pilgrimage
 - A Sacred Geography
 - Linked to Agriculture, Trade and State power

▼ Geography, History, Society

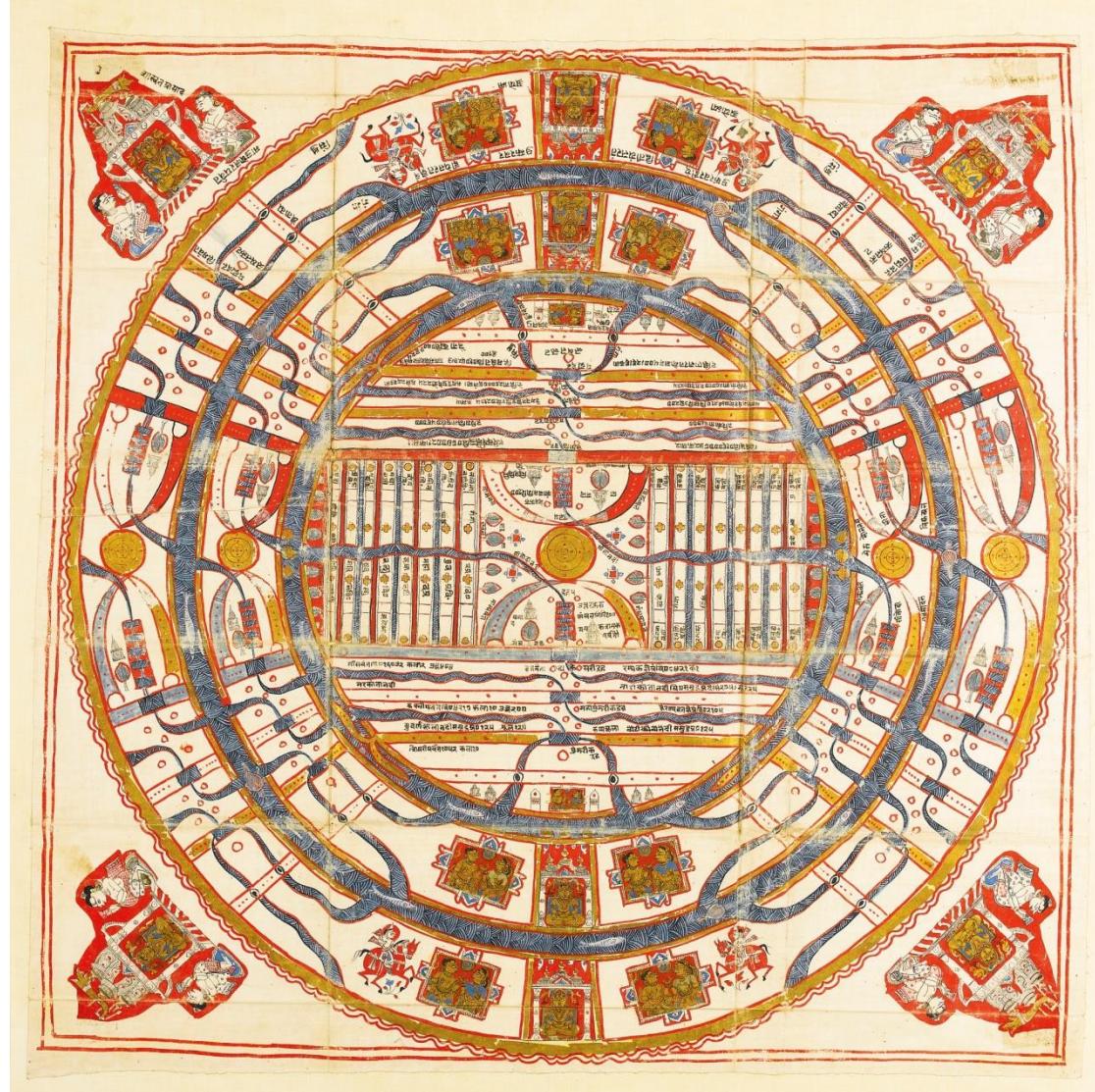
- Rivers, mountains, deserts, forests, etc have defined human experience in the Indian sub-continent
- Provide determining factors and limiting conditions
- The Indus-Ganges valley has been the centre
 - Geographical determinism?
 - But based on the mastery of horse, fire and iron
- Mountains have proved inhospitable to State and civilisation
 - Till the 19th Century
- Similarities among river plains and highlands, forests, deserts

India as Nation

- Similarities within populations around river flood-plains
 - Family
 - Caste
 - Religious practices
 - Languages
 - State structures
- State Anchored in the River
- British changed this political geography which had held since the beginning of History
 - Grew from sea-coast
 - Falling importance of River flood-plain
 - New routes of trade and travel opening up



Idea of India over History



End of the History Lectures

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