

1

Dilemmas

One morning . . . the old chief appeared graver and more affectionate toward me than usual,” notes a fieldworker in a report of his experiences trying to document customs. “He told me the *‘Ho-mah-tchi* was coming—a very *sa-mu* (ill-natured) dance,’ and suggested that ‘it would be well for me not to sketch it.’” Unaware that a council had ordered the Knife Dance to put an end to his objectionable behavior, the researcher persisted. Vexed, the man who had befriended him exclaimed, “‘Oh, well, of course, a fool always makes a fool of himself.’” The warning was shrugged off.¹

“When the great dance appeared, the governor seemed desirous of keeping me at home. During most of the morning I humored him in this,” writes the fieldworker. “At last, however, fearing I would miss some important ceremonial, I stole out across the house-tops and took a position on one of the terraces of the dance court.” He describes what he saw. “The dancers filed in through the covered way, preceded by a priest, and arranged themselves in a line across the court. Their costumes were not unlike those of the first dance I had witnessed, save that the masks were flatter and smeared with blood, and the beards and hair were long and streaming.” He continues, “In their right hands the performers carried huge, leaf-shaped, blood-stained knives of stone, which, during the movements of the dance, they brandished wildly in the air, in time and accompaniment to their wild song and regular steps, often pointing

them toward me.” As the day advanced, spectators thronged the terrace; most of them shied away from the fieldworker, however, who busied himself with note-taking and sketching.²

Suddenly two characters dashed into the court. Adorned in skull caps, painted with ashes, sporting around the neck a twisted rope of black fiber, and wielding war-clubs, they made a ghastly sight. Their harangues at each other were initially greeted with laughter, but before long even the children became silent.

“Soon they began to point wildly at me with their clubs,” writes the fieldworker. “Unable as I was to understand all they had been saying, I at first regarded it all as a joke,” he notes, “until one shouted out to the other, ‘Kill him! Kill him!’ and the women and children excitedly rising rushed for the doorways or gathered closer to one another.” At that moment the larger man brandished his club at the observer, violently striking the ladder near the top of which the researcher was sitting, and began to climb. “A few Indians had collected behind me, and a host of them stood all around in front. Therefore, I realized that in case of violence, escape would be impossible,” observes the fieldworker, describing his reaction.³

“I forced a laugh,” he writes, “quickly drew my hunting-knife from the bottom of the pouch, waved it two or three times in the air so that it flashed in the sunlight, and laid it conspicuously in front of me.” He describes his behavior further. “Still smiling, I carefully placed my book—open—by the side of the pouch and laid a stone on it to show that I intended to resume the sketching. Then I half rose, clinging to the ladder-pole with one hand, and holding the other in readiness to clutch the knife.” He indicates the men’s reactions. “The one below suddenly grabbed the skirt of the other and shouted, ‘Hold on, he is a *kí-he!* a *kí-he!* We have been mistaken. This is no Navajo.’ Jumping down to the ground,” reports the writer, “the one thus addressed glanced up at me for an instant, waved his war-club in the air, breathed from it, and echoed the words of his companion, while the spectators wildly shouted applause.” The fieldworker was, they had finally decided, a “spiritual friend,” one endowed with sacred powers for the good of mankind. “The two held a hurried conference. They swore they must ‘kill a Navajo,’ and dashed through the crowd and passage-way out of the court.”⁴

The fieldworker stayed put. "As I replaced my knife and resumed the sketching, the eyes of nearly the whole assemblage were turned toward me, and the applause, mingled with loud remarks, was redoubled," he writes. "Some of the old men even came up and patted me on the head, or breathed on my hands and from their own." But the episode was not yet over.⁵

"Presently a prolonged howl outside the court attracted the attention of all, and the frantic pair rushed in through the covered way, dragging by the tail and hind legs a big, yelping, snapping, shaggy yellow dog," continues the fieldworker, recounting more details about the incident. "'We have found a Navajo,' exclaimed one, as they threw the dog violently against the ground.'" While the dog was cringing before the two men, "they began an erratic dance, wildly gesticulating and brandishing their clubs, and interjecting their snatches of song with short speeches. Suddenly, one of them struck the brute across the muzzle with his war-club, and a well-directed blow from the other broke its back," reports the observer. "While it was yet gasping and struggling, the smaller one of the two rushed about frantically yelling, 'A knife, a knife.' One was thrown down to him. Snatching it up, he grabbed the animal and made a gash in its viscera."⁶

The scene that followed is not described, for it was "too disgusting." Instead, the fieldworker sums up the experience and interprets the event. "Whether the Indians had really designed to murder me, or merely to intimidate me," he writes, "my coolness, as well as my waving of the knife toward the sun, both largely accidental, had made a great impression on them. For never afterward was I molested to any serious extent in attempting to make notes and sketches." There were immediate results as well. "That night," writes the fieldworker, "the old chief was profuse in his congratulations and words of praise. I had completed in him, that day, the winning of the truest of friends; and by so doing had decided the fate of my mission among the Zuni Indians."⁷

Why was Frank Hamilton Cushing, the author of these words, among the Zuni? What did he want? How did he proceed? Perhaps more important, what are some of the implications of Cushing's experiences and the ramifications of his sketch for fieldworkers and the people they study today?

Cushing's account of his fieldwork experiences appeared in

serial form in *The Century Magazine* in 1882 and 1883 under the title "My Adventures in Zuñi." The vignette is a rarity. Despite the myriad collections of field data and reports of observations, as well as the innumerable analyses based on fieldwork, little is known about the particular ways in which fieldworkers obtained information. Was it elicited or volunteered? How did the researchers conceive of the people whose behavior they studied? How did the people whose behavior was observed identify and respond to the researchers? How did these identities and relationships shape the outcome of the investigations?⁸ "We have to turn our attention first of all to the artist himself," writes Franz Boas in his discussion of North American Indian art. Boas in fact was unable to comply with his own demand because "unfortunately," he admits, "observations on this subject are very rare and unsatisfactory, for it requires an intimate knowledge of the people to understand the innermost thought and feelings of the artist."⁹ Boas depended largely on objects rather than people as the basis for his inferences about North American Indian art, as others have restricted their examinations to the basic plots of narratives in their discussions of storytelling. Ruth Benedict, who trusted interpreters (but who never identifies them, explains how they were chosen, or indicates their role in her investigations) implies in her writings that she had probed the minds and actions of individuals in order to determine the functions of customs and the dynamic nature of the art of storytelling,¹⁰ but evaluation of her work is difficult without knowledge of her methods.

Melville and Frances Herskovits recorded Dahomean narratives in their hotel room; because of an imperfect knowledge of the native language, they were forced to use interpreters and then had to translate the narratives from French into English as they typed the texts.¹¹ Colin Turnbull was contemptuous of the Ik, whom he decided to study only because political unrest in the Congo and the Indian government's refusal of permission made it impossible for him to work among the peoples of Ituri Forest and the Andaman Islands, respectively.¹² William Hugh Jansen, when collecting stories in Kentucky, mentioned to his landlady that a man he had just met told him some "old-time tales," suggesting that this was an admirable thing to do, thereby prompting her for leads to other storytellers. Her response was, "Old-time tales nothing. All he tells are lies."¹³ Several of

John Dollard's informants challenged him, questioning his motives for coming to the South to study black-white relations, doubting the validity of his methods in carrying out the research, and assailing his interpretations of their behavior.¹⁴ In Levittown, Pennsylvania, Herbert Gans concealed from many people the fact that he was a sociologist, sometimes claiming to be an historian and at other times identifying himself simply as a resident and a neighbor; this selective revelation of purpose and identity produced some unexpected results, among which was a feeling of guilt about the prospects of reporting certain kinds of information.¹⁵ Nevertheless, these and other researchers have persevered, creating for us ethnographies and collections of information about the people they have studied. But what effects have the conditions of fieldwork had upon that which has been reported?

Cushing's characterization of his fieldwork experiences among the Zuni is unusual in another way. It contrasts sharply with the image generated in treatises on fieldwork and by most ethnographies; namely, that research is always well planned and systematic and that events go smoothly. Fieldwork guides tend to leave the impression that the logic of inquiry, which the authors have reconstructed, is the same as logic-in-use. Research is presented as largely a matter of stating what one is interested in, determining how to learn more about that topic, and then filling in the gaps in one's knowledge and understanding by making some observations or by interviewing people.¹⁶ Once observational skills and record-making techniques are mastered, one is presumably equipped to go "into the field." According to the authors of some manuals, even amateurs and Sunday collectors can do fieldwork, an important task which, they imply, is not too difficult, is often exciting, and is sometimes fun.¹⁷ There are, however, many unplanned events in conducting fieldwork for which one is not really prepared, nor is one assisted in most of the available literature in dealing with the personal element inherent in this type of research requiring firsthand interaction with other people.

Cushing's fieldwork experiences exemplify many of these problems. Consider the circumstances that led to his sojourn among the Zuni. "One hot summer day in 1879," he writes, "as I was sitting in my office in the ivy-mantled old South Tower of the Smithsonian Institution, a messenger boy tapped at my

door, and said: 'Professor Baird wishes to see you, sir.''' Cushing continues his account. 'The Professor, picking up his umbrellas and papers, came toward the door as I entered. 'Haven't I heard you say you would like to go to New Mexico to study the cliff-houses and Pueblo Indians?'' Baird asked Cushing. Cushing's response was immediate: "'Yes, sir.'" He reports Baird's next question. "'Would you still like to go?'" Again, the answer was positive. "'Yes, sir.'" Cushing quotes the professor's instructions. "'Very well then, be ready to accompany Colonel Stevenson's collecting party, as ethnologist, within four days. I want you to find out all you can about some typical tribe of Pueblo Indians. Make your own choice of field, and use your own methods; only, get the information,'" commanded Baird. "'You will probably be gone three months. Write me frequently. I'm in a hurry this evening. Look to Major Powell, of the Bureau of Ethnology, if you want further directions. Good-day.'" Cushing notes the outcome of this interview. "Thus it happened that, on a sultry afternoon in late September, by no means firmly seated in the first saddle I had ever bestridden, I was belaboring a lazy Government mule just at the entrance of a pass between two great banded red-and-gray sandstone mesas, in the midst of a waterless wilderness."¹⁸

Students will recognize some elements in Cushing's experiences similar to their own. They walk into a classroom and learn that to receive a passing grade in the course they must do fieldwork and submit a written report discussing the results. They probably will be given some instruction in how to observe and make records, particularly if the course has the word *fieldwork* in its title; but to a great extent they will be left to their own devices. "Get the information!" they will be told.

According to Cushing's account, his trip to New Mexico (on the basis of which he obtained information for many publications and earned a reputation as a pioneering and perceptive ethnologist) was a matter of happenstance. Chance also has been responsible for the decisions of many others to study certain behaviors, peoples, or events. Bronislaw Malinowski's sojourn in the Trobriand Islands seemed to have resulted in part because of the consequences of Europe at war. Since he was an alien in residence in England, it was considered judicious for all concerned that he remain out of the country for the duration of the conflict.¹⁹ When those carrying their supplies deserted

Margaret Mead and Reo Fortune near a mountain village in New Guinea, the two anthropologists could not proceed to their preplanned field destination. They acquiesced and studied instead the only accessible population, the Mountain Arapesh.²⁰ Henry Glassie went to Northern Ireland with the intent of preparing an ethnography describing how residents managed their daily affairs amid political strife. When talking one evening to an elderly woman about Christmas customs, however, he learned that some of the older men in the area had once been mummers; excited, Glassie changed topics and recorded information about the drama which he subsequently published.²¹ Others have had topics or problems, behaviors or peoples, suggested to them by instructors, colleagues, and chance acquaintances. Sometimes careers have been built, or lives destroyed, as a result.

Cushing might have been killed doing fieldwork; Raymond Kennedy was; Michael Clark Rockefeller may have been (though his fate remains a mystery). Others have contracted malaria, hepatitis, or dysentery. Some have been temporarily or permanently disabled. In at least one instance, the child of a fieldworker died shortly after the family arrived at the fieldwork site.²² For the most part, however, such nightmares go unreported.

Students today have an advantage over Cushing. They can take courses in fieldwork: indeed, they are often compelled to do so. They can read handbooks that assist them in writing a proposal or that instruct them in interviewing, administering questionnaires, tape-recording, taking photographs, or making films. Furthermore, they can learn from the insights and profit from the mistakes of those who have preceded them. It is sometimes remarked by students and professionals that after their most recent fieldwork experiences, they realized how ill prepared they were for the task. Despite their knowledge and training, they still had to rely on their own methods, as Cushing did.

What were Cushing's methods? Were they entirely accidental? Was he not prepared at all for his encounters in the field? Obviously, he could take notes and draw. "I had been busy with memoranda and had succeeded in sketching three or four of the costumes," he informs us.²³ He also suggests that he was capable of preparing himself experientially as events occurred.

The first Indian that Cushing met as he descended from a canyon rim happened to be a Zuni, though Cushing did not at first know it. Neither man could understand the other. When the Indian extended his hand, Cushing shook it warmly and asked, "Zuñi?" The Indian was ecstatic and reverentially breathed on Cushing's hand from his own, nodding toward the smoky terraces in the distance.²⁴ Absorbed in watching a dance on one of the plazas, none of the three-hundred Zuni noticed Cushing until he was virtually upon them. Suddenly, he was confronted by forty or fifty men. Cushing writes, "One of them approached and spoke something in Spanish, motioning me away; but I did not understand him, so I grasped his hand and breathed on it as I had seen the herder do. Lucky thought! The old man was pleased," observes Cushing. He explains the results of his act, noting that the man, smiling, "hastily addressed the others, who, after watching me with approving curiosity, gathered around to shake hands and exchange breaths, until I might have regarded myself as President."²⁵

Cushing used other techniques to ingratiate himself. Observing that the men usually smoked when they gathered to discuss matters, Cushing often provided the cigarettes and, though a nonsmoker himself, he also lit up. When he sketched, he always showed his subjects the drawings. "They were wonder-struck, and would pass their fingers over the figures as though they expected to feel them." Yet despite their interest, the Zuni objected strenuously when Cushing attempted to sketch their dances. To conciliate them, he began to carry sugar and trinkets with which he tempted the children. "I grew in their favor, and within a few days had a crowd of them always at my heels. The parents were delighted, and began to share the affection of their children. Nevertheless, the next time I sketched a dance, all this went for nothing."²⁶

Discouraged, Cushing decided to try to live with the Indians, so he moved his belongings into the governor's house. Cushing, like many subsequent fieldworkers, envisioned such an action as a means of learning about a people by participating more directly in their activities. But what were the consequences of this unilateral decision? "When the old chief came in that evening and saw that I had made myself at home, he shrugged his shoulders," writes Cushing, whose report of the man's first question suggests that the governor was not too pleased. "'How

long will it be before you go back to Washington?' he attempted to ask." Cushing replied that it would be perhaps two months before he was to leave the area, and hence the governor's home. "'Tuh!' (damn) was his only exclamation as he climbed to the roof and disappeared through the sky-hole," Cushing reports.²⁷

As Cushing settled in, he became acquainted with the governor's family. He notes that it "consisted of the governor's ugly wife, a short-statured, large-mouthed, slant-eyed, bushy-haired hypochondriac, yet the soul of obedience to her husband, and ultimately of kindness to me, for she conceived a violent fancy for me, because I petted her noisy, dirty, and adored little niece. Not so was her old aunt," who regarded Cushing "as though I were a wizard, or a persistent nightmare." The governor despised her almost as much as he disliked her nephew, whose wife he called "a bag of hard howls." The governor's brother-in-law was "a short, rather thick and greasy man, excessively conceited, ignorant, narrow," whom the chief nicknamed "Who-talks-himself-dry." Others in the family were as offensive to Cushing as he was to them at first, and as they were to one another.²⁸ "I made fair progress in the good graces of this odd group," claims Cushing, "but still by them, as by the rest of the tribe, I was regarded as a sort of black sheep on account of my sketching and note-taking, and suspicions seemed to increase in proportion to the evident liking they began to have for me."²⁹

Cushing was determined not to abandon the pursuit. Because of his persistence, a grave council was held. It occurred in the same room in which he slept; "as I lay in my hammock listening to the proceedings," he writes, "the discussion grew louder and more and more excited, the subjects evidently being my papers and myself." After the council broke up, "the governor approached me, candle in hand, and intently regarded my face for several minutes." Cushing reports what the governor said to him. "'The *Keá-k'ok-shi* (Sacred Dance) is coming to-morrow. What think you?'" Cushing's reply ignored the gravity of the situation. "'I think it will rain.'" The governor responded in the following way, "'And I think,' said he, as he set his mouth and glared at me with his black eyes, 'that you will not see the *Keá-k'ok-shi* when it comes to-morrow.'" Undaunted, Cushing said, "'I think I *shall* . . .'"³⁰ Cushing was indeed on hand for the dance. He was warned to put aside his books and pen-

cils. "I must carry them wherever I go," he insisted,³¹ and most of the time he did.

Cushing's determination to "get the information," and his success in doing so, motivated him to ask permission to extend his stay among the Zuni. His request was approved by the Smithsonian Institution, so he broached the subject with the Zuni governor, giving what he felt would be acceptable reasons. "I told the governor that Washington wished me to remain there some months longer, to write all about his children, the Zuñis, and to sketch their dances and dresses," reports Cushing, who notes the governor's response. "'Hai!' said the old man. 'Why does Washington want to know about our Kâ-kâ? The Zuñis have their religion and the Americans have theirs.'"³² In continuing his account, Cushing suggests that he flattered the governor as a potential contributor to better Anglo-Indian relations, for he writes that he asked the governor, "'Do you want Washington to be a friend of the Zuñis? How can you expect a people to like others without knowing something about them? Some fools and bad men have said 'the Zuñis have no religion.' It is because they are always saying such things of some Indians, that we do not understand them. Hence, instead of all being brothers, we fight.'"³²

Cushing's strategy seemed successful, for he was permitted to remain. Yet before the members of the Smithsonian party that had come for him had departed, Cushing became aware of the fact that his remaining would entail his making a number of concessions. The governor snatched off Cushing's helmet and bound his head with a long, black silken scarf. He insisted that Cushing wear a pair of buckskin moccasins instead of the "squeaking foot-packs," as the governor called his English walking shoes. "Thus, in a blue flannel shirt, corduroy breeches, long canvas leggings, Zuni moccasins, and head-band, heartily ashamed of my mongrel costume, I had to walk across the whole pueblo and down to camp, the old man peering proudly around the corner of an eagle-cage at me as I started," writes Cushing. He describes the conflicting responses to his dress and notes his reaction. "The Zuñis greeted me enthusiastically, but when I reached camp great game was made of me. I returned thoroughly disgusted, determined never to wear the head-band again; but, when I looked for the hat and shoes, they were nowhere to be found."³³

In the days that followed, more of Cushing's garb was taken from him and exchanged for Zuni clothing. He was forced to eat Zuni food. Even his hammock was torn down, and he was required to sleep on the floor on sheepskins as his hosts did. "I want to make a Zuñi of you," said the chief.³⁴ Once begun, the transformation of Cushing continued unabated. "My foster father, and many other of the principal men of the tribe, now insisted that my ears be pierced," writes Cushing. "I steadily refused; but they persisted, until at last it occurred to me that there must be some meaning in their urgency, and I determined to yield to their request." At the ceremony, Cushing was given a new name, that of *Té-na-tsa-li*, 'Medicine Flower' (he had often dispensed salves and ointments), signaling his growing acceptance by the Zunis.³⁵

There was still the matter of his not having taken a woman. One was thrust upon him. Cushing tried to ignore her attentions, but to no avail. There seemed to be only one solution. "I left word for her to come and eat with me at sunset. When she came, I was writing. She was accompanied by her aunt. I bade them enter, set coffee, bread, *he-we* [corn cakes, made by the girl] sugar, and other delicacies before them," Cushing reports. "Then I merely broke a crust, sacrificed some of it to the fire, ate a mouthful, and left them, resuming my writing." Cushing describes the effects of his acts. "The girl dropped her half-eaten bread, threw her head-mantle over her face, and started for the door. I called to her and offered a bag of sugar in payment, I said, for the *he-we*. At first she angrily refused; then bethinking herself that I was an American and possibly knew no better, she took the sugar and hastened away, mortified and almost ready to cry with vexation." Cushing characterizes his own feelings and defends his behavior. "Poor girl! I knew I was offering her a great dishonor,—as runs the custom of her people,—but it was my only way out of a difficulty far more serious than it could have possibly appeared to her people."³⁶

When writing about his fieldwork adventures, Cushing maintained an air of aloofness from the Zuni, although while living among them he often identified closely with them. Many of their beliefs he later called superstitions and survivals, but he also sided with them against the Navajo and the whites, actions which ultimately led to his being recalled to Washington. Not content merely to observe the behavior of the Zunis, he

attempted to participate in their daily activities as much as he could. When, as a consequence of his persistence, he was forced to make concessions and to conform to the demands of his hosts, he often did so reluctantly, but also with respect and out of consideration for them. More than once he had to play the game of bluff to observe activities, to sketch, or to take notes. Some of his actions seem deceptive or unethical to us today, as perhaps they seemed to Cushing himself at the time. Yet he was as involved and sensitive as he was detached and determined. He ministered to the sick and dying; he interceded in the torture of a man accused of sorcery; he bestowed lavish attention upon his adopted father. When Cushing deceived the Zunis or shamed one of them, he often expressed self-dissatisfaction or felt remorse. When he was tricked or put on the defensive, he usually seemed to understand and appreciate the fact that turn about is fair play.

As instructed, Cushing "got the information." But his experiences while doing so, as recounted in "My Adventures in Zuñi," reveal the diverse and often unpredictable nature of events that occur when one engages in fieldwork. Cushing's adventures also demonstrate the ambivalent feelings that evolve as fieldworkers interact with the individuals whose behaviors constitute the subjects of their research.

We know about the reactions of Cushing and a few other fieldworkers to their research subjects. But for the most part, we know nothing about what subjects think of the individuals who observe and write about them. In the case of Cushing and other researchers who have done fieldwork among the Zuni, however, we are more fortunate. Some impressions and reactions of individual Zunis who encountered or were told about these fieldworkers have recently been documented and reported.

An elderly woman, born while Cushing was in Zuni, said that she had been named after Cushing's wife, Emma, a fact that suggests some affection or respect for the Cushings. "He was a good friend of the Indians and that's why he was made a Bow Priest," a ninety-year-old man remarked. In response to a question about Cushing, one Zuni woman stated, "Yes, my mother told me about Cushing. She told me that her folks were responsible for making him a Bow Priest. But just a few years after making him a Bow Priest three high priests were killed in the Ramah area and the people said that because those priests made

that white man a high priest, they were killed.”³⁷ With this single exception, most published statements about Cushing are either positive or uncritical, perhaps because memory of him has faded or because Cushing had been well received generally.

The same cannot be said for Matilda Coxe Stevenson, whose husband, Colonel James Stevenson, had led the Smithsonian expedition of 1879, of which Cushing was a member. Mrs. Stevenson has been described by some contemporary researchers as “strong willed” and “overbearing.” She is said to have reacted “much too aggressively” and to have lacked “a saving sense of humor.”³⁸ An elderly Zuni woman who knew Mrs. Stevenson said, “She was disliked by many Zunis. She lived in a camp which was guarded by two Zuni men whom she paid every day. Some of the Zunis wanted to get rid of her. You cannot believe how arrogant she was. She entered the *Kivas* without asking permission of the high priest. She took pictures because the Zunis did not know what she was doing.”³⁹ Her persistence in gaining admission to religious ceremonies and in obtaining sacred objects, however, earned her respect from at least some Zuni who admired her obvious fearlessness.⁴⁰ Others interviewed recently railed against Mrs. Stevenson, accusing her of having stolen sacred objects, a charge that seems to have had its origin in rumor rather than reality.⁴¹ It has been suggested that Mrs. Stevenson had “a tendency to throw rapport to the winds” anyway, because of a sense of urgency in salvaging the old ways before they were irrevocably lost.⁴² Zuni reaction to Mrs. Stevenson’s book about their way of life was mixed at the time the work was first published in 1904. But some of the present-day Zunis reportedly have borrowed a copy surreptitiously from a local trader in order to study its pictures and descriptions of dancers.⁴³

Elsie Clews Parsons, another fieldworker, was fondly remembered as “a real friend of my husband and me” by a Cherokee woman, married to a Zuni, who had been hostess to Mrs. Parsons. According to this woman, “We were her best friends and we worked hard for her. I am not a Zuni and I don’t know everything about the Zunis. So if there was something which Mrs. Parsons wanted to know about them and I didn’t know, I asked the people and they told me everything. My husband was an important Zuni and he helped her a lot.”⁴⁴

Over the years, this Cherokee woman had also hosted such

well-known anthropologists as Leslie Spier, A. L. Kroeber, and Franz Boas. "When Mr. Kroeber was in Zuni for the first time," she recalled, "he came to see me and introduced himself by saying, 'My name is Alfred Kroeber. I am a friend of Mrs. Parsons. I am willing to eat beans three times a day. Will you accept me to live here for the summer?' I thought he was so cute that I agreed to rent him a room."⁴⁵

Of another famous visitor the same woman remarked, "Professor Boas was a very pleasant person. He was not talkative like Mrs. Parsons; he was calm, quiet, and very sweet. He was a good cook. So long as he was with me, he was in charge of the kitchen and cooked dinner—mostly soup. Once he sent me a packet of all kinds of soup."⁴⁶

More tarnished in the minds of some people is the image of another investigator. Archaeologist F. W. Hodge aroused considerable discomfort by excavating Hawikuh, one of the ancient settlements of the Zuni. By 1923 the Zunis were in the throes of religious factionalism. Hodge had wanted to make a film of some ceremonies. He had the approval of one faction, but not of the other. The opponents did more than merely protest. They smashed cameras and expelled both the photographer and Hodge from the pueblo.⁴⁷

Ruth Benedict and Ruth Bunzel arrived on the scene a year later. Their immediate problem in the midst of community strife was to find a host family and a local sponsor. "When Nick Tumaka paid his official call on us that evening," writes Bunzel about their arrival, "to find out, as governor, who we were and what we were doing, we fished around for names that might identify us as acceptable. (The question was, 'Who sent you?') He didn't recognize Parsons, Kroeber, or Spier. When we mentioned Hodge, he bristled, and we took it right back. We didn't really know him well. Finally running out of names, we mentioned Boas. Boas had spent three days in Zuni when he was working at Laguna, but Nick remembered the man with the crooked face who had wanted to hear stories. That turned the trick and we got our visa."⁴⁸

The interpreter for Bunzel and Benedict remembered them with mixed emotions. Of Bunzel she said, "She was just like a sister to me." Further, "Bunzel was a good woman. She liked people and was always good to children." There were some difficulties, however. "Once I got after her because she spoiled

one of my nicest dresses. She borrowed it for a dance and then sat on the dirt floor wearing my dress. I remember her getting upset only once when she was followed by some boys who said dirty things to her. She talked back to them in Zuni and scolded them. They got scared and ran away." Bunzel apparently made several promises to her hostess which she did not fulfill, leaving the woman puzzled and disappointed. Of Benedict, the interpreter complained, "She did not go out, as Bunzel did. She would pick out someone and would bring him home and write down whatever he told her." This woman and others contended that Benedict's analysis could not have been well founded, lacking as she did an intimate knowledge of pueblo life. However, Benedict was, according to her interpreter, "more polite and generous than Bunzel. She spoke gently and gave more money." The remuneration, whatever its amount, was sufficient to enable the interpreter to purchase land. On it she built a house in which subsequent fieldworkers lived in a manner the woman conceived to be more fitting to their status.⁴⁹

Not every fieldworker was invited to Zuni or permitted to stay, however. In 1941 the Tribal Council confiscated the notes of one researcher, burning part of them and demanding that the individual leave within twenty-four hours. Another investigator was threatened with expulsion, and several more have been denied facilities in Zuni for fieldwork.⁵⁰

That the Zunis' experiences with past fieldworkers have created difficulties for contemporary investigators is exemplified by their reactions to Trikoli Nath Pandey, an American-trained anthropologist born in India. Pandey, whose research is the source of much of the available information about the Zunis' interactions with ethnologists, comments: "During the course of my fieldwork, many a time I was asked by the Zuni why I was studying them and not the whites. Once on meeting a white trader one of my informants said: 'Do you know any of these blood-sucking leeches? Believe me, they are really leeches. I guess you have people like them in India, too. Like the Navajos, they are everywhere.'"⁵¹

A middle-aged male Zuni complained to Pandey, "When we go to white men's places, we behave ourselves, but when they come to our pueblo they don't. They never let us do anything alone. They ask questions all the time."⁵² Said another Zuni about fieldworkers, "They always sneak about and learn secrets

about people and write funny stories.”⁵³ The governor objected, “Nobody comes here to help us. Everyone who comes has his own self-interest at heart.”⁵⁴ And one man asked Pandey, “Are we still so primitive that you anthropologists have to come to study us every summer?”⁵⁵

The first host family with whom Pandey lived, and who received one hundred dollars a month for keeping him, seemed delighted to have a fieldworker for the summer. But reaction was not unanimously positive. “Some members of the family were always conscious that I was an anthropologist and believed my only aim in being with them was ‘to fish for secret information.’ They did not enjoy answering my questions about their culture and would ask me instead to tell them about the anthropologists whom they had known.”⁵⁶ The same family accused him of “selling Zuni secrets to white men.”⁵⁷

Pandey stayed with another family the following summer. “I soon discovered that the oldest woman of this family, the one who had served as an interpreter to Benedict and Bunzel, was a warmhearted person. She took a genuine interest in my work, introduced me to her large number of kinsmen, and kept encouraging me to learn the ways of her people. I believe,” he speculates, “her earlier contact with anthropologists was useful to my work. She was appreciative for her contacts with outsiders and always asked me about the anthropologists she had helped earlier.” When Pandey returned from visiting other people, she would demand: “Tell us the news; you know more about Zuni than anyone else here. When you go away, we certainly miss you.”⁵⁸ Once when Pandey told her that Zuni seemed to have changed a great deal over the years, her response was, “So have anthropologists, You are not asking me what Mr. Kroeber used to ask.”⁵⁹

While drunk, the son-in-law of Pandey’s hostess shouted at him, “Bloody Hindu, come out. I know why you came here. . . (name deleted) told me about you people (anthropologists). I know you people are no good.” But the family reprimanded him, saying, “Don’t treat him that way. He is an important person.” Later, the son-in-law apologized for his behavior, but he seemed resentful of the attention paid to Pandey.⁶⁰

“He is nice. We don’t feel ashamed of him,” Pandey’s hostess told another person, referring to her anthropologist-guest.

"He is just like one of us. He eats with us and behaves good. We like him."⁶¹

To others, Pandey, having come from a remote land called India, was an object of curiosity and even of spiritual kinship. He was reminded that he was "a real Indian" and was even asked if perhaps his ancestors were also ancestors of the Zuni.

"I have been received differently by different people at Zuni," concludes Pandey. "The white people knew who I was and were invariably friendly and cooperative," although they were not the subjects of his research. "The Indians," whom he studied, "were rather ambivalent towards me as well as towards my work."⁶²

The ambivalence Pandey describes is mutual. When people study people, all parties are necessarily ambiguous in their feelings toward each other—at least initially. Both fieldworkers and subjects of research must deal with dilemmas created by the nature of their relationship. Diverse problems arise in every fieldwork situation, and the individuals involved must make varied types of decisions. In citing at length Cushing's adventures among the Zunis, as well as the Zunis' reactions to Cushing and other fieldworkers, we hope to suggest the substance and scope of these dilemmas and to call attention to the fact that they are both rooted in, and resolved by, the shared human identity of the subjects.

The dichotomy between inquirer and subject is often drawn in the fieldwork literature. Yet what becomes readily apparent to those who engage in fieldwork is that the distinction is neither clear-cut nor consistent. Fieldworkers not only observe and question informants, but they are studied and queried themselves in a continual reversal of roles. Decisions made—sometimes with forethought, but often without prior consideration of the alternatives or consequences—reveal that sometimes one, and sometimes another, party to the act is in a position of dominance or control. "My Adventures in Zuñi" and other personal accounts of individuals' experiences as fieldworkers reveal the desirability, if not the inevitability, of an approach to fieldwork that focuses upon, rather than slights or ignores, the human element.

In the chapters that follow, we explore many of the issues that are discussed and debated in the scholarly literature on field-

work. Both published and unpublished accounts of fieldworkers' firsthand personal experiences are used to exemplify these issues and to suggest how and why a pragmatic approach to fieldwork might resolve the seeming dilemmas or better prepare one to generate and assess alternatives. We also raise a number of questions that are seldom asked, and we propose answers to them based upon our own experiences and those of others who have learned, often by trial and error, that there are many means to several ends, and that the means and ends are interdependent, inseparable aspects of a complex of experiences that define fieldwork and make it unique.