THE CONSTITUTION OF CLASSICALITY IN COLONIAL INDIA, c. 1850-1880

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **The Constitution of Classicality in Colonial India, c. 1850-1880** submitted by **Rakesh Pandey**, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of **Master of Philosophy** has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge this is an original work.

We recommend that this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of the above mentioned degree.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. CLASSICALITY AND INDIA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The story of colonial encounter in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century

British India opens up a vast terrain of subterranean themes and plots, which went

into the making of modern Indian society, culture, and knowledge systems. Indeed,

the historical complexity of this encounter precedes the complex theatre of

colonialism of the last two centuries, and confronts us with the larger questions of

historical perception of two broad civilizational entities - East and West - from

classical antiquity to modern times. This has been a much told story of historical

destiny of civilisations, guilt and superiority, and triumph of the word 'Reason'.

And yet, it has remained a story with a vast surface and elusive historical depths.

There have been several recent attempts to question essentialisms involved

in the descriptions of 'India' in the last two centuries, in both western and

indigenous discourses by historians, philosophers, linguists, cultural critics and

anthropologists.[1] How was 'India' constituted as an essence and separately in the

terms of its past, institutions, people, language and culture during colonial period,

forms the basic theme of cultural and intellectual history of modern India.

However, I will try to explore a specific theme in the vast repertoire of the history

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[1] Madhav Deshpande, 'History, Change and Permanence: A Classical Indian Perspective' In *Contributions to South Asian Studies 1*, ed. By Gopal Krishna (Delhi,1979); and, Anindita N.Balslev, *A Study of Time in Indian Philosophy* (Otto Harrassowitz. Wiesbaden, 1983).
A.K.Ramanujan, 'Where Mirrors Are Windows: Toward an Anthology of Reflections' *History of Religion*, Feb.1989, Vol.28, No.3, pp.187-216;

of ideas in the nineteenth century colonialism: *constitution of classicality in colonial India, from c.1850 to 1880*, and focus on idealist thought as one of the elements in the making of what we know as 'Indian thought' or 'Indian way of thinking'. We begin with the period when the first phase of Oriental construction of India achieves its maturity under the influential works of early Orientalists, such as William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Colebrooke, and H.H.Wilson (Which began with the establishment of The Asiatic Society of Bengal, in 1784). Our later phase of study coincides with the early decades of India nationalism.

In this chapter we begin with a critical survey of historiographical perspectives, and a synoptic and thematic sketch of the early phase of colonial encounter and British construction of "India". I will deal with two themes in chapter II and III, connected by an underlying thematic unity. These two themes are:

(i) The colonial project of translation of classical Indian texts, which projected classical textual traditions as the source of Indian civilisation. Translations in themselves became a massive colonial archive. Thus, our precise theme is, to examine how in the very act of colonial 'translation' (from literal rendering of classical text from one language to another to a kind of colonial ethnography) a 'classical India' gets constituted.

(ii) The hunt of Sanskrit manuscripts all over the country became a project for salvaging a decaying classical system of Indian knowledge. Manuscript emerged as a relic to be preserved, and more importantly a 'window' to the world of

knowledge in indigenous society – replicating the dominant theme of classical

humanism of the Renaissance Europe. It is interesting to note here that there were

forms of creating a classical domain in the intellectual history of pre - colonial

India.

We shall examine how different notions of classicism from both indigenous

and European intellectual traditions interact and blend in the colonial imagination

to constitute, what we may characterize as 'colonial classicality'.

This involves evidently a study of the interface between the 'world of

language' (translation), the 'world of knowledge' (manuscript-as a repository of

knowledge), and the 'world of idea' (classicality-being the specific example) in the

course of colonial encounter in the nineteenth century India. While weaving the

whole narrative covering these themes within the broader intellectual history of

empire and colonialism, I try to keep the history of European ideas and classical

Indian thought, as two distinct mirrors through which a 'classical' and 'idealized'

image of 'India' got constituted.

However, specificity of the theme of this study, in no way precludes the

plurality of perceptions, responses, and modes of constituting different ideas in

colonial encounter on both British and indigenous parts.[2] While looking into the

ways in which Indian thought and traditions were projected as predominantly

idealist systems, which here I try to show as an offshoot and logical consequence

of the construction of a 'classical domain' and an aestheticized textual tradition, I

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[2] C.A. Bayly, Empire and Information (Cambridge, 1996).

do not deny the existence of 'rational' Indian systems of knowledge either in classical Indian systems, or in the colonial period.[3] And finally, giving due credit to Edward Said's pioneering work on Orientalist constructions of East, I remain conscious about its tenor of reading too much on the Western part undermining the indigenous agency in the making of the Oriental lore.[4]

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

There have been several ways of knowing 'India',-both as a cultural-civilizational essence, and as a geographical space inhabiting man and nature with their diverse and concrete institutions existing in diachronic and synchronic ways. However, in both forms-abstract and concrete-representations of 'India' constitute a common space; where 'India' as an essence, and 'India' as a governable geographical unity- with its people, keep creating each other. Our concern is to look into the ways in which phenomena this takes place in colonial encounter. Before well defined disciplinary studies emerged in the early twentieth century Europe, there was already a vast corpus produced in British India by administrators. Scholars, and travellers in an attempt at knowing, ordering and transforming the colonial world. This created a hegemonic intellectual apparatus

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[3] B.K. Matilal, *Perception : An Essay On Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge.* (Oxford, 1986); J. N. Mohanty, *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought : An essay on the Nature of Indian Philosophical Thinking* (Oxford, 1992); C.A. Bayly, 'British Orientalism and the Indian "Rational Tradition" c.1780 - 1820.' *South Asia Research,* Vol.14, No.1, Spring 1994.

[4] Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings : James Mill's 'The History of British India' and Orientalism* (Oxford, 1992); C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information : Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge, 1996).

under variety of influences of Western ideas. Fifteenth century onwards Europe's

quest for identifying the elements of present in the past, led to the study of past

actions and thoughts as embedded and reflected in various form of individual and

collective representations in social, institutional and cultural forms. With the

change in European theory of time into chronology-transplanting the idea of time in

a linear mode, eighteenth century Europe fabricated 'a real world out of the past,

... as natural and all-encompassing.'[5] This acute awareness of the power of past in

shaping the real present led to a two fold exploration of history in European

culture. First, the search of European past, which was mainly an attempt of locating

the boundaries of states and nations; and, second, exploring the pasts of Europe's

others, which were in a primitive stage and without a European sense of

chronology (known as 'archaic civilisations'). From the end of eighteenth century

comparative method-mainly drawn from comparative philology–emerged as the

most common methodological device to classify Europe's others on a civilisational

scale in its every social, cultural and institutional sphere. Eighteenth-century

Scottish philosophers' emphasis on the idea of progress and scale of civilisations

for societies to be judged and classified became a major tool in Europe's project of

having control over larger space.[6] Colonialism provided the concrete historical

situation in which Europe's desire of control of space, and looking into its own

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[5] Bernard S. Cohn, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi, 1987), pp.50 - 1.

[6] Ibid., pp.52-3.

past in its others' present got materialized. Indeed, the image of colony was a highly textualised one— a classical image in a textual mirror, having its roots in European humanist traditions of the Renaissance period onwards.

Historiography centred around the intellectual and cultural history of colonial encounter in nineteenth century India can be broadly categorised in three groups:

(i) Studies which concentrate on the images of India (and the East) constructed in European history of ideas from classical antiquity to the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment period; which show the location of the East in the West, and concentrate on the larger question of empire and European knowledge.

(ii) Studies which deal with European (specifically British) constructions of Indian society, culture, history and institutions by the Orientalists, evangelics, and the missionaries from mid-eighteenth century onwards. It broadly covers the studies of law, traditions, language, colonial ethnography, antiquarian projects, and surveys done by Britishers which led to the 'creation' and 'ordering of difference'[7], and emergence of different forms of colonial knowledge.[8]

(iii) Studies which deal with indigenous responses to colonialism, emergence of nationalist discourse, agenda of social and political reform, and rebirth

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[7] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, 1995).
[8] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge. The British in India* , (Delhi, 1997).

of vernaculars with the coming of print, colonial modernity, and public sphere.[9] There are very few studies focusing on the indigenous perceptions of Europe;[10] however, there are few studies which try to see the Western influence on indigenous discourses in colonial period.[11]

There is an obvious schism in the way modern Indian historiography moves with regard to history of ideas in the colonial period in these types of studies; as they seem to be closed in their narrow contexts without trying to let these contexts expand both horizontally in temporal terms and vertically in letting various sub-contexts add up to the historical depth of this encounter. How ideas travel in these three interlinked compartments- European, colonial, and indigenous- through their permeable walls pose some deeper questions.

Two pathbreaking works of Edward Said on Orientalism, and Benedict Anderson on nationalism, have radically influenced the recent studies of modern Indian history.[12] Their importance does not lie in the novelty of their themes–which had already been discussed in different contexts, but in the ways in which they tried to rethink and show the intellectual and political power– these two categories have

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[9] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World : A Derivative Discourse ?* (Delhi, 1986); *Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and Post- Colonial Histories* (Delhi,1997).

[10] Tapan Raychandhuri, *Europe Reconsidered : Perceptions of the West in Nineteenth Century Bengal* (Delhi,1988).

[11] Ranajit Guha, *An Indian Historiography of India: A Nineteenth-Century Agenda and Its Implications* (Calcutta, 1988).

[12] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.,* Revised Edn. (London, New York, 1991).

been carrying for the last few centuries in creating destinies of Europe's so called others. In an attempt to historicise these two notions, both the authors show how do they fit in the complex matrix of the Western idea of empire, as an embodiment of eighteenth century Enlightenment rationality; and on the other hand how they influence colonial knowledge and indigenous imagination. Said gives the general meaning of Orientalism as 'a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident", which emerged in the late eighteenth century–a 'corporate institution' in Western style, for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.[13] Said's book draws its major theoretical inspirations from French philosopher Michel Foucault's works on the Western systems of thought, humanist scholars and critics Eric Auerbach and Spitzer, and eighteenth century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico's idea of human history. Two major themes which have been deftly analysed by Said are 'textual attitude'[14] and 'philological laboratory'[15]; which were the result of Europe's quest for knowing the Orient primarily in the 'materiality of its texts, languages and civilizations.'[16] This textual attitude was instrumental not only in perceiving, and describing reality; but, even turning those descriptions into truths. Thus, Said sees a 'preposterous transition' in textual constructions, gradually crystallizing into practices in the Orient, and in nineteenth

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[13] Edward Said, Ibid., pp.2-3.
[14] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978), p.92.
[15] Ibid., pp.123-48.
[16] Ibid., p.77.

century West's exploration into the intricacies of Oriental languages; the collection, edition, translation, and commentaries on manuscripts; grammars of classical languages, numismatics, and relics of the past in the Orient.[17] Although Said's books is specifically concerned with the Arab world, its importance lies in the way in which with its analytical vigour and illuminating generalizations, it lays bare the hegemonic instrumentality of the Western essentializations of the East.

In some of the recent studies related with the themes of Oriental constructions of India, Saidian perspective has increasingly come under sharp criticism for giving a canonical and monolith interpretation of Orientalism. The blame on Said's 'Orientalism' is that it overlooks the internal tensions and diversity of this vast intellectual project; while, on the other hand, it does not take into account the indigenous responses which shaped the Oriental discourse with almost equal intellectual involvement. C.A.Bayly, forcefully challenges the axiomatic status of Foucault's and Said's contention, summarily put in Bayly's own words: 'the influence of a knowledge or a discourse both reflects and substantializes the political "weight" of its authors'. Bayly's argument comes from pre-colonial and colonial India, where he sees the emergence of systems of knowledge equally reflecting the 'weakness of power and legitimacy, or situations of intense social competition.'[18] He continues to show that British constructions of knowledge in colonial India reflected 'weakness and ignorance of the colonisers' rather than a

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[17] Ibid., p.96.
[18] C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information* . (Cambridge, 1996), p.25,n.49.

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'gauge of hegemony'. And thus, Bayly further argues, Orientalism, in Saidian sense

was a specific instance of 'localised engagements between power and knowledge'.[19]

He rightly pleads for the localised character of colonial encounter and the

formation of colonial knowledges (Orientalism being one of them); but, he is

grossly mistaken in reducing power- knowledge relation in Foucaultian sense as

completely ignorant of the so-called 'weak' factors. The sheer weight of his highly

polemical argument is trapped in the same puzzle of locating the intentional factors

in historical study of colonial encounter. Bayly's argument against Foucault's

thesis, Saidian Orientalism, and their followers reaches its conclusion in recognising

the 'dialogic' nature of the creation of colonial knowledge, reaffirming Eugene

Irschick's thesis in his book *'Dialogue and History'*. His caveat on burgeoning

recent historiographical trend is starkly clear, but not as powerful as his argument

purports to show. He reminds us epigramatically : 'European knowledge may have

been hegemonic, but it was never absolute.'[20]

Javed Majeed in his study of James Mill's, *The History of British India*

raises some questions on Said's notion of Orientalism, and suggests a more limited

notion of power instead of its overgeneralized notion; thus to create more space for

divergent forms and conflicting notions of Orientalism. He points out a kind of

'circularity' and 'self-reinforcing nature' in Said's argument, which is as much a

crises of Foucault's philosophy, in the sense, that it does not see any possibility of

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[19] Ibid., p.143.
[20] Ibid., p.370.

actually knowing a culture. Majeed's criticism tries to make a theoretical point by questioning the very mode of analysis (adopted by Said following Foucault), which is marred by the lack of self-reflexivity and any sense of purposeful human agency. And, which in turn, impedes (our) understanding of Orientalist discourse and their relationship to power and knowledge.[21] In some ways these questions were presaged by James Clifford in his review essay on *Orientalism*, where he pointed out the prevalence of tautological statements, clearly shown in Said's overuse of the phrase 'Orientalizing the Orient'; Said's problematic characterization of the nature of cross-cultural discourse; and, ambiguity involved in his theoretical position on the very possibility of 'human encounter', its interpretative strategy, and the possibility of any 'humanistic knowledge'.[22] More perceptively Clifford shows two apparent contradictions, bearing more on Said's theoretical stance in our discussions, which relate to Bayly's and Majeed's criticisms. First, there is no clear link between Said's humanist perspectives and Foucault's radical critic of humanism;[23] and, second while criticizing the essentializing modes of thought Said himself falls prey to 'totalizing habits of Western humanism', and 'humanist cosmopolitanism.'[24]

Undoubtedly, Raymond Schwab's *The Oriental Renaissance. Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880*, which was originally published in

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[21] Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings* (Oxford, 1992), pp.198-9.

[22] James Clifford, 'Review of Orientalism' *History and Theory*, pp.209-10.

[23] Ibid., p.212.

[24] Ibid., pp.219-222.

French as *La Renaissance Orientale* in 1950, still remains the most authoritative

and Classic account of Orientalism. In his encyclopaedic account Schwab traces the

cultural and intellectual genealogies of Europe's great rediscovery as a major

component of Western intellectual and cultural history of the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries. India, among all the Orients became a striking example in

human civilization, as for the eighteenth century Romantics 'the great question of

the different'[25]; and thus, the Indic world gleaned from the images of India 'regally

entered the configuration of the universe.'[26] Schwab sees Orientalism as a major

project of Western humanism in the nineteenth century. By 1875, Orient and chiefly

India, got fixed in the Western classification of knowledge, and simultaneously got

implicated in its humanistic base. This was the year marked by the launching of

sacred books of the East series—edited by Max Müller; establishment of the

Theosophical Society of Madam Blavatsky; and only a year later, saw James

Fergusson's seminal publications such as *'History of India and Eastern*

Architecture' and *'History of Architecture in All Countries.' Vol.III.*[27]

The Oriental Renaissance, which Schwab calls a 'Second Renaissance' was

marked by the arrival of Sanskrit texts in the nineteenth century Europe which

revived the memory of Greek manuscripts and Byzantine commentators arrival in

Europe in the fifteenth century after the fall of Constantinople. Schwab borrows

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[25] Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance : Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880.* Trans., by Gene Patterson-Black, and Victor Reinking (New York, 1984), p.6.

[26] Ibid., p.7.

[27] Ibid.; p.8.

this term from Edgar Quinet's book *Genie des religions* (1841), in which Anquetil-Duperron and Willaim Jones have been seen as modern Lascaris, and Hindu manuscripts remind the classical grace of *Illiad* and *Odyssey*. It was 'an antiquity more profound, more philosophical, and more political' than Greece and Rome—heralding 'a new Reformations of religions and secular world'; and marking the close of the neo-classical age, as classical Renaissance did with the medieval age.[28] Orient as an idea or image created a strange revival of the past, as if Renaissance humanism of the sixteenth century was haunting the nineteenth century Romantic imagination. In Schwab's own words the object of his inquiry is 'a history of the process whereby the Western image of India moved from the primitive to the contemporary.' He divides the period between 1785-1870 according to Europe's search of Indian religions: Vedism, Brahmanism, and Buddhism; which became prominent during the 1840s with the arrival of Sanskrit and Pali cannons.[29] Schwab, in his erudite and profound style shows how after the initial period of 'establishing the text', Europe's interest in the Indic civilizations was seen as a revelation of a 'new classicism' with the discovery of Sanskrit texts. The journal *Asiatic Researches* and Jones's translations of *Shakuntala* together with the pioneering works of early British Orientalists like Wilkins, Colebrooke, and Wilson projected 'India' of its classical texts for the whole of Europe.[30] Schwab locates a shift in

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[28] Ibid., p.11.
[29] Ibid., p.24.
[30] Ibid., p.53.

Indic studies in its move from its native land England to the land of Indic

Renaissance Germany. In Germany, it caught attention of philosophers Schelling,

Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Schleiermacher; poets Goethe, Schiller, Novalis

Tieck, and Brentano; and above all, the great masters of Romanticism from Herder

to Friedrich Schlegel. The period from 1830-50 was one of 'linguistic

organizations' under the leadership of Franz Bopp and Burnouf.[31] Schwab's account

of West's rediscovery of Orient primarily traces the origins, significance, and

historical trajectory which Orietalism as an idea covers as a part of the larger

history of European ideas. Although, he does not deal with the role Orientalism

plays in colonial encounter; yet, he very suggestively dilineates a realm of 'aesthetic

incompatibilities', which were most apparent in the plastic arts. He writes-'If India

abounded in people unable to read the written word, the West had a prodigious

number who were illiterate when it comes to image marking a conflict between the

two civilizations, the two modes of reason, the two souls.'[32]

Wilhelm Halbfass has given the most comprehensive and synoptic account

of images of East, and more specifically India, in the history of Western philosophy.

Halbfass's work follows a speculative mode of analysis of the East-West encounter;

and searches the place of 'India' as an essence and a *philosopheme* in Western

thought. He defines his work as one which deals with the 'historical and

hermeneutical presuppositions of the philosophical 'dialogue' between India and

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[31] Ibid., p.121.
[32] Ibid., p.480.

Europe.'[33] As a counter-part of this it is concerned with the European philosophy,

and more precisely the place of 'Europe' in what we may call Indian self-

understanding and thought. Halbfass locates himself at inter-disciplinary cross-road

between 'Indological and historically Oriented philosophical work';[34] and argues for

the worth of '"comparative" philosophizing', 'power of Indian tradition', and

dialogic possibilities of the two traditions and their thought systems. It follows the

league of German Romanticists and their vigorous critic Hegel's speculations in his

'Philosophy of History.' Here it is appropriate to go back to Hegel's words on the

'real theatre of world history'- the Oriental world, a hallmark of the contemplative

tradition on the East-West encounter:

'World history travels from the East to the West; for Europe is the absolute end

of history, just as Asia is the beginning.................. Thus the first form which the

spirit assumes is that of the Orient. This world is based on the immediate

consciousness, on substantial spirituality........... In India, the difference lies in

those firmly established divisions which necessarily arise within a highly developed

national culture. In this case, it is the castes which determine the rights and duties

of each individual. This system of Government can be described as a theocratic

aristocracy. These fixed distinctions are transcended by an ideality of the

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[33] W.Halbfass, *India and Europe:An Essay in Understanding* (Albany, 1988), p.XIII.
[34] Ibid., p.XIV.

imagination, and ideal realm which has not yet become divorced from the world of the senses.'[35]

Halbfass presents a critique of 'heathen' construction of India in Western philosophy and its reflections in Indian self-understanding and self-representations in the Western mirror. He traces it presenting the very formation of the idea of India historically–as miraculous and fabulous in classical antiquity (ancient Greek account); Portuguese explorers search for Christians and spices; and from 1500 onwards, missionaries attempt at learning Indian languages (including Sanskrit), to the German Romantic conception of India as the 'hidden depth of European identity', against materialism and rationalism.[36] This drama culminated in the early twentieth century with Edmund Hussserl's prophetic dictum of 'Europeanization of Earth', which was later treated with much historical and philosophical insight by Martin Heidegger. In Husserl's words: "(They will have to) Europeanize themselves, whereas we, if we understand ourselves properly, will never for example, Indianize ouselves. (The) Europeanization of all foreign parts of mankind (is the destiny of earth)."[37] Halbfass, himself sceptical of the defenders of Indian analytical and rationalist philosophers, believes in the 'Europeanization of the earth' with dialogical possibilities.

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[35] G.W.F.Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Introduction: Reason and History,* Trans. By H.B.Nisbet (Cambridge, 1975), pp.197-200.

[36] Halbfass, p.435.

[37] Edmund Husserl, cited in Halbfass.

Projecting things at a much deeper level, the search for the epistemic

bases of Europe's theorisation and description of East and India needs a more

nuanced unraveling of the universal categories of Western thought. To unravel the

myths of these universals and their career in the intellectual and cultural history of

modern India we need to move to specific instances to probe deeper into their

historical and theoretical meanings. S.N.Balgangadhara, from a philosophical and

meta-anthropological perspective, brilliantly analyses how Europe creates its own

image, and its other, making religion a cultural universal (which implies that 'native

to each culture is some or other religion').[38] He argues that 'the constitution of

identity in Western culture is tied to the dynamic of Christianity as a religion';[39] On

the other hand religion has not been the constitutive elements of all cultures but

only the West, and neither all cultures borrow 'world views' (if indeed they have it)

from religion.[40] Indeed, the upshot of Balgangdhara's argument is that it projects

Europe's theoretical edifice historically constructed for the description of its other

to show that the West itself has been partially constituted by these beliefs. Thus, he

sees a fissure in the way Western epistemology endowed East with a typical

ontology and religious essence. We know how these universal categories

constituted India in the nineteenth century Europe's divergent and contested

description of its religion and classical(textual) roots.

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[38] S.N.Balgangadhara, *'The Heathen in his Blindness...'* : *Asia, the West and the Dynamic of Religion* (Leiden, 1994), pp.1-6.

[39] Ibid., p.5.

[40] Ibid., p.507, 7.

How Orient was reconstituted as a part of Europe's quest for antiquities and relics of its past has been presented by Martin Bernal in his pathbreaking book, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. Bernal gives us an erudite account of what we may call Europe's self-fashioning in the mirror of classical civilizations. How two models 'Aryan' and 'Ancient' of classical civilization (that is Greek history) move from one to another in the intellectual history of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the 'fabrications of ancient Greece' is the central theme of his work. The 'ancient' model claiming its roots in the periphery of Egyptian and Semitic cultural area, was superseded by the 'Aryan model'- which believed in the European and Aryan origin of Greece in the first half of nineteenth century, following a period of classicism in the eighteenth century. This was the period which tried to defend Christianity together with the defence of Hellenism and textual criticism.[41] This coincided with the development of Europocentrism, racism, and colonial expansion; and Egypt which was seen as 'the fount of all 'Gentile' philosophy and learning, including that of the Greeks', was clubbed with those people who could not really 'think'.[42] With the emergence of modern disciplinary scholarship, and the search of the other worlds being established with the university of Gottingen in Germany (1734), emergence of the idea of 'progress', and the enthusiasm of the eighteenth century Romantics for

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[41] Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization Vol.1: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece* (London, 1987), pp.25-27.

[42] Ibid., p.440.

other cultures created the milieu to trace autochthonous roots of Europe, and accordingly a new self-definition.

Indeed a far more complex disciplinary example than the wars played out in Egyptology among the adherents of the Ancient and Aryan models for recuperating the European classicism(s) (classical civilizations) in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century became apparent in the emergence of Indology. With the endeavours of early Orientalist such as Anquetil-Duperron, William Jones, Colebrooke, Wilson and others, it crystallized as a disciplinary form with the search, collection, translation, and interpretation of classical textual traditions, of India. As a kind of hermeneutical exercise, it became a search for deep, immutable structures and forms in other cultures and traditions. Indology marked the formulaic search for Hegelian characterisations– 'Idealism of Existence', and 'Idealism of Imagination'.

To explode the conceptual basis of Indology and the related disciplines in the social sciences, and for creating a space for the production of 'a new knowledge of South-Asia' Ronald Inden gave a preliminary sketch of his thesis in his essay, *'Orientalist Constructions of India.'*[43] Here, Inden argues that the 'facts' of Indian history have been produced by an 'episteme', which presuppose a 'representational view of knowledge'.[44] The 'episteme' of Indology, according to Inden assumes that 'the real world consists of essences', and that world is unitary,

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[43] Ronald Inden, 'Orientalist Constructions of India', *Modern Asian Studies,* 20, July 1986,pp.
[44] Ibid., p.401.

with a 'human nature' having a unitary essence. The inherent teleology of the

Western world-rational and scientific-is to act as an agent. Indological discourse

replicates this philosophy: India the opposite of the West is a complex of social

essences (institutions)- village, Caste, religion (Hinduism), and hierarchical and

ritualized order of society.[45] Inden elaborates this formation of 'idealized essences',

in the constitution of India from the Romantic movement (Herder and Hegel

onwards) as a part of the tension between the eighteenth century classicism and

early nineteenth century Romanticism.[46]

C.A.Bayly questions the theoretical import of words such as 'hegemony'

and 'discourse'. Bayly argues that as an 'important trope', the decaying knowledge

of India was seen as ultimately 'our' knowledge, which goes against the

dichotomies erected by Saidian Orientalism. Thus, 'Indian knowledge was unstable,

in a field of intense debate which reflected class and profession-formation within

both the empire and the metropolis.'[47] Bayly's argument has been developed with

extreme ingenuity in his book *Empire and Information*. Although he specifically

claims it as a study of 'state's intelligence and social communication' it emerges as

an empirically rich attempt at writing the intellectual history of colonial encounter

in nineteenth century North India. However, the most remarkable aspect of Bayly's

book is the study of the emergence of a vibrant indigenous knowledge system,

written cultures, scholarly disputes, and their interaction with Western knowledge

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[45] Ibid., p.402-3; and, Louse Dumant, *Homo Hierarchicus* (London, 1970),
[46] Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford, 1990), pp.43-4.
[47] C.A. Bayly, 'British Orientalism .....' *South Asia Research*, Vol.14, No.1, Spring 1994,p.8.

and rule. Bayly's theoretical claims are wholly based on the 'ignorance' and 'panic' of the Britishers. Bayly argues that 'Orientalism was a distorting mirror rather than a purely fictional construct.'[48] Colonial knowledge was derived from indigenous knowledge-'torn out of context and distorted by fear and prejudice'.[49] However a kind of *spiritual anthropology*[50] in depiction of religion, and 'essentialization of social types'[51] without racialist hierarchy was existing from pre-colonial times. In Northern India the 'power of text' led to the growing 'power of the 'writing people"[52] giving those texts a ritualized status.[53] On the Britishers part-'Orientalist fantasy flooded in the gaps left by decline of pragmatic informations';[54] and British constructions of Indian society was a result of the lack of 'reliable informations' rather than of 'Orientalist stereotypes.'[55] Thus, what Bayly characterizes as the north Indian ecumene (typical cultural and political debate before the emergence of newspaper and public associations) enlightened by Hindu classics, blinded the Orientalist quest for the East.[56]

Studies related with the intellectual history of the Colonial encounter broadly touch upon following themes: (a) the influence of European ideas in the

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[48] C.A.Bayly, *Empire and Information* (Cambridge,1996), p.173.
[49] Ibid., p.7.
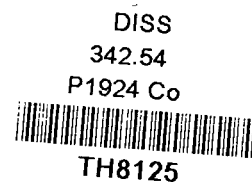[50] Ibid., p.23.
[51] Ibid., p.28.
[52] Ibid., p.40.
[53] Ibid., p.43.
[54] Ibid., p.70.
[55] Ibid., p.48.
[56] Ibid., pp.181-2.

formation of British policies; (b) ideas, persons, and institutions involved in the early Orientalist discouse in India, which largely covers the period till 1830s; (c) a relatively unexplored area of the formation of 'colonial knowledge' and emergence of modern disciplines, and their impact on defining 'India' as an essence, in reconstructing traditional and modern institutions, and the making of colonial ethnography; (d) the colonial history of modern Indian art and aesthetics; and(e) colonial context and the modern Indian literary discourse which covers the question of modern genres, languages, and vernaculars.

Javed Majeed has recently written a very sophisticated intellectual history in his book *ungoverned Imaginings. James Mills 'The History of British India' and Orientalism,* on the utilitarian idea in Colonial India. This study focuses on the 'emergence of utilitarianism as a political language in Britian in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century', analysing the ideas of Bentham and James Mill and their influence in 'imagining' India.[57] The crux of Majeed's argument lies in his emphasis on aesthetic and linguistic attitudes in what he calls 'the politics of imagination' in the 'definition and depiction of cultural identities.'[58] But far more illuminating aspect of his argument is the way he locates the battle of European ideas fought in their native place and their projection in colony. He shows how Bentham and Mill criticism of colony was reflected on their own society, and was an 'exercise in disenchantment' with their own aesthetic attitudes.[59] Majeed's

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[57] Javed Majeed, *Underground Imagining's* (Oxford, 1992), p.1.
[58] Ibid., p.2,3.
[59] Ibid., p.200.

attempt unravels the complexity of history of mentalities in colonial encounter and search for their genealogy.

Thomas Trautmann in his recent study *Aryans and British India* has argued the primacy of ethnological, rather than linguistic project of William Jones search for Indo-European language families, which he calls 'Mosaic', that is an 'ethnology whose frame is supplied by the story of the descent of Noah in the book of Genesis, attributed to Moses, in the Bible,' which were inspired by the ethnological writings of Jacob Bryant and Sir Issac Newton.[60] Trautmann argues for the inclusion of Jones and the new Orientalism together with Calcutta Sanskritists in the wider history of European ethnology; and regards Jonesian ethnology as a 'model for subsequent British and British Indian ethnologies'.[61] Trautmann sees the quest for language (specifically Sanskrit), 'Ancient wisdom' and colonial ethnography as creating an empowering discourse of Indo-European and Aryan idea, which was projected differently in Britain- 'being a sign of inclusion (of Indians)', and 'a sign of exclusion (of Jews, Asians, Africans and so forth)' elsewhere. For Britons it was a sign of relation between India and themselves, while for Germans the frontiers of Europeanness itself.[62] He pleads for the pre-dominant dialogic element in the Colonial encounter, but does not bring out the details from the inner recesses of this encounter. To see the view from the other side of the fence, well populated by 'not so well known' British officials and scholars, and the masters of indigenous

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[60] Thosmas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, 1997),pp.40-41.
[61] Ibid., p.41.
[62] Ibid., p.221.

knowledge system will go far beyond the new search of the 'dialogic' in colonial encounter.

, A biographical study of William Jones by S.N.Mukherjee shows the turn in European constructions of India–a new discovery of great philosophies of the West, with the production of 'theories of India-based on second-hand sources, from the Indian informers and Persian works.'[63] The discoveries of Jones and his society of 'Indian civilization' cover a vast tract in nineteenth century history of ideas from Ram Mohan Roy to the nationalist imagination. Having negligible impact on Romantic poets, selective influence on Romantic Statesman in India in seeing Indian institutions but none on their administrative philosophy, Jones 'India' was perceived in a variety of ways. He himself a precursor of the authoritarian liberal Statesman in India preached liberalism at home, but upheld the authoritarian rule in India.[64]

There is a remarkable shift taking place in the modern Indian historiography specifically concerned with the cultural and intellectual history of colonialism, and the making of a variety of modern discourses in colonial societies in the last three centuries. Undoubtly, well known essays of Bernard S.Cohn written with a true urge for dialogue between anthropology and history in reading 'colonial knowledge' has created a lot of reflection. His essays on the construction of Indian

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[63] S.N. Mukherjee, *Sir William Jones : A Study in Eighteenth - Century British Attitudes to India* (Cambridge, 1968),p.16.
[64] Ibid., p.140-1.

village society, lower caste in British ethnography, census as a tool of 'objectification' in India, colonial constructions of law, colonial projects of controlling language and reinterpretating the textual corpus with the advent of print-culture, colonial collecting and transformation of objects into artifacts, antiquities and art have thrown many questions on the constructions of 'colonial knowledge' in sharp theoretical relief. Cohn has repeatedly emphasized the importance of looking into the 'epistemic' bases of colonial 'theatre of power', which emerged eighteenth century onward, and European state's increasing desire to extend its theatre through the 'gradual extension of "officializing" procedures of defining, and classifying space, making separations between public and private spheres, recording transactions, counting and classifying populations' using religious institutions for administrative pragmatics, and standardizing language and scripts. Thus the maintenance of nation states using the machinery of determining, codifying, controlling, and representing others past was as much involved in 'exegetical' and 'hermeneutical' skill in interpreting texts.[65] In Indian context, Cohn calls it a 'conquest of knowledge'–creation of an 'epistemological space' in which 'instruments of colonial rule' were produced.'[66] Cohn's reading of colonialism as a well orchestrated part of Western imperial polity and modern Europe's episteme puts a major question before the pleaders of 'dialogue' in colonial encounter. Then, how to trace 'dialogue' between a society 'living in a world of signs and

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[65] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (Delhi, 1997),p.3
[66] Ibid., p.16,21.

correspondences' (that is European) and another in a 'world of substances' (Indian).[67] In a much reflective essay on 'Colonialism and Culture' Nicholas B. Dirks has tried to expand Cohn's thesis. Dirks shows how anthropological givens and concept of culture were impossible without a colonial theatre in which varieties of 'Colonial technologies of conquest and rule', which created such binary opposites as colonizers and colonized, modern and traditional, East and West (with a variety of 'cultural technologies'), and turned colonialism into a cultural project of control. Thus, colonialism was as much a project of re-creating Europe,[68] as a historical moment of European conquest and domination of other worlds and a 'trope for domination and violation'– giving birth, together with culture to a new world 'to deploy a critical cartography of the history and effects of power'.[69]

With the recent trend of looking into all possible ways in which colonialism and culture created a really vexed scenario of modern third world post-colonial societies, the volum *Orientalism and the Post-colonial Predicament* has become a representative collection with essays on such varied themes as the status of languaage and literatures (English, Hindustani, and Sanskrit), Orientalist roots of communalism and sociology, relations of knowledge and governance in the Eighteenth century, orientalist empiricism, constitution of a colonial archive and the role of number in colonial imagination.[70]

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[67] Ibid., p.18.
[68] Nocholas B. Dirks, (ed.). *Culture and Colonialism* (Ann Arbor, 1992), p.3.
[69] Ibid., p.5.
[70] Carol A. Breckenridge, and Peter van der Veer, *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament. Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia, 1993).

How the realm of Indian aesthetics and particularly, visual and plastic arts was refabricated in western imagination has been authoritatively discussed by Partha Mitter in his book *Much Maligned Monsters*. Mitter traces the historical origins of western perceptions of Indian art and aesthetic norms and its enigma and unassimilability in Western aesthetics. He charts this curious East - West encounter in the aesthetic realm from the end of the Middle Ages to the thirteenth century, when basic contours of western attitude were formed, mostly derived from travel accounts which was dominated by the 'monster tradition' based on certain stereotypes stemming from travellers' Christian backgrounds. This tradition coexisted with a less powerful tradition of praise of certain aspects of Indian Art. These two contradictory tendencies were resolved in the middle of the seventeenth century with the rise of scientific interest of different forms of paganism.[71] In the nineteenth century the images of Indian gods were regarded as monsters because they were not fit on the 'classical ideals of order and rationality' - a tendency which goes back to the 'symbolic interpretation of monstrous to the early Greek history.'[72] However, the creation of a modern Indian aesthetics based on the Oriental scholarship and indigenous proponents of it through classical Indian texts in Bengal has been elaborately studied by Tapati Guha - Thakurta in her book *The making of*

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[71] Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters : History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford, 1977),pp.1,2.
[72] Ibid., p.8-30.

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a New 'Indian' Art. Artist, Aesthetic and nationalism in Bengal, 1850-1920.[73] She

has shown how two important figures in modern Indian aesthetics E. W. Havell and

Anand K. Coomaraswamy created ideas of the classical Indian past and aesthetics

as primarily spiritual and idealist.[74]

Transformation of literary sphere with the emergence of print, redefinition

of classical textual tradition, together with the standardization of vernaculars and

emergence of modern literary genres have increasingly drawn attention. Colonialism

emerged with the conquest of the power of word in the Europe's other worlds, and

thus 'linguistic colonialism' was seen as a small part of the larger enterprise of

conquest, conversion, and settlement. Benard S. Cohn's essay *'The Command of*

Language and the Language of Command' has become the most comprehensive

and probing account of British engagement with Indian languages, primarily

classical ones such as Sanskrit, Persian and Telugu; and classical textual traditions

in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Cohn has argued that the 'tribute

represented in print and manuscript' - a repository of complex forms of indigenous

knowledge was "codified and transmitted" by European.[75] British enthusiasm for

"classical" and "vulgar" language of India created a powerful apparatus of

grammars, dictionaries, treaties, school books and translations and thus this textual

production simultaneously marked the establishment of 'a discursive formation', an

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[73] Tapati Guha - Thakurta, *The Making of a New "Indian" Art : Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal, 1850-1920* (Cambridge, 1992) p.118.
[74] Ibid., p.159-60.
[75] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledg.* (Delhi, 1997), p.16.

'epistemological space' and discourse of Orientalism. This was an act of translation of Indian forms of knowledge in European objects.[76] Cohn's essay is confined to the Britishers part of this 'objectification and recording' of 'Indian thought and culture' through European Scholarly methods. However , emergence and translation of modern Indian languages, new literary genres, and modern literary consciousness in this European encounter of nineteenth century is yet to be properly studied.

Sudipta Kaviraj, in his essay "Writing, Speaking, Being : Languages and the Historical Formation of Identities in India" tries to trace the functions of languages in Indian civilization (primarily focusing on the Bengali Speech Community) as different from Europe. Kaviraj while comparing the western notion of 'logos' and primacy of writing over speech finds an 'ambiguity' involved in the Indian traditions, which show a 'complex combination of reverence and mistrust' towards writing.[77] Modern literary consciousness emerged with the standardisation of Indian Languages and creation of a homogenous speech communities mid-nineteenth century onwards, which culminates in the creation of a 'nationalist diglossia'.[78] More specific studies on the questions of literary consciousness and their disciplinary aspects primarily from a literary critics' point of view in the

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[76] Ibid.,p.21.

[77] Sudipta Kaviraj, 'Writing, Speaking, Being: Language and the Historical Formation of Identities in India', In Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagan and Dietmer Rothermund, eds. *Nationalstaat und Sprachkonflitke in Sud-und Sudostasien* (Stuttgart, 1992), pp.27-8.

[78] Ibid., p.28.

colonial period have been done by Gauri Viswanathan and Sara Suleri.[79] Gauri Viswanathan has shown how the literary histories of English evade the hegemonic role of empire, and 'imperial mission of educating and civilizing colonial subjects in the literature and thought of England'; since strangely enough by the 1820s while classical curriculum was the standard way of literary studies in Britain, English as a discipline and study of culture was already institutionalized in India.[80] While classicism and humanist functions of literature and language in colonial period constituted a new literary sensibility. Sara Suleri has read the rhetorical aspects of Edmund Burke's and others British accounts of India, where she notes an 'anxiety of empire' which provided the imperial India a rhetoric in which a relation between the colonizing project and the 'crippling structure of imperial capability' could be traced.[81] Suleri's argument about the economy and dynamic of guilt does not seem to be cogent one, since 'anxiety of empire' does not necessarily imply a sense of 'colonial guilt', as she seems to argue.

In the recent past there appears to be some rethinking on the problems of literary history and its radical transformation in colonial period in the works of G.N.Devey, Sisir Kumar Das, Aijaz Ahmad, and Sheldon Polock. G.N.Devey in his two books 'After Amnesia. Tradition and Change in Indian Literary Criticism and 'Of many Heroes.' An Indian Essay in Literary History has tried to reread the

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[79] Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Studies and British Rule in India* (London, 1990); Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, 1992).
[80] Gauri Viswanathan, *Mask of Conquest* (London, 1990), p.2, 3.
[81] Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, 1992), p.26.

literary and aesthetic landscape as it was constituted between the dialogue and hegemonic presence of the 'colonizing west' and the 'creative west'.

Sheldon Pollock exhorts for a 'radical literary history' with a global sense of cultural hydridity, as there is nothing 'pure', and the search for 'indigenous' is a 'conceptual consequence of a deficiency of historicization'. As he asserts, 'there is nothing "authentic", nothing beyond the process itself to recover from the depredations and degradation's of colonialism, westernization and "late-capitalism."'[82] Pollock's argument has largely been based on his study of the appropriations of Sanskrit and quasi-Sanskrit literary models by vernaculars from AD. 300-1300 in pre-colonial India, what he has termed as 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis' and 'vernacular cosmopolitanism.[83]

To a large extent modern Indian historiography has concentrated either on British Constructions or indigenous responses in isolation. The impact of modern print culture and the nationalist ideology have become much prominent with the influence of Benedict Anderson's work on nationalism. Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities : Reflections on The Origin and Spread of Nationalism* has argued to look into nation-ness and nationalism as 'cultural artefacts of particular kind' which emerge with the spread of print capitalism with a 'discontinuity-in-connectedness between Print-languages , national consciousness, and nation-

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[82] Sheldon Pollock, 'Literary History, Indian history, World History', *Socialist Scientist* , No.269-71, p.136.

[83] Ibid., p.132.

states'.[84] However, the problem arises when Anderson's suggestions are prolifically and in a much simpler manner used to give a historical interpretation through vernacular tracts of colonial period. Yet, there are some influential works on indigenous responses to colonialism, and construction and impact of the West in indigenous discourses. Tapan Raychaudhury's *Europe Reconsidered : Perception of the West in Nineteenth Century Bengal* remains a pioneering and singular attempt to reread 'Europe' in colonial society. The perceptions of Europe which he calls 'archetypal rather than typical' under colonial

structure of power are created by the transmission of variety of ideas which often work autonomously.[85]

With regard to specific themes of this study there is not much secondary literature available. Dorothy Figueira has argued in her book, *Translating the Orient. The Reception of Sakuntala in Nineteenth-Century Europe,* against the growing tendency in recent scholarship to see the literature—which emerged out of the European encounter with the Orient—exclusivly in terms of political domination. Her main criticism against Edward Said's impact on the studies of Orientalism, is that it evades the aesthetic aspects and writer's individual self in the East-West encounter. Her emphasis is to reclaim the autonomy of literary and aesthetic domain of human faculty. There is a kind of unreflective self, as she says : 'exotic

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[84] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1991), pp.4, 46.
[85] Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered* (Delhi, 1988), p.5, 346.

effects a taxonomic shift;........ it transforms (the foreign culture) and its members

into objects of art...Reduced to artefact, the exotic becomes indistinguishable from

racism.' Figueira uses 'aesthetics' and 'creative self' as ahistorical, primal

categories which have been questioned by literary critics such as Terry Eagleton

and Raymond Williams. Figueira's contention becomes questionable when she

remarks that "The India which nineteenth-century European writers discovered was

principally a phantom arising out of a confrontation with the self."[86]

In a more theoretical study of translation and the question of history from a

post-structuralist point of view has been done by Tejaswini Niranjana. She sees the

translations of eighteenth and nineteenth century colonial India as creating a notion

in which colonial cultures seem 'static and unchanging rather than historically

constructed'. It locates the colonized in history, the Hegelian conception of history

is brought in the colony which endorses a teleological, hierarchical model of

civilizations based on the "coming to consciousness" of spirit'– an event for which

non-western cultures are unsuited and unprepared. Translation, thus prefigures

different colonial discourses - philosophy, historiography, education, missionary

writing, travel writing, and the literary texts in a different manner. Thus, translation

proved to be the greatest asset in clearing the mystique of the unknowability of the

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[86] Dorothy M.Figuiera, *Translating the Orient. The Reception of Sakuntala in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Albany, 1991), pp.4-5, 7.

colony, its subjects, and institutions. It fixed the limits of imagination and objectification in which the colony was to be reshaped.[87]

Similarly, the studies on colonial collecting are rare, apart from some stray references in certain works dealing with art history and emergence of modern aesthetics in colonial India. Carol. A. Breckenridge's essay *'The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting : India at World Fairs'* had drawn our attention to the way in which by collecting and displaying everyday things from India in later half of nineteenth century by fixing cultural materials in the way of 'aesthetics, politics and pragmatics;' and which created a 'Victorian ecumene' through such cultural technologies as museums and exhibitions. And similarly Tapati Guha-Thakurata and Nicholas Dirks have respectively tried to study the establishment of Museums and Mackenzie's vast collections of manuscripts and objects as a colonial archive.[88] Bernard Cohn's essay on transformation of objects into artefacts, antiquities and art in colonial India remains a theoretically probing study of colonial surveys and collections of individuals and the company for having practical

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[87] Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley, 1992), p.2.

[88] Carol A.Breckenridge, ' The Aesthetic and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs', *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* Vol.31, 1989; Tapati Guha-Thakurta, ' The Meseumised Relic:Archaelogy and the First Museum of Colonial India', *Indian Economic and Social History Review,* Vol.34, No.1, Jan-Mar, 1997; Nicholas B.Dirks, 'Colonial Histories and Native Informants: Biography of an Archive', In Carol A.Breckenridge and Peter Van der Veer ed. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia,1993), pp.179-313.

knowledge of the colony, and its intricate relations with colonial order, fixing India

in nineteenth-century notion of linear history.[89]

However, interaction of various forms of classicism coming from both

colonial (together with the pre-colonial forms) and European influences in literary,

aesthetic, and ethnographic corpus of the nineteenth century India remains to be

studied as one of the pre-dominant forms of colonial ideas.

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[89] Beranrd S.Cohn, ' The Transformation of Objects into Artefacts, Antiques, and Art in NineteenthCentury India', in Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (Delhi, 1997), pp.80, 101.

2. TRANSLATION AS AN OCCURRENCE: THE FORMATION OF A CLASSICAL TEXTUAL TRADITION IN COLONIAL INDIA.

The very act of knowing the colonial subject and its world was deeply enmeshed in the act of translating its cultural and social world. Translation, both as a process of literal rendering of texts from one language to another, and as a metaphor denotes a linguistic and cognitive space in which strangeness of 'India' was to be captured. The colonial project of translating the classical Indian texts – mainly related with indigenous law, classical literature and various philosophical and scientific systems written in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, began in the later half of the eighteenth century. This marked the onset of the initial phase of textual constructions of India, which ultimately became a vast project of cultural translation in the colonial context. However, different types of motives and purposes coming from philosophical interest in Sanskrit language, to the search for indigenous codes of law, to the German Romanticists' passion for Oriental literature, were involved in recuperating the classical lore of India. The most remarkable aspect of colonial translation was the transformation of the notion of culture(s) 'into the notion of a text,-that is, into something resembling an inscribed discourse.'[1] It can be broadly argued that the translations of classical Indian texts done by Europeans and Britishers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century created an ethnography of India.

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[1] Talal Asad,'The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology', in James Clifford and George E.Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Delhi, 1990), p.141.

In eighteenth century Europe the origin of language and speech was envisaged as the chief element to be explored for knowing the proper history of human thought and mind. From the Renaissance up to the seventeenth century the very idea and search of linguistic universal based on the Biblical story of the confusion in the tower of Babel (after which the singular and natural language of the human beings was dispersed into various mutually unintelligible languages) remained central. The search for original language led to the systematic etymological study and comparative philology. However, thinkers like Locke, Mersenne and Condillac argued against the mystical characterisations of language and tried to prove that it is impossible to look into the internal constitutions of things, and that language was based on convention, opposed to its natural character in Adamic sense. Thus external manifestation or 'nominal essence' (as shown by Locke) were the only things which one could know about language.[2] The search for the natural form of human language and race was one of the major impulse acting behind the debates on the origins of language theories and philology in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, which led to the search for other pagans and their languages. Translation of the ancient and the classical texts of those pagan races was a search for any trace of monotheism (resembling the distant past of the Christian world) and the lost natural language. Translation denoted an act of breaking the mutual unintelligibility among different languages. The search for the origin myth of the Christian world

[2] Hans Aasrsleff, *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History* (Minneapolis, 1982), pp.278-92.

became the prime cause behind the cultural translation; thus, it was primarily an act of looking into the history through language. One of the early examples of the European translations of Indian texts was Abbe' Guyon's *History of the East Indies Ancient and Modern* published in 1757, which saw Hindus as those people who preserved the memory of true God from posterity.[3] After the event of Babylonian confusion language became the grand repository in which the primal elements of human history could be traced.

Together with the search for legal codes and for creating a proper device for governance, Europe's quest for the traces of history in the Oriental world became the chief motive for exploring classical (ancient) Indian languages. In the late seventeenth century Jewish Origin was considered to be the primal reservoir in which all traces of the ancient world could be traced; and, thus some people argued that with the dispersal of the human race after the confusion of Babel Hinduism came under the influence of Jewish and Christian religions.[4]

Translation as an act of knowing other cultures through their textual creations and the complex interrelation between the 'original' and the translation – and, its 'foreignness' have been discussed and theorized in different ways in European intellectual history. Indeed, the greatest problem has remained the attempt to 'cope with the reality of untranslatability from one language to another'.[5] In ecclesiastical context the word 'translation' denoted the removal of

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[3] P.J.Marshall (ed.), The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, 1970), p.22.

[4] Ibid., p.23.

[5] Hugo Friedrich, 'On the Art of Translation', in Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (ed.) *Theories on Translation: An Anthology of Eassays from Dryden to Derrida* (Chicago, 1992), p.11.

a Saint's remains or his relics from one place to another, and in medieval

Christian accounts narrativization of these events was known as *translationes*.

Thus, 'translation (like history)' represented 'a sequence of human acts and a

narrative recounting it, both being and representation.'[6] Translation represented a

tension between the transfer of meaning (between translation and interpretation),

an urge of fidelity towards the original, and the power due to the context and

recreation of meaning from one context to another. In classical Roman context

translations were largely a process of imitating and appropriating the Greek

models in literature and philosophy, however these translations usually meant

change and appropriation of the original without following the stylistic and

linguistic specificities of it. For Romans, "translation meant transformation in

order to mold the foreign into the linguistic structure of one's own culture."

Romans even envisaged translation as a 'contest with the original' to surpass it,

making original only an inspiration. In the early Christian period, people like

Saint Jerome adopted the method which sounded like the imperial voice in the

domain of language: 'the translator considers thought content a prisoner which

he transplants into his own language with the prerogative of a conquerer.' It

showed the sense of power involved in the linguistic translations a marker of the

'Latin cultural and linguistic imperialism.'[7] In Renaissance Europe the above

theory of translation moved to a more sober attempt of vying for the hidden

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[6] Talal Asad, 'A Comment on Translation, Critique, and Subversion', in Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Meir (eds.), *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts* (Delhi, 1996), pp. 325-26.
[7] Hugo Friedrich, Ibid., pp.12-13

aesthetic and stylistic possibilities compared to the original. It was a move to get out of appropriation of the content only; and new styles of prose and writing were developed through these methods. However, from the mid-eighteenth century a completely different theoretical turn came in translations. Now, it no more represented a conquest of the form and content of the original; it rather took cognizance of 'cultural differences' involved in it. Hugo Friedrich characterizes it as the intrusion of 'a sense of history' in translation theories and the recognition of the lexical, semantic, and syntactical differences between the languages and their internal laws. This also marked the sensitivity towards the larger historical and linguistic questions in the eighteenth century, especially in the writings of Diderot and d'Alembert in France, and Schleirmacher and Wilhelm von Humboldt in Germany. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, translation was increasingly seen as analogous to history; and the tolerance for linguistic and cultural differences gave a fixity to the element of 'foreignness' in the European theories of translation. It created the space for 'acknowledging the differences between languages' and 'a move toward a possible rapprochement of styles between languages'. Schleiermacher's emphasis on the distinction between 'language as reality' and 'language as act' (that is, style), and Humboldt's urge for the recognition of the 'ambiguities of the original' in translations still raise the key questions regarding the very act of translation. Curiously, with this change from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, the rhetorical and stylistic

elements of language became the integral part of the theory of translation, which were not considered important in the classical antiquity for translation theories.[8]

In one of the most influential reflections on the question of translation Walter Benjamin writes: "Translation is a mode. To comprehend it as a mode one must go back to the original, for that contains the law governing the translation: its translatability." Further, Benjamin emphasized the fact that "all translation is only a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages", and the most crucial aspect of translatability is that it can only trace 'the intended effect (intention) upon the language' into which the original is translated.[9] Indeed, as a distinct mode of comprehending the original, translation becomes analogous to history. Elaborating this theme of analogy between translation and history in Benjamin's essay Paul de Man has characterized *translation as an occurrence*, which denoted the afterlife and survival of the original through history, in its own distinct mode, beyond the failure of translation. Paul de Man sees textual occurrence happening through translation as a 'historical event,' in the sense that it enters into the lager grid of linguistic creations and interpretations.[10]

By the end of eighteenth century translation of the Oriental texts (which were thought as authentic and classical) concretized as a distinct feature of 'linguistic colonialism' begun in the sixteenth century. The New World emerged

[8] Ibid., pp.11-16.
[9] Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (eds.), *Theories of Translation* (Chicago, 1992)pp. 72, 76-77.
[10] Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory* (Manchester, 1986), pp.83,104.

as a 'rich field for the plantation of the English language'. 'The treasure of tongue' was considered as the "best glorie" compared to the 'treasure of faith' that the English voyagers carried with themselves. As far back, as in the year 1492 language was envisaged as 'the partner ("Companera")' and 'a perfect instrument of the empire.'[11] However, Europe's quest for the 'original texts' in the colonial world was chiefly centered around translation and interpretation. Translation marked the process of the constitution of 'India' through the availability of Oriental(Sanskrit) manuscripts in the libraries of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which was primarily selected with the Europeans attempt of interpreting Hinduism, and with the pioneering efforts of William Jones to establish historical philology. The search of 'philosophical' Hinduism (and the Indic world at large in the Original classical texts) saw in contraposition to it 'popular' Hinduism. 'Popular' cults of Hinduism were largely seen as debased and heathen, while the 'philosophical' ones were perceived in the mirror of western concepts filtered through their own metaphysical and ethical ideals of the Christinity.[12] From the early eighteenth century a deep curiosity in the Indian and especially its classical texts became apparent in France. French Jesuit missionary's letters from South India aroused much interest in Hinduism in the early eighteenth century. However the most influential intervention was Abraham Anquetil-Duperron's *Zend Avesta* in 1771,

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[11] Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse : Essay in Early Modern Europe* (New York, London, 1990), pp.16-17; See especially the essay 'Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century'.
[12] P.J.Marshall (ed.), The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, 1970), p.20

which according to Raymond Schwab was the very first attempt of 'breaking into one of the walled languages of Asia.' This effort rendered fuller realization only with the endeavour of William Jones and other early Orientalists of India with the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta and the translations produced by them of 'authentic' Sanskrit texts. Pierre Sonnerat wrote a survey of Hinduism in his *Voyage aux Indes Orientales*, published in 1702; and Guillaume Le Gentil de La Galais' wrote the early accounts of Indian astronomy. French Orthodox point of view was represented in the works of Etienne Mignot and Joseph de Guigness, while Voltaire, Abbe Raynal and Jean Sylvain Bailly represented the opposite move. Letters written by the Danish Lutheran mission of the Coromandel (Tamilnadu) coast published a series of letters on India in various collections and in the annual *Account of the Origins and Designs* of the British Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in India.[13] From the end of the eighteenth century gradually the British were involved in translating and interpreting Indian texts for the European World.

William Jones' attempt of equating the similarities in languages with the similar origin of the human race in the past was located in the ongoing debates in the eighteenth century Europe about the authority of Moses. By linking language with the roots of human history Jones opened the way for the large scale textual exploration of India and the Orient by European Scholars. The influence of classical education was even apparent in Warren Hastings' attitude towards

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[13] Ibid., pp.3-4.

Indian languages and literatures. However, Jones' interest in the classical Indian

languages and translations of texts written in Sanskrit and Persian were shaped

by his interest in the European classical texts and heritage. But, even before

Jones' project came into existence scholars in Europe had tried to locate the

'original texts' of India. With Europe's increasing interest in Hindu religion and

its sacred texts, largely informed by the early travellers and the accumulation of

Sanskrit manuscripts from the 1730s the 'original' and 'classical' texts of India

were getting classified. One of the earliest attempts of translating an Indian texts

was a Portuguese translation of *Geeta* in the sixteenth century. However,

Abraham Roger's translation of Bhartrihari's 'hundred proverbs' published in

Dutch in 1651 and later in French marks the curious turn in locating the

'authentic texts'.[14] Before the systematic translations of the Sanskrit texts began

in 1784 with the publications of Charles Wilkins' *Geeta*, there were many

scattered attempts at translating the Vedic sacred literature of the Hindus through

translation of intermediary texts. These translations were mostly 'spurious

Shastras' and 'fragments of treatise or poems' related to the works of Henry

Lord in 1630, Abraham Roger in 1651, the report of Pons in 1740, Tibetan

missionary Marco della Tomba in 1757, of Holwell in 1757, and of the Danish

missions of Tranquebar, and the *Ezour Vedam* (1778) and *Bhagavadam* (1788) of

Foucher d'Obsonville. Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's translation *A Code of Gentoo

Laws, or, Ordination of the Pundits* (1776) was the last work which remained

influential and belonged to the earliest series of translations done by the

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[14] Ibid., pp.17-18.

Europeans. Before textual constructions through translations and the search of a 'classical India' through antiquities and ancient texts began in 1784 with the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the 'map of ancient India' was constructed on the basis of "the data of classical antiquity" and the accounts of various voyagers that Bourguigon d'Anville and James Rennell had undertaken.[15]

By the mid-nineteenth century the search for 'classical' Indian texts and their translations had become the integral part of the British bureaucratic project of classifying and reordering Indian society, primarily through its antiquities, chronological history, and authentic and original texts. It marked the maturation of the process of 'discursive formation' and 'invasion of an epistemological space' through textual constructions in the colonial context. Through these textual constructions of Indian society, British rule tried to create and differentiate each and every element of it by properly classifying and naming it in all possible forms. The scholarly impulse concerned mainly with the philological and Aryan question, and the lost classical world of India was intertwined in a very subtle (and sometimes very gross) manner with the colonial governance and Western civilizing mission. Translations of classical and original texts were most importantly a deliberate act of knowing and interpreting Indian Society and its past. Translations mostly implied a kind of anthropologization resulting into vast ethnographic account of India. Thus, it was one of the chief tools of constituting 'India' in its classical trope through 'Original' texts.

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[15] Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance* (New York, 1984), pp.30-33.

John Muir, a principal of the Banaras Sanskrit College in the second half

of the eighteenth century translated various sections of ancient Indian texts with

commentaries on the history of the origin of caste from the ancient times; the

racial origin of the Hindu; the origin, authority and inspiration of the Vedas, and

their writers and commentators; comparison of the Vedic and later Indian deities,

and the cosmogony, mythology and religious ideas of the Vedic times.[16] Muir's

translations became one of the most ambitious and influential projects of writing

a comprehensive social, cultural and institutional history of India for the earliest

times. It was wholly based on the Sanskrit texts and was an attempt of

prefiguring India in its 'archaic' form based on textual representations. Debates

around language and race had become so intense around 1850s in Europe that

most of the textual interpretations were deeply involved in exploring this

relation. A remarkable shift in these years was the recognition of the fact that

race and language are not always necessarily linked to each other. It showed a

simmering reaction against the Aryan theory, and its claim of showing

similarities between the Indians and Europeans-marking the erosion of the power

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[16]   John Muir (Collected, Translated and Illustrated), *Original Sanskrit Texts on the Origin and History of the People of India, Their Religion and Institutions.* Vol.I : 'Mythical and Legendary Accounts of the Origin of Casts, With an Inquiry into its Existence in the Vedic Age', Second Edition, Rewritten and Greatly Enlarged, London: Trubner & Co., 1868; Vol.II: 'Inquiry Whether the Hindus are of Trans-Himalayan Origin, and Akin to the Western Branches of the Indo-European Race', Third Edition, (London: Trubner & Co. 1874); Vol.III: ' The Vedas. Opinion of their Authors and of later Indian Writers on their Origin, Inspection, and Authority', Second Edn. (London: Trubner & Co. 1873); Vol.IV: 'Comparison of the Vedic with the later Representation of the Principle Indian Deities', Second Edn, (London: Trubner & Co., 1873); Vol.V: 'Contributions to a Knowledge of the Cosmogony, Mythology, Religious Ideas, Life and Manners, of the Indians in the Vedic Age (London: Trubner & Co.,1870).

of the comparative philologists and Sanskritists. The hold of Aryan idea so far

fabricated in the nineteenth century by European and Calcutta Sanskritists

remained as powerful in shaping the racial commonsense. The attack on the very

bedrock of the idea of Aryan race as derived from the Indo-European languages,

forced on its proponents modification. John Muir had argued in the first edition

(1858) of his book that 'affinity in language implied affinity in race', but in the

second edition (1868-73) the scepticism about the bases of Aryan theory had

crept in, which was evident in his reformulation- "affinity in language affords

Some Presumption of affinity in race".[17] Even one of the canon makers of Aryan

theory, Max Müller, had tried to refine his theory in view of above scepticism in

the second half of the nineteenth century. He tried to separate the language

question and racial theory, that is the inevitable connection between comparative

philology and ethnology. This marked a 'reatreat of the Sanskritists' after the

1870s. British Sanskritists had till now carefully constructed a high textual

version of 'Indian civilization' giving racial essentialism the central place in

their intertwining of Sanskrit language and ethonology.[18]

The projection of European classicism, and antiquarianism with the

emergence of comparative philosophy, and nineteenth century discourses of

western ethnology created a distinct idealized 'India'. The very notion of a

classical domain in pre-colonial India was apparent in the emergence of Sanskrit

and Persian as two dominant languages in the first and the second millenium.

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[17] Thomas R.Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, 1997), pp.190-91.
[18] Ibid., pp.172-78, 190-91.

However, in all those years Indian classicism or more appropriately the formation of a distinct high culture was internally contested with various parallel traditions in literary expressions. The emergence of a kind of 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis' from 300 AD to 1300 AD, as recently argued by Sheldon Pollock, and its decline with the emergence of a 'vernacular cospolitanism' shows the plurality and vibrancy of indigenous literary, aesthetic traditions and various other knowledge systems.[19] The transformation of 'classical' Indian knowledge systems and linguistic theories (especially of Sanskrit grammarians) into idealized and ahistorical systems in the nineteenth century by British Sanskrits was largely done under the influence of western concepts. The 'world-view of the religious literature of classical India' was interpreted as stagnant and archaic. The classical Indian tradition sought justification of present in the past, as it considered the past as an authority and often for this purpose even constructed an imaginary past.

Constructing a 'mythological and legendary' account of the Indian people and their ancient institutions was the central aim of John Muir's first volume of translations of various classical and authentic texts of ancient India in his *Original Sanskrit Texts*. Muir made his purpose very clear, as he was trying 'to give some account of the traditions, legends, and mythical narratives which the different classes of ancient Indian writings contain regarding the origin of

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[19] Sheldon Pollock, 'The Sanskrit Cosmopolis; 300-1300 CE: Transculturation, Vernacularization,and the Question of Ideology' in Jan E.M.Houben (ed.), *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit: Contributions to the History of the Sanskrit Language* (Leiden, 1996), pp.197-248.

mankind, and classes or castes into which the Hindus' have been divided.[20] The

search for Indian people's past and their institutions in their original texts

through translations and interpretation was a project of documentation through

translation. Here collation of evidences from Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads,

Samhitas, Puranas and epics and other literary texts were patterned on the

western empiricism and desire to capture the reified and authentic Indian essence

in its classical and antiquated past. It was a part of the western 'evolutionary

epistemology' becoming established as the chief motive towards creating Indian

society.[21] In Muir's account, translation was envisaged as evidence towards

understanding colonial society and its ancient hierarchy. It was clearly

formulated in his conclusive statement: 'From a comparison of these several

literary records, it will be found that the Hindus, like all other civilized nations,

have passed through various stages of development- social, moral, religious, and

intellectual. The ideas and beliefs which are exhibited in their oldest documents,

are not the same as those which we encounter in their later writings.'[22] To put

India in the western chronological and evolutionary frame of history a

classicality was constituted . Muir tries to give the account of the origin of caste

in India considering the larger theme of Aryan race, when in the beginning of

Indian civilization people were not divided into castes, and proves that the sacred

books of the Hindus do not give a uniform account of the origin of castes, and

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[20] J.Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol.I, p.1.

[21] Bernard S.Cohn, *The Past in the Present: India as a Museum of Mankind* (Unpublished Essay), p.31.

[22] J.Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol.I, p.1.

the distinction between the four castes as derived from the creater's body is not valid even by the 'literal interpretation' of its most popular writings. In the second volume he tries to prove the emergence of Indian people from the original Aryan stock from the evidences drawn from comparative philology and the earliest Hindus writings, especially the Vedas. Muir follows William Jones endeavour of showing the same origin of the Aryan race through the evidences of the linguistics similarities between various classical languages. That changes apparent in the Sanskrit language from the earliest Vedic hymns to the later Itihasas and Puranas as, Muir argued were 'the result of gradual development will be proved by a reference to the natural laws of speech, and to the analogous process which the tongues of other nations have undergone.'[23] It was largely an elaboration of the argument which tried to negate the eternal and divine aspects of Sanskrit language and to endow a historical aspect in the context of Indo-European language family. The close interlinkages between the Zend, Persian, Greek, Latin, and other western tongues and the similarities between Greek and Zend mythology and literature he establishes the common origin of the different nations - Aryan, Indo- Germanic or Indo-European. The crucial element of the similar origin of languages was to show 'the strong probability that the progenitors of the Hindus immigrated from the north or north-west to India.'[24] Mid-nineteenth century onwards the construction of racial theory by aligning race and language is apparent in Muir's contention that a rivalry between the

[23] J.Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol.II, p.2.
[24] Ibid., p.3.

Indo-Aryan and the native 'barbarian tribes', speaking a different language and belonging to a different race took place, which he tries to prove by giving the translations of the Vedic hymns and other texts.[25]

Muir traces the history of vernaculars, especially the languages of northern India and their relations with other languages. As it was quite evident in nineteenth century Europe, the history of languages was considered to be the most authentic tool of tracing the overall history of human society. Muir tries to locate the historical changes which would have occurred in the vernaculars after decline of Sanskrit. To search the antiquity of these vernaculars he cites Professor Lassen and John Beames. While Lassen fixes 1000 AD., when these vernacular came into being John Beames regards them as emerging from an ancient Aryan language, which includes even those words which were not found in classical Sanskrit. Beames raised two major points regarding the origin of dialects in India. First, overemphasis on the written Sanskrit and 'high antiquity' attached to them as dialects, which was 'as imperfectly represented in Sanskrit as the speech of the Italian peasantry of their day was represented by Cicero and Virgil.'[26] Beames saw vernaculars as emerging from an ancient Aryan speech and argued against explanations given by Lassen for the Prakrit being only a derivation from Sanskrit. Beames theory of the origin and history of vernaculars (as distinct from 'written' language such as Sanskrit) was an attempt to locate Indian vernaculars as independent derivations from the ancient Aryan speech,

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., pp.6-8.

and tried to prove his thesis by showing the similarities between cognate Indo-Germanic languages and 'humble and obscure Hindi or Bengali dialects'-similarities which are not even found in Sanskrit. Muir, rather favoured the common origin of these dialects, since according to him the larger historical pattern in which the people speaking these languages have survived follow the same creed with some modifications, receive the same religious books, are divided into the same castes, and have descended from one common stock must have used one language at some point in human history.[27] But he rejects Beames contention of ascribing any 'high antiquity' to these dialects, and proves their roots in the earlier provincial dialects by citing examples from extant Buddhist sources carrying traces of 'popularized Sanskrit', language of rock inscription of the second and third centuries before Christ, from languages such as Pali and Magadhi, and the use of specific forms of speech (Prakrit and Apabhransa) used by the inferior castes and women in Sanskrit drama.

Muir's main thrust is to prove that the dominant race of Hindustan - Arians, were not autochthonous, but had immigrated from central Asia. He also tries to show that the people of South India belonged to a different race from Indo-Aryan due to the differences evident between the Sanskrit and the languages of south India.[28] By citing several portions of the Rigveda, with translation Muir shows that the Rigveda recognizes the distinction between author's own tribe and 'a hostile people who observed different rites, and were

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[27] Ibid., p.9.
[28] Ibid., pp.358-59.

regarded with contempt and hatred by the superior race.' However, most striking observation in this regard is that: 'If human enemies are designated in the latter texts by the word Arya, we may reasonably suppose the same class of foes to be commonly or often denoted by the word Dasya. It is not, of course, to be expected that we should find the Indian commentators confirming this view of the matter more than partially; as they had never dreamt of the modern critical view of the origin of the Aryas and their relation to the barbarous aboriginal tribes.'[29] Muir's translations from the original texts follow the grid prepared by British historians of Indian history with a distinct chronology and as a story of conquest over the aboriginal tribes. His constant reiteration of the theme of immigration and non-autochthonous elements of the Aryans in ancient India resonates with the colonial presence and its civilizing mission. Indeed, the trauma and confrontation of the immigrant Aryans in ancient India is projected in the Indian past as the beginning of the true civilized society. Employment of Indian past in these terms of conquest and onset of civilization is implicitly suggestive of the present moment of civilizing process. To corroborate the facts gathered for Aryan theory Muir cites other Vedic texts which talk of relations of the Aryas and Dasyas. Muir's method is comprehensive and dense as he freely alludes to other British and European Scholars' translations and interpretation of Sanskrit texts. Most striking example is of Max Müller's review of Muir's first volume of Original Sanskrit Texts, which appeared in newspaper 'The Times' of

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[29] Ibid., pp.362-63.

the 10 and 12 April 1858 (republished in *'Chips from German Workshop* Vol.II).

Muir's emphasis on distinct complexion of Aryas and Dasysas ('the dark

aborigines' or 'black -colour enemies') appears to be deeply influenced by Max

Müller's characterization: 'At the time, when this name 'varna' was first used in

the sense of caste, there were but two castes, the Aryas and the non-Aryas, the

bright and the dark race. This dark race is sometimes called by the poets of the

Veda "the black skin."[30]

Max Müller envisaged his proposed translation of the Rigveda as a great

service to the Western civilization, 'as a step leading upwards to a higher,

clearer, truer point of view, (to) gain a real insight into the thought, the fears,

the hopes, the doubts, the faith of the true ancestors of our race;- of those whose

language lives in our own language...'[31] Besides invoking language and race in

Aryan antiquity as one of the most important dimensions of Europe's past, the

most crucial element related with his search for textual evidences in Sanskrit was

his conception of translation as such. In a very suggestive way Max Müller

touched the question of the failure of translation: "A translator must before all

things, be a "sceptic," a man who looks about, and who choose that for which he

is able to make himself honestly responsible, whether it be suggested to him, in

the first instance, by the most authoritative tradition or by the merest random

guess."[32] But in the way Max Müller envisioned the inadequacy and failure of

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[30] Ibid., p.374-75.

[31] Max Müller, 'Prospects of the Rig Veda Translation', Originally published in *The Pandit*, 2, 13(June 1, 1867) 21-22, reprint, *Pandit Revisited*, ed.by Dr.B.N.Mishra, (Banaras, 1991, p.222.

[32] Ibid., p.222.

translation at a theoretical plane was different from a notion of literary translation where capturing the very literary value in totality and at a stylistic level remains elusive. For max Muller, however the question lies beyond literariness. It's rather an endeavour whose failure incessantly clears the way for 'a humble contribution towards future translation.' Translation is a move towards a hope for recuperating the lost antiquity. He saw his own translations as something which would be 'antiquited and forgotten', and yet would be beneficial as something which would win-back the Aryan past. Max Müller's theory of translation implicitly shares the larger theoretical shift in translation theories, which recognized cultural differences as an essential element. However, translation for Max Müller mainly remained a process of continued cultural translation to reach the pure originary event of Indo-European past. Translation thus became a project of continuous recovery of antiquity.

From the mid-nineteenth century traditional Sanskrit scholars who were exposed to western knowledge and the works of the European and the British Sanskritists were continuously responding to the large scale translations and interpretations of classical Indian texts. One of the key features of their intervention in the debates around these texts and Indian traditions was their double-bind position. The recovery of a classical India and its tradition was a great achievement for them, but they were highly sceptical towards Europe's handling of these issues. It marked a tension in the English-educated traditional

pandits' circle. European scholars' construction of a classical India through textual evidences was in ultimate analysis an attempt to put the originary moment of Indo-Aryan races and their language and history in a larger pattern of Western antiquity. There was a curious turn in European and British attempts of constituting Indian classicality in the nineteenth century. It was a lost classicism of the larger grid of the western classicism; however, in itself Indian classicality was seen as submerged in ideational constructions of Indian society and traditions. The scepticism of Indian scholars although did not perceive this problem in its entirety; however vaguely they tried to touch upon the destinies of western scholarship. Shasishekhara Sanyal in his comment on the 'Colebrooks's translation of the Sankhyakarika' questioned the authenticity of European translators, with regard to their understanding of Indian tradition and knowledge systems. Sanyal's emphasis was on providing correctives on the part of own traditions - 'painted in their true colour', leaving them free to draw whatever conclusion did from it. Sanyal made a very clear statement: "I do not mean that the Europeans have not as yet succeeded in getting any idea of our philosophies at all; but simply that their notion of our philosophies is a confused one."[33] He cites William Jones, Humboldt, Halhed and Hammer as few Europeans who got some right notion about the Sanskrit language. An interesting rejoinder to Sanyal's comment was published under initial A.B., (who seems to be an European) regarding the inaccuracy of his translation of Vedantic text,

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[33] Shashishekhara Sanyal, 'Colebrook's Translation of the Samkhyakarika', originally published in, *The Pandit,* 2, 17 (Oct., 1867) 116-118. Reprint, *Pandit Revisited* (Banaras, 1991), p.214.

disclaiming his knowledge of either Indian philosophies or English language.[34]

Undoubtedly, the failure of translation of Indian knowledge was haunting the Europeans and Indian scholars; however, the most crucial element was the reconstitution of classical Indian knowledge, and the fate of this vast project of translation in colonial India.

This aspect of translating Indian knowledge in English was captured both at a theoretical and practical level by Rajendralal Mitra.[35] It is interesting to put Mitra's notion of the overall question of translatibility together with Max Müller's. Rajendralal Mitra writes: " I believe it will be generally admitted as a truism that the primary object of translation is to reproduce the thought of one language in another so as to render them intelligible to those who do not know the language of the original; and its success must bear a direct ratio to the extent to which it serves to make the original thoroughly intelligible in its new form. If so, everything opposed to perfect clearness and through intelligibility must necessarily be a defect; and as words are but the clothes in which thoughts are dressed, it must follow that where those words on which the sense mainly depends are not reproduced, or so produced as not to be clearly apprehended, the translation will fail to subserve its purpose. In literary composition, whose value depends upon their styles and imaginary—their idiomatic felicity and niceties of expression – and which are impressed more or less strongly with a characteristic

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[34] Ibid., p219.

[35] Rajendralal Mitra, *A Scheme for the Rendering of European Scientific Terms into the Vernaculars of India* (First printed, Calcutta, 1877; Reprint, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, 1956).

individuality, something more than the mere reproduction of their words is necessary; and that something is often of a nature which no possible ability in a translator can supply; for the secret power of a language is frequently as undefinable as it is untransmissable; and their is an evaporation in the process of translation which never can be prevented."[36] Rajendralal Mitra underlined the fact that despite its failure, translation had 'serious consequences' as it touched and shaped the intellect of a nation. While writing a report on the possible methods of translation of scientific works, he noted the hazard which the loss of cultural differences in translation created. He argued in favour of translation of scientific terms only if they are not a 'servile verbation translation, like a Chinese copy, with patch and all'.[37] His entire scheme outlines the obvious difficulties involved in translating European scientific terms, which could only be surpassed by an attempt to preserve the correct meaning and purpose of scientific knowledge.

J.R. Ballantyne of Banaras Sanskrit College (in the late 1840 and 1850) was deeply involved in the translation of works on Indian philosophic systems, especially Nyaya Darshan which caught Europeans' attention for its emphasis on logic. Nyaya was in many senses seen as path to Indian 'rational' systems. Ballantyne was one of those European scholars who were interested in developing Indian knowledge systems for spreading western knowledge and Christian ideas. He was translating European (mainly contemporary Scottish

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[36] Ibid., pp.1-2.
[37] Ibid., p.13.

philosophy into Sanskrit) and Indian knowledge systems simultaneously.[38] To

fuse western knowledge into the indigenous 'rational' systems, Ballantyne

envisioned a completely different program of changing the colonial society.

Christian ideas and western knowledge moved together in Ballantyne's scheme

through which he sought to create a modern scientific and rational discourse in

Indian society. Ballantyne saw Nyaya as a system through which 'the learned

mind of India may be invited to advance into the scientific paths of chemistry,

zoology, botany, geography, geology, astronomy, psychology, ethics,

mathematics, formal logic, the philosophy of Induction, rhetoric, and mechanical

philosophy.'[39] The translation and transmission of knowledge in the later half of

the nineteenth century touched the question of 'rational' systems in the

indigenous tradition mostly as a part of civilizing discourse. The search for

'rational' in India was always restricted by Western essentialization of Indian

traditions, and looking towards the Christian principles as the most powerful

mode of putting this 'rational' into practice.

Muir, a successor of Ballantyne, as a principal of Banaras Sanskrit

College tried to give an elaborate account of cosmogony, mythology and the

religious ideals of the Hindus, mostly as evident from the Rig-veda, in a

comparative perspective with classical Europe (that is early Greek). This is in

continuation of his early volumes where he had tried to prove through instances

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[38] C.A.Bayly, 'British Orientalism and the Indian 'Rational Tradition' c.1780-1820', *South Asia Research*, Vol.14, No.1, Spring 1994; pp.7-8.

[39] J.R.Ballantyne, 'On the Nyaya System of Philosophy, and the Correspondence of its Divisions with those of Modern Science', (Originally Published *in Benaras Magazine*, Vol.I, 1849, reprint, *The Pandit*, 1,2 (July 2, 1866) 22-25) in *Pandit Revisited* (Banaras, 1991), p.27.

drawn from comparative mythology and history that the Brahmanical Indians originally belonged to the same race as the Greek, the Latin, the Teutonic, and other nations of Europe. Muir builds his hypothesis on the commonality of language among the different branches of the Aryan stock, and infers a common and large stock of religious and mythological conceptions.[40] Muir recognized the differences between the Greek and Indian mythology as a result of long separation between two groups speaking different languages. Similarity, in all instances was to be drawn from the earliest accounts of both the languages. He firmly believed in the existence of 'some fragments of the primitive Indo-European mythology' common to both the eastern and the western branches of the family, which would have been preserved more in traces of common religious conceptions.[41] But Muir emphasizes the fact that these similarities in religion and mythology were gradually lost. The similarities between religious works of ancient India and that of Homer and Hesiod were far more prominent than found in later texts. However, he further recognizes different sorts of commonalties in the later Indian texts with the Greek texts, especially in tendencies of personification found in Puranas and Indian epic poems. Muir's constant emphasis was on the 'older points of correspondences' between the religious ideas of the Greeks and the Indians.[42] The notion of desire, elaborated in the concept of Kama in Indian tradition was equated by Muir to the notions of Eros

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[40] J.Muir, *Original Sanskrit Text, Vol.V*, p.2.
[41] Ibid., p.2.
[42] Ibid., p.3.

in Greek.[43] Western classicality continuously emerges as the true reservoir of Indian classical systems, which were gradually eroded through time.

Sanskritists like Bühler and Kielhorn, who were involved in the British bureaucratic project of discovering every relic of Indian antiquity (especially classical Sanskrit texts) in the later half of the nineteenth century, prepared a plan for printing and popularization of Sanskrit classics in the educational institutions. They were asking for the 'correct and cheap editions' of the Sanskrit classics made in harmony with the principles of modern philology. Their plan of the introduction of Sanskrit classics in educational institutions was based on the requirement of modern criticism practiced in West—and the requirements of Anglo Indian education.[44] Indigenous literature and their knowledge system seemed to get a revival in their scheme, as they explicitly wrote 'besides its value for practical instruction, the publication of a series of critical editions of Sanskrit classics may be a *palaestra* for the young native Sanskritists, by inviting their co-operation, and thus may serve to realize the high aims of Indian University education".[45] The question of authenticity of Indian texts always remained tricky. The mass of textual production with introduction of print was a challenge to trace the 'real' as distinct from the inauthentic. The relative purity

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[43] Ibid., p.406.

[44] G.Buhler and F Kielhorn, 'Proposed Edition of Sanskrit Classics', (Originally Published, *The Pandit*, 1,2 (July 2, 1866), Reprinted from: *Bombay Educational Record*, Vol.II. No.5, May 1866), *Pandit Revisited* (Banaras, 1991), p.199.

[45] Ibid., pp.199-200.

of ancient texts was chosen as the baseline. For printed edition, from among the mass of texts the oldest one was to be chosen. Authenticity was presumably envisaged in the times nearer to the separation of Indo-European stock.

The constitution of a classical domain for reinterpreting the whole indigenous knowledge systems was an obvious attempt of projecting the present of India in the deeper layers of historical time where western classical period could stand as a parallel. In the second half of nineteenth century European scholars in conjunction with colonial government rehearsed the antiquarian project of tracing the lost 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis.' It marked a different destiny of Sanskrit language and classical Indian knowledge created in it. Sheldon Pollock has brilliantly shown the 'polis' or political dimensions of Sanskrit language and its ideology in Ancient and early medieval India. The crucial aspect was translation and vernacularization taking place in the 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis' in south and Southeast Asia through Sanskrit language as the 'premier instrument of political expression' and a vast cultural formation.[46] Europe's rediscovery of India and its essence through Sanskrit in the nineteenth century projects Indian classicality as the only authentic way of knowing India–as a surrogate of European classicism. The paradox involved in this whole project is that while European classicism becomes the bedrock of the European discourse of rationality and progress from the Renaissance onwards, in the colonial context it denotes stagnation, decay and the hold of ideational constructs in the indigenous

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[46] Sheldon Pollock, 'The Sanskrit Cosmopolos...' in J.E.M.Houben (ed.) *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit* (Leiden, 1996), p.197-98.

imagination. Europe's discovery and rereading of Indian classicality is couched

in an overarching civilizing discourse. Translation of Indian knowledge in the

later half of nineteenth century remained 'sceptical' (on both indigenous and

European's side of the fence), and yet it occurred- as a distinct mode of

constituting India in terms of essentialism. The whole question of translation and

recuperation of India tradition, past and its institutions opens a large and

complex story of pre-colonial political and cultural formations, which would not

evade the mystique of colonialism by seeking analogies in the pre-colonial past;

rather, it would delineate the story of colonial encounter in sharp relief. On the

other hand, in the second half of the nineteenth century with the emergence of

modern genres in vernaculars, and early phase of the emergence of nationalist

ideology, a classical India as translated by Europeans began to be appropriated in

a variety of ways taking the essentializations of India to the literate sections. The

intellectual history of the second half of the nineteenth century is yet to be read

in terms of the constitution and projection of Indian classicality in two modes –

on the indigenous part it became a sign of futuristic models in classical idiom,

while on the Western part it was an explanatory model of civilizing discourse

which was to be pushed deeper in the Western classicality.

3.THE MANUSCRIPT HUNT: KNOWLEDGE IN DECAY

AND COLONIAL HUMANISM.

The classical impulse of the early modern Europe, which created the antiquarian enterprise reappeared in the colonial setting as a distinct mode of ordering the past of the alien society. The search for a lost classical moment (classicism) in European civilisation and its past emerged from humanism, and was thoroughly shaped by it. Joseph M.Levine, has in the recent years, emphasized the continuing strain of this classical revival in the European world (with equal importance in Britain) in different situations and different ways, from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. This classical revival had a strange and paradoxical fate in early modern Europe, as it deeply influenced the "moderns" (who wanted to undo the "overdependence" of English culture on antiquity), as well as "ancients" who valorized the two classical languages-Latin and Greek, and were proud of 'antique learning'. The "moderns" recognised the 'neoclassical reformation' of language and culture, begun in the age of Thomas More and Erasmus.[1] Fifteenth century Italian humanist Paggio Bracciolini and an eighteenth century Englishman Edward Gibbon - the illustrious author of *The Decline and Fall* - shared a common intellectual

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[1] Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History : Origins of Modern English Historiography* (Ithaca, 1987), pp.73-5.

temperament for classical revival and humanist learning. Thus, eighteenth century neo-classicism of the English took an intellectual and cultural leap in its attempt to acquire antiquity which had been recovered and was flowering in Italy and Continental Europe for the last three centuries. This power of classics, and ancient literature in European intellectual history became the 'matrix for antiquarian thought and activity'; which created a stereotyped European intellectual, a legacy which ran from Thomas Elyot under Henry VIII to Horace Walpole and the Earl of Chesterfield under George III, culminating its ideal types among Burke, Pitt and Charles James Fox in the late eighteenth century Britain. This 'deepening of knowledge' steeped in 'classical idioms' and 'classical ideals' became possible through a belief in this 'commitment to antiquity, almost universal throughout the period, in the practical value of the classics to the life and work of the governing classes.'[2] Humanism as a movement was based on the recovery of lost authors, and for this purpose each work or manuscript was to be recovered, deciphered, collated and interpreted. Material remains of antiquity and classical texts recreated a lost world corresponding to each other; as Joseph Levine says: 'words could be illustrated by things, and the ruins of the ancient world by its literature.'[3]

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[2] Ibid., pp.74-5.
[3] Ibid., pp. 75.

Another interesting development began from the late fifteenth century with Europe's project of exploration, trade, and conquest of the non-European world; simultaneously amassing a wealth of knowledge about other people with the sense of superiority of European Scientific Knowledge and technical achievements. In mid-eighteenth century, it culminated in a deep comparativist quest of other civilisations vis-à-vis Europe's people, knowledge, institutions, and pasts. From among the Oriental world initially it was China with its system of government, art and the Confucian religion which captured attention. However, in spite of a substantial corpus available on India from the fifteenth century onwards, only in the middle of the eighteenth century it became the centre of interest. India was continuously explored, and was perceived as a place marred by intellectual stagnation, decaying knowledge systems, despotism, and the bonds of ancient religion.[4] As a part of European, and especially British understanding of India, its people, institutions, knowledge systems, religion and history the search for Indian antiquities and texts formed one of the instruments to look into and trace the difference between the two civilizations. It contributed to the creation of intellectual foundations of knowing and governing Indian society. From 1760 onwards, a textual view of India began to emerge with British officials' quest for classical Indian languages and texts.

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[4] P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1970), pp.1-3.

The antiquarian enterprise in Britain began in the sixteenth century with

John Leland. Trained in the humanist tradition in London and Paris, and

equipped with the knowledge of classical languages- Latin and Greek, he

entered into the world of antiquities and old manuscripts. In eighteenth

century Britain, Leland epitomised a great source of whatever had been done

in the field of antiquities since the Reformation. It was a search of the English

past from the sixteenth century onwards, which initiated a search for ancient

texts of the British nation and also a philological quest (besides classical

languages) centred around British, Saxons, Celts and Welsh languages and

cultures. The recovery of an English past was dependent on the search for old

manuscripts and monuments. To recover the ancient glory of the English past

was an aim of antiquarian enterprise.[5] Most remarkable example of the

eighteenth century antiquarian enterprise in Britain was seen in the Welsh

renaissance or revival, in which Welsh scholars and patriots went on hunting,

rediscovering, and at times recreating the past and its historical, linguistic and

literary traditions; thus, creating a 'mythical and romantic' Welsh which

pushed the immediate past to the margins.[6] From the mid-eighteenth to the

early nineteenth century, this antiquarian enterprise was vigorously replicated

in colonial India through the attempts of company merchants, travellers and

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[5] Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History,* pp.79-81.

[6] Prys Morgan, 'From a Death to a View : The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983, 1996), pp.43-45, 99-100.

British officials. However, the antiquarian enterprise and an unquenchable desire for collectibles, and all kinds of remains and relics of the past were conceived with a difference in colonial India, where it became a part of the newly emerging 'imperial archive' and the Indian exotic. More importantly, it symbolised the creation of a powerful system of knowledge and representation in the colonial context.

From among all the objects which the British discovered and collected in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in India, either ruined monuments, art objects such as sculptures and paintings, several kinds of remains and artefacts or botanical, zoological specimens, it were ancient texts and manuscripts which became most difficult to retrieve. Manuscripts were marked by two characteristics as an antiquity- as collectible objects, and as objective remains and carriers of the world of indigenous knowledge (a repository of ossified and decaying indigenous knowledge and classical language). And, indeed simultaneously it was a window to look into the textual world. Manuscripts- as objects and artefacts of knowledge were different from the aesthetic (such as sculpture, paintings, remains of old monuments) and living specimens whose reception depended on form and presentability, as they were displayed in the museums of metropole as objects of wonder. Manuscripts were to be retrieved from the indigenous literati for whom it was both a precious object and stored arcane knowledge. Therefore it largely differed

from discovering and collecting art objects and monuments from the material remains. The collection of manuscripts created a history of colonial encounter together with ordering and interpreting the textual world of India; and, the manuscript hunt from the mid-eighteenth century onwards created a colonial ethnography as a project of retrieving and creating a disembodied textual knowledge. What Bernard Cohn has characterized as a 'tribute represented in print and manuscripts...... created by Indians, but codified and transmitted by Europeans' marking a 'conquest of knowledge'[7] began from the mid-eighteenth century by private and company collectors and was systematized by the British Government under the patronage of the Asiatic society of Bengal. By the mid-nineteenth century, as an important part of colonial antiquarian enterprise collection of manuscripts was properly launched by the British Government through an institutionalized project. It marked the complete integration of the desire and surveillance on indigenous knowledge with the powerful apparatus of colonial governance.[8] As Cohn has argued the British patronage emanating from the antiquarian enterprise was implicated in a wider 'political context' in which the British values were imposed on Indians; and,

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[7] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge. The British India* (Delhi, 1997), p.16.

[8] A .E Gough, (ed.), *Papers Relating to the Collection and Preservation of the Records of Ancient Sanskrit Literature in India.* (Calcutta, 1887).

the 'objects' which were collected, discovered and classified were imbricated in 'the larger European project to decipher the history of India.'[9]

On 10 May, 1868, Pandit Radhakrishna, chief Pandit of the former Lahore Durbar, wrote a letter as a reminder to the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, lamenting the grievous situations in which hordes of Sanskrit manuscripts were lying in different private collections of unknown Pandits, native libraries of the princes, and small zamindars. Pandit Radhakrishna's letter was written in response to the Government's order for collecting the catalogues of the books written in three major classical languages of India– Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. As he wrote: "There are two things which would complete the information so much desired by the Oriental scholars of Europe and Asia. The Sanskrit list will necessarily remain incomplete unless it contains the names of the books that are in the libraries of the Maharaja of Jaipur and Nepal. The rarest books were collected by the liberal ancestors of the former, from the time of Raja Man Singh; and as the latter country has never been under the subjection of Mahomedans, the oldest Sanskrit books are to be found there.'[10] However, with equal emphasis he added that this project should be carried out especially with regard to Sanskrit books which are

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[9] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge*, p.77.

[10] Extract from a letter from Pandit Radhakrishna, Chief Pandit of the late Lahore Durbar, to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India, 10 May, 1868, in A.E, Gough (ed.) *Papers Relating.. Ancient.. Sanskrit Literature..*, p.1.

preserved in the 'great libraries of England, Germany, France, and other continental countries of Europe', and a list should be 'published in English and Sanskrit... for the furtherance of the cause of learning.'[11] Whitney Stokes, Secretary to the Council of Governor-General for making laws and regulations gave proper attention to Pandit Radhakrishna's letter, but showed his limitations in doing this work properly, as yet. Stokes wrote from his practical experience, as someone who was deeply engaged in the colonial manuscript hunt: "I know of no native scholar possessed of the requisite learning, accuracy, and persistent energy. I know of no European scholar in India possessed of the requisite time or who might not be more usefully employed in making original researches."[12] The only way out from this impasse as Stokes contemplated was that, 'the work, if done at all should be done in England, and like Max Müller's edition of the Rigveda, under the patronage of the Secretary of state.'[13] Stokes knew the problem of moving deeper into indigenous knowledge and their masters- the learned Pandits.

However, as early as the 1730s and 1740s, James Fraser -a company merchant of Surat, and the author of the history of Nadir-Shah was the first person to collect the manuscripts on a large scale.[14] This enthusiasm for

[11] Ibid.
[12] Note by Whitney Stokes, Secretary to the Council of Governor - General for Making Laws and Regulations, 6 August, in A.E.Gough (ed.) Papers Relating... Anc.Sanskrit Lit., p.2.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, p.

Sanskrit manuscripts was perhaps rarely of bibliophilic interest for the Orientalist or the Government officials; since the nature of these manuscripts and the variety of subjects dealt in them created a quest for living knowledge in indigenous mind. Charles Wilkins, one of the early Orientalists and Sanskrit scholar remarked on Richard Johnson collection of manuscripts in 1807: 'The books, as to the writings, illuminations, perfectness, preservation and binding are upon a par with any other collection which has come under my view.......... As to the subjects, there is a good proportion of the best histories, many very valuable dictionaries of the Arabic and Persian languages, several useful treatises of grammar, etc.... There are also great many distinct treatises on Mathematics, Astronomy, Music, Medicine and other sciences and arts... works on law, religion and ethics... translations from the Sanskrit into Persian... a great variety of useful and interesting subjects... a choice collection of statistical works consisting of particular tables and statements of the lands and revenues of several of the provinces of India.'[15] In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the object of surveying and collecting Indian texts, various remains of the past and inscriptions, Colonel Colin Mackenzie- a cartographer and surveyor (with the help of Cavelli Venkata Boria, a Telugu Brahman) amassed a vast amount of manuscripts, inscriptions, temple records, translations, coins and all kinds of antiques for

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[15] Charles Wilkins, cited in Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, p.98.

his projected history of South India. Mackenzie's search for antiquities and texts created a new intellectual map of India, as he discovered new sources on Jaina religion and philosophy, different ancient religious sects, and copper and stone inscriptions throwing light on the important subject of Hindu tenures, various similarities in ancient customs with the early Western nations.[16] Mackenzie was disadvantaged compared to the early Orientalists' linguistic capacities in native languages. His collections became possible largely through the help of native scholars and interpreters, and his collections marked a rift between 'official Orientalism' and 'colonial sociology', as his textual collections were not fit for the Orientalist demand for classicism and antiquity, and his histories proved irrelevant to direct administrative purposes.[17] Mackenzie's efforts remained the biggest project of incorporating natives into such a large antiquarian enterprise until mid-nineteenth century, until Whitney Stokes charted a massive countrywide project of retrieval of all kind of textual records. From 1815, due to the efforts of the Danish surgeon Nathaniel Wallich, The Asiatic Society in Calcutta began establishing a public museum to have at one place 'a collection of the substances which are the objects of science, and of those reliques which illustrate ancient times and manners....

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[16] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, pp.80-3.
[17] Nicholas B. Dirks, ' Colonial Histories and Native Informants : Biography as an Archive', in Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter Van der Veer (eds.), *Orientalism and the Post-colonial Predicament. Perspectives on South Asia.* (Philadelphia, 1993) pp.279-313, especially p.282.

from the abundant matter, which India offers."[18] Hereafter, began the

collections and a new spate of writing on ancient, inscriptions, monument,

coins, manuscripts and all kinds of objects related with Indian past or present.

In the very first meeting Colebrook, a well known Orientalist and Sanskritist,

donated over seventy-five volumes of books and manuscripts to the Asiatic

Society Library.[19]

The elaborate programme of tracing, collecting and printing of Sanskrit

manuscripts was poorly funded (as only Rs.2,000 per month was allotted for

this purpose by the Government), and practically difficult, considering the

'vastness and importance of the subject.' On the part of Government, thus,

Stokes formulated a scheme spread all over the country and mostly dependent

on the labours of political agents of all provinces, native scholars and the

British officials having interest in this antiquarian enterprise.[20] Stokes' detailed

programme of collection of manuscripts was meticulously followed as a part of

the British government's social and political agenda in the second half of the

nineteenth century. However, Stokes envisaged 'various learned societies of

Europe' and individual scholars, such as Aufrent, Cowell, Goldstucker, Hall,

Max Müller, Muir and Rust in England; Benfey, Kuhn, Roth, Stenzler, and

Weber in Germany; Regnier in France; Gorressio in Italy; Westergoard in

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[18] O.P. Kejariwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's Past.* (Delhi, 1988), pp. 115-16; Nathaniel Wallich, cited in O.P. Kejariwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal,* p.116.

[19] Ibid., pp.116-17.

[20] Whitney Stokes, in A.E. Gough(ed.) *Papers Relating ..Anc. Sanskrit Lit.,* p.3.

Denmark; Bothlingk in Russia, Whiney in America; Bühler and Griffith in India; as the persons to whom 'the Government would carefully attend to their suggestions as to which of the manuscripts therein mentioned should be examined, purchased, or transcribed.'[21] At a much deeper level, in the different parts of India a network of government officials working in the Educational Departments of the local government were to be sent in search of texts. Prof. Bühler in Bombay, Mr. Burnell in Madras, Mr. Growse in the North-Western Province, a well known Indian Orientalist and scholar Babu Rajendralal Mitra or Mr. Tawney in Bengal were to be sent 'every cold weather .... on tours to examine the manuscripts reported on, to seek new manuscript, to explain to the Native Scholars at the different places visited the object and importance of the mission, and to purchase (for the India House Library) such manuscripts as the possessors are willing to sell at a reasonable rate.'[22]

Indigenous knowledge, as preserved in the textualized form, was being brought under a colonial design by the government from the mid-nineteenth century. The project of salvaging, classifying, interpreting and 'translating' the textual relics took place in a different political and intellectual milieu from the mid-nineteenth century. The period from 1850s to 1880s marks a disjuncture, as the previous antiquarian enterprise and its classicism was fading and from

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[21] Ibid., p.3.
[22] Ibid., p.4.

mid-nineteenth century onwards the indigenous leterati was discovering new genres (such as early histories and novel) and idioms; and an idealized essence of India through its classical world was being constructed. However to trace the intellectual genealogies of such essentializations through the search and constitution of "India" and indigenous classicism(s) from mid nineteenth-century, together with the birth of Indian modernity and nationalism, one has to look into the ongoing British (and European) search of 'India' and its textualized essence.

Undoubtedly, the colonial State was readily acting as a patron for tracing and extracting knowledge. Even if we do not characterize it as a hegemonic process in earnest, we do see colonial power reaching out to the so called recesses of 'local knowledge.' "Some tact and management will be needed to lessen the aversion which native scholars sometimes have to shewing and parting with their books; but here the government might effectually aid by conferring titles of honour on such Sastris and other Natives as exhibit conspicuous liberality in this respect ..... To Europe we should send everything obtained in working out this scheme, - Original manuscripts, copies, extracts; for in Europe alone are the true principles of criticism and philology understood and applied, and fifty years hence, in Europe alone will any intelligent interest be found in Sanskrit literature. There will be then, it is safe to say, be as few Sanskrit scholars in India as there are now Greek

Scholars in Greece."[23] Thus wrote Stokes, envisaging colonial state's role in preserving a decaying and intractable knowledge. Stokes delineated the purpose and practical importance of collecting manuscripts very clearly, according to him subjects which the 'European Scholars deemed most valuable' had to be the guiding principle. Primary importance was given to the manuscripts of 'the Vedas and Vedangas, and of their commentaries, law books, grammars (especially those relating to the system of Panini), vocabularies, and philosophical treaties'; and texts related with poetry, astronomy, medicine, treaties and mechanical arts were only of secondary importance.[24] As for the pragmatics of governance and knowledge of 'India' this project according to Stokes, would 'result in important contribution in the history of religion and philosophy' and most importantly would 'enable the government to begin a work ...the publication of critical editions of all authoritative Sanskrit law-books relating to the inheritance and adoption'; apart from settling important disputes of philology it would be 'politically' beneficial in proving to the 'educated class of Hindus' that the British rule in India was not 'neglectful of the claims of literature,' leaving it entirely on the continental scholars and Foreign Government.'[25]

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[23] Ibid., pp.4-5.
[24] Ibid., p.5.
[25] Ibid., p.6.

The grants made for the Bibliotheca India Series for editing at Calcutta was increased. Bombay (Southern Mahratta Country) which had already proved to be a great treasure, where Professor Bühler had collected around two hundred important Sanskrit manuscripts, and Madras with its adjoining areas were found extremely important for carrying this project. Tour expenses in the north-western provinces, Oudh and Central Provinces, Rajputana, Bombay, Madras and Mysore and Bengal including the purchasing cost of manuscripts, printing native catalogue and additional grant to the Asiatic Society was estimated around R24,000 a year, which was considered a trifling amount.[26]

The government support for the collection and preservation of the ancient literature was meagre (R 500 per month) as compared to the antiquarian researches, and as H.M. Durand deplored in his minute in 1868 some of it was only spent on 'trifling' and 'desultory investigations' of Cunningham. The British officials' search of ancient Indian Sanskrit texts could in a major way solve the problems of law, as they repeatedly underlined the importance of Sanskrit manuscripts related with law. Durand's remark is startling: "However practical our government may be in its administration of this great empire, and justly reluctant to apply its resources to means which offer no palpable return of present prospective advantage, it may I think, be

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[26] Ibid., pp.5-6.

questionable whether this utilitarian principle may not overshoot its mark, when it neglects the ancient literature, as an element having no sensible relation to the public mind of the masses of the Hindu population," as he speaks as an insider of the colonial governance, and actually pleads for a different kind of 'utilitarian' concern which touched the minds.[27] He cites the works of Muir and Max Müller as the kind of works which had shown 'what use may be made of' ancient literature. Although, sometimes there were deep personal motives and intellectual passions involved in Britisher's enthusiasm for Sanskrit literature and knowledge coded in this language there was a distinct and identifiable motif of recuperating and purging indigenous knowledge and society. The search for knowledge in indigenous context apart from polishing the grammar of rule, was in all instances an attempt of locating the other episteme and creating an ethnography. It was difficult to reach to the ur-nature of Indian society; however it was possible to hunt and 'translate' the traces. In the early nineteenth century Francis Wilford's and his pundits story at Banaras had already got a lot of attention. Wilford, an assistant to the Surveyor-General in Bihar (1786-90), was known as a 'brahmanised' orientalist, who with his deeper connections with the Banaras Pandits had done a lot of translations and collected a large number of Sanskrit manuscripts especially related with grammar, which later became a great aid for H.H

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[27] Minute by H.M. Durand, in A.E. Gough (ed.) *Papers Relating ... Anc. Sanskrit Literature,* pp.7-8.

Wilson's researches into Sanskrit grammarians. Wilford's head Pandit created

a major scandal changing the names of places in the puranic texts with

Egyptian or Greek names and words as something which might suit Wilford's

intellectual quest of 'tracing ancient Indo-European mother language' and 'the

inheritance of a common store of sacred lore ....expected to attest to

underlying unities in human mythologies.'[28] Just after Wilford, the collection

and purchasing of Sanskrit manuscripts was mostly done in Banaras by the two

principals of Banaras Sanskrit College Edward Fell and James Ballantyne.[29]

C.A. Bayly has rightly emphasized the changes taking place in the 'reciprocal

perceptions' of the British and indigenous traditions in Banaras from 1810-40,

arising from the 'collisions between ideas originating in the metropolis' in the

colonial encounter taking place at learned local centres such as Calcutta,

Nadia, Madurai and Banaras. Despite the unpopularity of the 'antique human

knowledge in the Sanskrit texts' taking roots among the British officials

already under the partial or full influence of evangelical and utilitarian ideas

coming from reformist agenda and then insistence on 'useful knowledge' and

belief in the importance of the 'public instruction' by mid nineteenth century

superior Western knowledge was to be gratified on the indigenous ones.[30]

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[28] C.A. Bayly, *Orientalist, Informants and Critics in Banaras, 1790-1760*. (Unpublished paper, presented in Bonn, Dec,15-19 1996; On 'Reciprocal Perceptions of Different Culture in South Asia). , pp.5-7.

[29] C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information* (Cambridge, 1996), p.294.

[30] C.A. Bayly, *Orientalists, Informants and Critics in Banaras, 1780-1860* (Unpublished paper), p.10.

The search for a new domain of Indian classicism emerging from within the colonial encounter, with the revival of traditional education in modern institutions and the coming of print created a new discourse of high Indian tradition and Hinduism. This was ingrained in the emerging ideas of modernity, nationalism and newer forms of self images, and construction of an idealized India. The constitution of an idealized essence of India in this encounter was to a large extent appropriated from the British constructions of India and its classical lore. There were very few people who showed interest in 'rational' Indian traditions, such as Ballantyne who was deeply engaged in nyaya philosophy, one of the 'rational' philosophical systems of classical India which was still alive in the eastern parts of the country in traditional institutions and among the scholars. From mid-nineteenth-century onwards 'spiritualised' and rather 'non-rational' forms of Indian knowledge and traditions gleaned from the texts of so called high and classical systems got concretized. A constant sense of failure was starkly evident on the part of British officials having no hold on the 'root-feelings pervading Hindu society' and in the 'superficial knowledge ... observable in the great mass of official... of becoming at all conversant with the literature which a formed priesthood and the habit of ages make the current pabulum of the Hindu mind almost from its cradle."[31] But, most importantly classical literature in Sanskrit and other languages was seen

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[31] H,M. Durand, in A. E. Gough (ed.) *Papers Relating ....ANC. Sanskrit Lit.,* p.8.

as 'the radical source of enormous spiritual influence on millions under the rule', and even from a 'pure utilitarian principle' the neglect of their ancient utterances was untenable as they remained 'a living power among those millions.'[32]

Whitney Stokes' scheme got full approval due to its importance for the government and the order was issued with immediate effect to the Government of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, North Western Provinces and Panjab, the Chief Commissioners of Oudh and Central Provinces, and the Commissioners of Mysore and Coorg.[33] Rajendralal Mitra in Bengal, Mr. Burnell in Madras, and Dr. Bühler in Bombay were the scholars and officials appointed as authorities and incharge of the collection and printing of the manuscripts from private collections and native libraries; with special emphasis in the collection "the desirability ...(of) subjects which European Scholars deem most valuable, and that manuscripts of the Vedas and Vedangas and Philosophical treaties, should be regarded as of primary importance."[34]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] extract From the proceeding of the Government of India in the Home Department (Public), No.4338-48, 3nd Nov.1868, Simla, in A.E. Gough (ed.), *Papers Relating .....Anc.. Sanskrit..*, p.9.

[34] From A. Powell, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to the Secretaries to the Government of Madras, Bombay , North Western Province, Punjab, and Bengal; to the Chief Commissioners of Oudh and the Central Provinces, - No.4349 to 4355, Simla, 3rd November, 1868, in A. E., Gough (ed.), *Papers Relating,,.....Anc. .Sanskrit Lit.* , p.10.

Rajendralal Mitra, an Indian Orientalist of the second half of the nineteenth century was deeply involved in the collection of ancient Sanskrit texts in Bengal and other eastern parts of India. As one of the superintendents of the proposed manuscript hunt and as the only native scholar contributing to indological scholarship through his work on art, antiquities and Indian history and culture, Mitra prepared in 1875 an exhaustive report (with lists) on the status of Sanskrit manuscripts and knowledge in traditional natives institution. Rajendralal Mitra wrote *The Antiquities of Orissa* in two volumes between 1875-80 covering both a high aesthetic tradition and 'classical' past of India in comparison to European classicism in aesthetics and civilization. His larger intellectual project was to discover the 'pristine,' 'traditional Indian civilization' and its essence through his Orientalist, classical antiquarian and archaeological researches. The 'Aryan race theory' was examined by Mitra in the light of the religion, literature, language and aesthetic achievements of the "Aryans".[35] Rajendralal Mitra's attempts of recovering the classical past and its remaining heritage marked 'within the framework of Orientalist studies....(a) simmering cultural nationalism' which was brilliantly elucidated in his book *Indo-Aryans : Contribution Towards the Elucidation of their Ancient and Medieval History (1881)*. Indeed, it also marked the move towards translating the classical elements into ideal essences which became

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[35] Tapati Guha- Thakurta, *The making of a new 'Indian' Art : Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal, c.1850-1920* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.119-21.

one of the markers of nationalist imagination, and culminated in the early twentieth century in the aesthetic and philosophical writings of scholars like Anand K. Coomaraswamy.

Rajendralal Mitra submitted a report to the government regarding the state of Sanskrit in different parts of Bengal and Banaras largely based on the information gathered by a pandit entrusted by the Mufassil to different traditional seats of education such as private Toles, or newly established Sanskrit colleges, and his own several visits. He was himself involved in the tracing and purchasing of manuscripts in Banaras during the 1870s.[36] The most remarkable aspect of Mitra's search in association with his pandits was the discovery of the neglect of traditional systems of education and various forms of indigenous knowledge. His encounter with the native scholars in Bengal and Banaras gradually made this fact clear that with declining social patronage this vast world of classical knowledge would disappear. On the other hand this knowledge was held as a rare possession by traditional scholars and was petrifying as it was preserved in hierarchically closed world of Brahmins. For many native scholars and pandits manuscripts were only valuable as a bundle of esoteric knowledge on which they did not have any command. The social location of knowledge in Indian society which was coming through a

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[36] Rajendralal Mitra, *A. Report on Sanskrit Manuscripts. In native Libraries* (Calcutta, 1875,), p.1.

hierarchised order was facing a difficult situation in the face of modernity. In Nuddia, a traditional centre of Nyaya (especially Navya-Nyaya) in the library of the Raja of Krishnasagar a large number of Tantra manuscripts were deposited, but were lying in a neglected state, and many of them were defective as well. In the 24 Purgannahs even several Zamindars had good collections of Tantras and Puranas, in Burdwan Babu Hitalala Misra of Manakara had a large collection of Vedanta treaties and in Hooghly with Cary's efforts a good collection was kept in Serampore College. On the bank of Hoogly and at Harinalhi and elsewhere he found a large chunk of rare manuscripts about which 'very little was known to European Orientalists,' while in Rajshahi, Mymensing, Palinah, Tirhoot and Orissa large collections were especially kept in Mathas.[37]

However, the authenticity of manuscripts remained a major challenge for European Orientalists, and the indigenous scholars exposed to modern western learning. Besides the errors which the copyist committed, remarks and comments on the manuscripts became part of the texts.[38] More strikingly in the printed versions from Bengal and Banaras, these errors were perpetuated according to Rajendralal Mitra because 'the plasticity of Sanskrit language of the original is thereby irretrievably ruined.'[39] Nevertheless, Rajendralal Mitra

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[37] Rajendralal Mitra, *A Report on Sanskrit Manuscripts*, p.1.
[38] Ibid.,10.
[39] Ibid., p.10.

had underlined the authenticity of extant texts (three to four hundred years old), which read almost the same in all parts of India, whether in Bengal, Madras, Bombay or Kashmir. He concludes citing Isaac Taylor, that, "the habituated of Eastern nations undergo so little change in the lapse of the ages that, probably these descriptions of things as they are now, would differ little from a similar graphic account of the operations, dated a thousand year back. Where the arts of life remain in their rude state, those operations which depend on them, continue nearly the same." Mitra deplored the fading away of the 'halo of sanctity' around Sanskrit literature, destruction of manuscripts, and decline of Hindu religion among the people. Sanskrit as a language and the knowledge preserved in it were decaying as European literature was replacing traditional texts; he noted 'the oldest literary monuments of the Aryan race' was dying out.[40]

The emergence of Vedic texts as the 'most important and revered of Sanskrit works' in the nineteenth century has much to do with the 'spiritual' and monotheistic core of Indian philosophical and religious traditions. It was one of the most important components in the construction of a 'non-rational' intellectual tradition of classical India, which was profusely appropriated, popularised and interpreted by the Orientalists, and a large section of social religious reformers after the mid-nineteenth century such as Arya Samaj

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[40] Ibid.,. P.11.

movement and Theosophist movement of Madam Blavatsky—which 'promoted

vedic authenticity and Sanskrit knowledge' and emphasised , though

differently 'indivisibility of Science and Hinduism.'[41] Although Bengal had

never been a seat of Vedic Scholarship (which was dominated by Nyaya and

Tantras).

In the North-Western Provinces R.T.H.Griffith reported the

disenchantment among some intelligent Hindus with Whitney Stokes' project

of the collection of manuscripts of the learned classes left in this part of the

country Griffith said: 'it is only poverty, and extreme poverty generally

speaking, which forces them to part with their books for pecuniary

considerations.'[42]

In response to Pandit Radhakrishna's suggestion and Whitney Stokes

scheme of discovering and compilation of manuscripts, Government of

Bombay specially, deputed Professor Bühler to cover the Northern Division

and Professor Kielhorn to go through Dharwar, Belgaum, and Canara.[43]

Western India was considered an unexplored treasure for Sanskrit codices,

especially related with traditional Indian law. Bühler's search for manuscripts

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[41] Gyan Prakash, ' Science Between the Lines', in *Subaltern Studies, IX* (Delhi,1997) , pp.71-5.

[42] From R.T.H. Griffith, officiating Inspector, r3rd circle, Department of Public Instruction, North Western Provinces, to M. Kempson, Director of Public Instruction, North Western Provinces, --- No,119, Banaras 13 March, 1869, in A.E. Gough (ed.) *Papers Relating... Anc.. Sanskrit Lit.,* pp.39-40.

[43] Extract form the Proceedings of the Government. Of Bombay in the General Department,--- No.2357, 10 December, 1868, in A..E. Gough (ed) , *Papers Relating Anc.. Sanskrit Lit.,* p.48.

became a graphic account of entering into the world of 'living' antiquities and colonial ethnography.

Bühler issued a circular to the Deputies of Surat, Broach, Kaira, Ahmedabad, Kattiawar, Rewakantha and Khandesh to identify the places and people from whom manuscripts could be obtained. Bühler himself a renowned Sanskrit scholar easily entered into the world of Pandits due to his own scholarship.[44] He held Sabhas of learned people in Balsar, discussing in the traditional manner following Purvapaksha (the first proposition), and its opposite Uttarapaksha, finally making his purpose clear, as to why Europeans were interested in Sanskrit, and collection of Sanskrit manuscripts. In Junagarh a group of pandits asked him a series of question, which show the scepticism on pandit's part: "(1) Whether in Europe, especially in Germany, the learned lived according to the Brahmanical law, (2) Whether they performed sacrifices, as a European had done in Poona (Dr. Haug); (3) Whether (he) preferred sacrifices, or the study of the vedanta, as the road to salvation; (4) How supposing that (he) was descended as had told them, from the Aryan stock, (he) could consider (himself) entitled (adhikrita) to study the Vedas and Sastras without having been initiated."[45] Bühler was assiduous enough to get local people for assistance resulting in preparation of catalogues

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[44] From G. Buhler, Acting Education Inspector, Northern Division, to J. B. Peile, Director of Public Instruction, Bombay --- 5 July, Surat, 1869, in A.,E., Gough (ed.), *Papers Relating... Anc. Sanskrit Lit.,* p.48.

[45] Ibid.,p.50.

of 7,000 books and several copies of old-books manuscripts.[46] Copies of

manuscripts collected in western India by Buhler and Kielhorn aroused much

interest for the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and the Trustees

of the Indian Museum.[47] Kielhorn discovered Gujarat as 'far richer in Sanskrit

libraries' than the Southern Parts of the Presidency, which were 'older and

more correct' also.[48]

Alexander Cunningham who persuaded Lord Canning to establish the

Archaeological Survey of India in 1859 had through his survey and reports of

monuments and topographical research laid the foundations of archaeology in

India.[49] Cunningham's interest in all collectibles of 'India as a vast museum'

of human civilisation was aroused due to Bühler and Kielhorn's tours in the

countryside in search of manuscripts. He recommended Rajasthan (especially

Jesalmer and Bikaner) where Colonel Tod had found a great treasure of

manuscripts and in the fortress of Bhatner where he himself had seen a vast

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[46] Ibid., pp.50-1.

[47] Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of Bombay, in the General Department, ---
Np.1975, 18 August. 1869, in A.E. Gough (ed.), , *Papers Relating... Anc.. Sanskrit Lit.,*
pp.59-60; and, A. P. Howell, Under Secretary to the Govt. of India, Home Department, to the
Secretary to the Asiatic Soc. Of Bengal, ---No.4111, Simla, 8 September, 1869, in A.E. Gough
(ed.). *Papers Relating ...Anc.* Sanskrit Lit., p.60.

[48] From F. Kielhorn, Superintendent of Sanskrit Studies, Bombay to J. B. Peile, Director of Public
Instruction, Bombay, Deccan College, Poona, 1 July, 1870, in A.E.Gough (ed.) , *Papers
Relating... Anc.. Sanskrit Lit.,* p.63.

[49] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its forms of Knowledge* (Delhi, 1997), p.9; Tapati Guha -
Thakurta, 'The Museumised Relic : Archaeology and the First Museum of Colonial India',
The Indian Economic and Social History Review, 34 , 1 (1997), pp. 30-31.

collection.[50] Mr. A. Burnell was largely responsible for the collection of manuscripts in the Madras Presidency. However, Madras was slightly behind in collecting manuscripts which was deplored and was expected to be remedied by concerned scholars 'by showing what important problems of Sanskrit Philosophy and Indian history are dependent for their solution upon the south.'[51] Bühler reported the utilisation of the newly collected Sanskrit manuscripts in Bombay and Gujarate 'copies of Gopathabrahmana (bought in 1870-71) was used for the Bibliotheca Indica Series, the Sanskrit drama Malatimadhav (bought in 1869) was used by Prof. Bhandarkar, for a new edition; and similarly Dasakumarachrita was used for new edition, Dhatupryana, and Ganaratanamahodadhi used by Dr. Eggleing in London and Prof. Weber of Berlin had asked for a manuscript of Hala's 'seven centuries'.[52]

How does this small and yet very dense and significant story of the formation of colonial ideas and colonial encounter in the second half of the nineteenth century fit in the vast grid of colonial knowledge, through a vast documentation of the past and present of India, through institutionalized sites such as the archaeological survey. The search of Sanskrit manuscripts,

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[50] From A. Cunningham, to E.C., Bayly, Secretary to the Govt, of India, Home Department, No.15, Simla, 17 April, 1872,, in A.E. Gough (ed.) , Papers Relating... Anc. Sanskrit Lit., pp.81-82.

[51] 'Progress of Oriental Research in 1869 - 70 (from the last published report of the Royal Asiatic Society)' , The Indian Antiquities, Jan.5 , 1872, pp.22-24.

[52] From G.Bühler, Surat, 30 August 1872, in A.E. Gough (ed.) , Papers Relating ANC.. Sanskrit Lit., pp.82-85.

collection and preservation of arts and crafts, decennial census and linguistic

survey of India The kind of empiricism employed by the colonial bureaucratic

and scholarly discourse of 'knowing' the country from the mid-nineteenth

century onward made India an object of deep survey. The 'knowledge of India'

was always filtered through a 'cultural screen constructed by and for the

British'.[53] But this is only half a screen, since later part of the nineteenth

century was also the period in which the indigenous literati created its own

'cultural screen'. Indeed the deeper historical question is the ways in which

'images' and 'essences' of India got constituted, and form the early

nationalist, reformist, and modern literary-aesthetic discourses.

Collection of manuscripts of classical Sanskrit texts took place in a

living museum of mankind, and Europe's living past. The humanists of

Renaissance Europe sought for classical manuscripts, for retrieving the Latin

language beyond all barbarian elements of the age of darkness to recreate the

world in its 'classical purity'. As Frances Yates the great classical scholar said

'with his increased knowledge of classical civilisation, the humanist (was)

unable to regard this as having continued unbroken upto the present (his

present), they actually created 'a sense of historical distance'.[54] In the

formation of colonial knowledge the search for 'classical' and its humanistic

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[53] Ibid., p.17.

[54] Frances A. Yates, *Astrea : The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (Penguin, 1975) ., pp.13,16.

streak is enmeshed in the search for the grammar of rule and the lost historical past of Europe. Collection of manuscripts ended in a failure to trace 'Indian knowledge'; however, it put forward an archive for constituting images of India, which strangely enough was an idealized one.

4. CONCLUSION

In this study an attempt has been made to locate the notion of classicality as being constituted in colonial encounter in the later half of the nineteenth century as one of the chief elements of colonial knowledge. The two specific themes – translation of the original Sanskrit texts by the Europeans (Chapter II), and the large scale hunt for the classical Indian texts (Chapter III), try to show the interrelation between the materiality of the texts and the exegetic aspects of the textual knowledge in the colonial context. The construction of Indian classicism by the Europeans with specific relation to these two themes became possible in the light of Western antiquarianism, and Western theories of the origin of language, translatability and textual interpretation. The search for the authentic knowledge of Indian society was begun to locate the colonial society, its past, and institutions to facilitate its governance (and simultaneously to look into the past of Europe in the present of the colony). In this process, the classicism which was constituted in the nineteenth century created an idealized essence of India.

From the eighteenth century, origins of human races were traced in the origins of language, which culminated in the emergence of historical philology at the end of the century. Differences in the languages and literary expressions were gradually read as the fundamental differences between their histories and this scholarly practice endowed a specific speech community with certain essentialisms. The inevitable relation between historical philology and ethnology

created race theory as one of the dominant modes of essentialization in the nineteenth century. These relations between language and history became very clear in the question of translatability in the nineteenth century. Translation of classical Indian texts created a theory of cultural difference, which was traced in the distinct historical evolution of the European and colonial societies. Translation thus emerged as a mode of ethnography of Indian society. However, the whole question of translatability became a contested issue among the Western and indigenous scholars. Two distinct aspects of the translations of classical textual traditions were: first, Indian classicality was recreated in the mirror of Western classicism which had became dominant after the Renaissance period; and, second, in opposition to the consequences of western classicism the creation of a classical domain in colonial India ultimately created an idealized essence of India. Even the search for a 'rational' Indian tradition was aimed to facilitate the regeneration of Western scientific and progressivist discourse.

The search for a vast number of hidden manuscripts was a part of colonial antiquarian survey projects concerned with objects of past, languages, and indigenous knowledge. The search for manuscripts which began in the 1730s in Europe, was launched by colonial bureaucratic apparatus in mid-nineteenth century all over the country. It was a search for the relics of authentic knowledge in indigenous society. Manuscripts denoted a repository of hidden knowledge which would lead to the elemental structures of indigenous society. However, it was evident that the search for antiquities in colonial India, though deeply influenced by European search of classical Greek and Latin manuscripts

from the Renaissance onwards, was actually the search for a decaying classical knowledge of India. It rather paved the way for the European civilizing mission. A classicism constituted by the British antiquarian project in the nineteenth century marked the decay of classical Indian traditions and created classical humanism in the colonial context. This humanist impulse can be read as a part of European civilizing mission.

The story of colonial encounter in the later half of the nineteenth century could be in a major way read as the emergence of Indian classicality. In this study, it has been argued that broadly the colonial search and creation of the 'classical' in India projected an idealized essence of India. How classical influences on the European intelligentsia and those responsible for the governance of India, shaped the imagination in respect of the colonial society in British bureaucratic, ethnographic and scholarly endeavours raises a series of questions regarding the formation of colonial knowledge. It is interesting to note that the obvious tensions of European history of ideas in the eighteenth and nineteenth century are fused to create a hegemonic discourse in the colonial context.

At the same time it is also important to trace the continuities of the pre-colonial classicism existing in Indian tradition and its relation to the western constructions of Indian classicality. However, apart from the prevalence of such intellectual streams in pre-colonial India it is the question of colonial ideology which claims our attention. More important is the transformation of certain ideas through history, rather than showing their prior existence as an untouched

historical presence. In the specific context of this study, it is clear that the constitution of classicality in the nineteenth century became possible through a variety of influences coming from indigenous and Western influences, which became the bedrock of the idea of Indian tradition and thought system as idealist. The hidden tensions involved in the indigenous and Western responses to this classicism in the later decades of the nineteenth century became more apparent in the early decades of the twentieth century, with the emergence of nationalist ideology and new genres in vernaculars. This study stops before that complex history of Indian classicism and consequent projection of Indian idealist tradition moves on from the last two decades of nineteenth century. Here, the aim was to delineate certain key ideas at work in the constitution of Indian classicism of nineteenth century India.

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