VI

The College as a Center for Linguistic Modernization and Literary Revival

When the College of Fort William opened its classroom doors in 1800 for the first lectures, it had no library and its staff and students discovered that they had no means for either printing or publishing oriental materials basic to the curriculum. There were only a few worn Urdu textbooks used previously by Gilchrist at his seminary. It was this sudden and desperate realization that greatly contributed to an early emphasis on Orientalism at the college. The Orientalist found himself the man of the hour. His familiarity with ancient history and comparative culture seemed also to qualify him as a philologist able to systematize alien languages, Romanize their alphabets, and publish books in them.

In the race for patronage benefits, John Gilchrist maintained a commanding lead between 1800 and 1804, primarily because of the acknowledged importance of Urdu. In 1801 Gilchrist was asked by the College Council not only to prepare and publish textbooks for his students but to “develop a complete system of Hindoostance Philology.”¹ He replied that the college would have to pay him at least an additional 1,000 rupees annually for the laborious work required in philological research.² He also pointed out that printing expenses in 1801 were high and that the government already owed him 63,000 rupees for previous linguistic research.³

¹ PCFW, DLIX (January 12, 1801), 47–50.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
Gilchrist submitted a plan to the Council in January, 1802, in which he stated his conditions for devoting all his time and energy to developing the Urdu program according to Wellesley’s ideals. He would require his own printing press; salary increases for his Asian associates at the college; the purchase by the college of a guaranteed number of his publications so that a marginal profit would be assured; and freedom “to sell such works wherever I please and to enjoy every right and privilege as an author in the utmost acceptation of that term.” Expressing what may have been a veiled threat, Gilchrist added, “the Hindoostanee is in fact still in its embryo state and never can grow to maturity if fettered with too rigid economy. . . .” The government agreed to all his conditions.

In 1802 Gilchrist launched the Hindoostanee Press, which not only earned him and his successors handsome profits but played an important role in the early history of printing and publishing in India. In this same year he raised the salaries of his munshis and increased their number from 2 to 20.

By 1803 Gilchrist had completed two important works, the polyglot translation of Aesop’s Fables and the translation from Persian of the Gulistan. The Council paid him 5,000 rupees for the latter work, which sold for 32 rupees per copy. Other books were published regularly and the college bought at least 100 copies of each publication. On June 27, 1803, Gilchrist reported the progress of his “typographic reformation” of Urdu. He had introduced into oriental printing the European principles of punctuation, word separation, and “joining the letters of each vocable as much as possible.” Expensive new styles of type had been created by a carefully chosen “establishment of oriental compositors.” He also reported progress in giving every “character of the Persian, Arabic, and Nagree Alphabets” an equivalent in the Roman alphabet. After requesting an additional 1,000 rupees a year to continue his research, he predicted that Urdu was well on its way toward becoming a great language. Gilchrist wrote enthusiastically:

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 48.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid. (February 19, 1802), pp. 60–61.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid. (June 27, 1803), pp. 255–256.
10 Ibid., p. 255.
11 Primitiae Orientales (1804), p. xxxix.
I shall engage soon to form such a body of useful and entertaining literature in that language as will ultimately raise it to that estimation among the natives which it would many years ago have attained among an enlightened and energetic people. . . May not we then reason thus from analogy, that the Hindoostanee will ascend as high on the Indian scale . . . as the English has done in a similar predicament in our own country. . . .

In August, 1803, the Urdu department submitted its list of works completed up to that date, with miscellaneous remarks by Gilchrist. Of the forty-four books on that list, most were translations of Persian and Arabic classics and only a few were original compositions. The Asians in the department were almost all Muslims and, judging from later obituary notices and pension applications, they were not Bengalis. Only one Hindu, Tarinicharan Mitra, a Bengali from Calcutta, was listed among the Asian authors.

One of the best of these works, the *Oriental Fabulist* (1803) was a translation of Aesop and other ancient "fabulists" into Urdu, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Bengali, and English. Gilchrist's preface is significant historically for showing understanding of the range of linguistic problems that faced the self-styled "humanist" professors of the College of Fort William. He began by describing the enormous difficulty that all foreigners had experienced in distinguishing between the Islamic languages of Urdu, Persian, and Arabic and the languages of Sanskrit, Bengali, and Hindi. He hoped that his *Oriental Fabulist* would help establish the precise similarities and differences between the Muslim and Hindu tongues. According to Gilchrist, the primary point of departure from other oriental translators was his system of transliterating oriental languages into Romanized form. For him, Romanizing these exotic languages was an effective technique for teaching them to civil servants, but he warned that any such system must have some defects because of the multiplicity of oriental sounds.

Gilchrist praised Wellesley for establishing the College of Fort William, where civil servants were introduced to Oriental culture by becoming "proficient in several Oriental tongues." The cul-

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13 PCFW, DLIX (June 27, 1803), 256.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., p. iii.
17 Ibid., p. ix.
18 Ibid., p. x.
19 Ibid., p. xxxv.
tivation of Urdu went far beyond mere philological interest. “The translation of these Fables,” he wrote, “has now diffused a taste among the Hindoostanees for such exercises, which may yet be attended with the most beneficial consequences on the literature of India. . . .”

He was boundlessly optimistic about the role that Wellesley’s college would play in the approaching cultural revival: “A prophet is not required to predict that in a few years more, the Orient gleam of learning in the days of Hastings and Jones will be totally eclipsed by that precious dawn in the Eastern lore apparent now, and which will then break forth with meridian splendour, to promote and confirm the happiness and prosperity of British India. . . .”

Unfortunately for Gilchrist, his position in the institution promoting a glorious revival in the East became more and more precarious by the end of 1803. His letters to the Council were increasingly filled with descriptions of new projects, demands for more money, and resentful, violent language in referring to the Council’s growing tendency to procrastinate. In February, 1804, he confessed that bad health made it necessary for him to return to England that year. Gilchrist mentioned casually an accumulated personal debt, and in view of his years of service he requested help from the Council in paying this debt. The Council ignored the request, recorded his resignation, but nevertheless “eulogized his zeal and ability.” Months later Gilchrist boarded a ship for England and passed quietly from the Calcutta scene forever.

When Gilchrist left Fort William, he was replaced by William Hunter, also a Scot. Having arrived in India in 1781, at the age of twenty-six, Hunter, like Gilchrist, served as a surgeon who probably learned Urdu as a spoken language before studying it systematically.

Hunter did not prove a productive linguist in his adopted Indian language. His first appeal for patronage was in 1805, when he expressed interest in researching the “Pathan,” a new language of the northwest. He received 1,200 rupees for the project, but it seems unlikely that such a book was ever published. William Carey later occupied himself with this and other northern languages when the possibility of missionary expansion to that part of India became

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20 Ibid., p. xv.
21 Ibid., p. xxxv.
22 PCFW, DLIX (April 22, 1805), 402
23 Ibid., DLX (March 12, 1806), 91.
evident. Hunter's only published work in Urdu, an *Hindustani-English Dictionary* in two volumes, appeared in 1809.

On the other hand, Hunter was an effective administrator and excellent librarian. He served as secretary of both the Asiatic Society and the College of Fort William. Under his direction the college library expanded greatly, Asian assistant librarians were hired, and the practice of exchanging books with European universities was begun.

When John Leyden was hired as Hunter's assistant, it seemed as if the Hindustani Department was rapidly becoming a monopoly of Company surgeons from Scotland. John Leyden, the poor Scot born in the hut of a border shepherd in 1775, and a self-taught poetic genius befriended by Walter Scott, came to Madras as a Company surgeon in 1803. When Lord Minto, also a Scotsman and an admirer of Leyden's poetry, was named governor-general in 1807, he immediately transferred Leyden to Calcutta and arranged an appointment for him as assistant Urdu professor under Hunter. Leyden quickly became Hunter's protégé and was made deputy secretary of both the Asiatic Society and the college. This relationship ended tragically, for both men died of disease while serving as Minto's interpreters in Java.

The Persian department seems to have considered itself the most elite circle of the college. During these early years it was the only department with more than one salaried European professor. Neil B. Edmonstone, William Kirkpatrick, and Francis Gladwin originally shared the teaching load. Gradually two assistant professors, Mathew Lumsden and Charles Stewart (the future first historian of Bengal), began in 1803 to assume most of the departmental responsibilities. However, until Lumsden's request on May 16, 1803, to work on a Persian grammar, no significant linguistic innovations in Persian were attempted nor was there evidence of a single distinguished original work at the college in that language.

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24 Marshman, I, 429.
25 PCFW, DLXI (March 25, 1809), 4.
29 LASB MP, II (December 11, 1811), 48.
30 Roebuck, Appendix, p. 53.
31 PCFW, DLIX (May 16, 1803), 248–249.
On September 20, 1805, Lumsden presented to the Council the Department’s first plan for improving existing Persian typography and for establishing a printing press. With Council encouragement he hoped to recruit the “best artists . . . in Calcutta under the direction of the Persian Writing Master Shykh Kulb Alee . . . ." Lumsden, as in the case of the other Orientalists, felt compelled to attribute to his project a deeper cultural significance. This project would, he wrote, “aid the more general diffusion of Persian literature by introducing the use of printed books among the natives of India.” If his plan were accepted, he predicted that:

The acquisition of the Arabic and Persian tongues both to Europeans and Natives will be greatly facilitated by the encouragement given to the art of printing in this country, and the adoption of that art by the Natives of India will doubtless ensure the preservation as well as the general circulation of many valuable works in either language that are now in danger of being lost.

Two months later Lumsden was given the twin post of full professor in Arabic and Persian.

Between 1806 and 1814, Mathew Lumsden directed a newly combined Persian-Arabic Department—still the largest, most favored, and best endowed of all departments. In 1813, the college secretary prepared a list of works since 1800 and (if known) the number of each that were printed. Of a total of 264,106 rupees expended, the Persian-Arabic department had received approximately 167,000 rupees, or roughly two-thirds. Lumsden, apparently a competent, unassuming Orientalist and part of the Calcutta “Persian elite,” was rewarded in 1812 with the post of Calcutta Madrassa Secretary in recognition of his prolific output of publications on Islamic studies.

The Arabic Department, before being joined with the Persian in 1806, was directed by John Baillie. Various small but useful works were crudely printed: principles of Arabic grammar and vocabulary, digests of the medieval Arabic philosophers, and several editions of the Koran. Even though the government tried to

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32 Ibid. (September 27, 1805), pp. 45-46.
33 Ibid., p. 46.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid. (November 18, 1805), p. 71.
37 Ibid., DLXII (April 1, 1813), 381-389.
38 Primitiae Orientales (1803), pp. xlvi-liv.
encourage students to take Arabic because of its importance in Muslim law, Baillie had no more than six students in his class at any time. He seems to have been greatly attracted to Arabic culture and to have inspired his students—if their declamations can be considered a valid gauge of their feelings. In spite of his small teaching load, Baillie was among the highest-paid faculty members, receiving 2,600 rupees a month.\(^{39}\) Gilchrist (who was earning only 1,500 rupees) pointed out this fact in an aggressively worded letter written on his own behalf.\(^{40}\)

Colebrooke’s association with the College of Fort William seems to have aided him considerably as a scholar. The institutional environment of the College of Fort William, with its assemblage of Asian and European scholars, library of oriental manuscripts, publishing facilities, and policy of liberal patronage, seems to have had a profound influence on him in at least three different ways.

To begin with, the competitive college atmosphere, in which patronage benefits were sought after by Europeans representing linguistic and cultural groups, forced Colebrooke to identify himself completely with Sanskrit, its derivative vernaculars, and Hinduism. This helps not only to explain his close relationship with William Carey but also his determined effort to promote Sanskritic and Hindu studies in the face of the powerful Persian-Urdu group. Secondly, the Wellesley-inspired program of defining the cultures of India for student benefit inspired all its faculty, including Colebrooke, to describe consciously and deliberately India’s cultural configurations. All of Colebrooke’s writings during his period of college association may be characterized as having a textbook quality natural to the output of a teacher who is organizing, simplifying, and generalizing—in his case on the Hindu great tradition. Finally, the great emphasis at the college on philology, which led every language department to contribute at least one grammar and one dictionary between 1801 and 1805, forced Colebrooke to do likewise. He applied the same methods of intensive study to language and literature that he had once devoted to Hindu law.

On January 7, 1801, Colebrooke delivered his first paper before the members of the Asiatic Society on “The Sanscrit and Prakrit Languages.”\(^{41}\) This was not only the first reliable scholarly study

\(^{39}\) PCFW, DLIX (June 15, 1803), 257–260.
\(^{40}\) Ibid.
\(^{41}\) LASB MP, II (January 7, 1801), 1.
dealing with Hindu languages but also the first useful description and analysis of the then contemporary Hindu vernaculars. Colebrooke’s research convinced him that William Jones’s original speculation on the Hindu languages was inaccurate and misleading. Jones, for example, believed that languages such as Hindi preceded Sanskrit whereas Colebrooke contended that the contrary was true. He reasoned that: “Progress has been from languages rich in inflections, to dialects simple in their structure. In modern idioms, auxiliary verbs and appendant particles supply the place of numerous inflections of the root: it may, for this reason be doubted, whether the present structure of Hindi be not a modern refinement.” Colebrooke was probably the first European to recognize that Hindi had existed prior to and separate from the Persianized Urdu.

Although Colebrooke’s books during the next few years were written chiefly for the College of Fort William students, they were, according to Max Müller, used also by German scholars increasingly interested in Indian scholarship. Colebrooke’s Hitopadesha (1804), done with Carey’s assistance, was typical of the new kind of scholarship at Fort William made possible by available resources concentrated in a single place for effective use. Colebrooke based this translation on the collation of six manuscripts and therefore improved the earlier, imperfect translation of Jones and Wilkins. Furthermore, Colebrooke’s Hitopadesha constituted the first attempt to employ the press in multiplying copies of a Sanskrit work with a highly perfected Devanagari syllabary. In 1808 he completed for the college a Sanskrit Dictionary which was actually a popular indigenous lexicographical work, the Amara Kosha, adapted for student use. His method was to retain the essence of the original while making it more comprehensible to the students by inserting marginal notes.

In 1810 Colebrooke published The Translation of Two Treatises on the Hindu Law of Inheritance. This work was important because it demonstrated how Europeans were able to pull together the fragments of a chaotic and contradictory Hindu legal system.

43 Ibid., p. 22.
44 Müller, p. 230.
45 Colebrooke, Hitopadesha (Serampore: Mission Press, 1804).
and reconstruct it along modern lines. The *Two Treatises* was designed to assist Fort William graduates expecting to serve as judicial officers in Bengal. William Jones and his chief pundit, Tarkapanchanan, had collaborated on earlier translations, but Colebrooke found them vague, poorly digested compilations without useful analysis.\(^{47}\) The College of Fort William was training judicial officers for Bengali stations, and it was necessary for Colebrooke to determine which laws were then actually operative in Bengal. Colebrooke concluded that there was no single textual law of inheritance for all of India.\(^{48}\) He had discovered, in fact, that only one treatise, the *Mitākṣhara*, might be said to have been in general use in parts of southern India and Benares.\(^{49}\) He reported that “the Bengal school alone having taken for its guide” Jīmatavābava’s treatise is, “on almost every disputed point, opposite in doctrine to the *Mitākṣhara* and has no deference for its authority.”\(^{50}\) Colebrooke’s research on legal diversity thus brought to light an important category of cultural differences between the regions of India.

By 1804, Colebrooke had risen quickly in the administrative-judicial hierarchy. He preferred research to teaching, and he might have believed that the cultivation of Sanskrit studies at the college required a man with a greater gift for organization than he possessed and with the enthusiasm to convert others to a cause. For a man active in local politics and who, in 1807, would enter the Supreme Council of Government, the post of Sanskrit professor was probably no longer attractive. Colebrooke chose and groomed William Carey to be his successor.

Between 1804 and 1806 Carey achieved full respectability and equality with his colleagues. On September 29, 1804, William Carey stood in Colebrooke’s place at the yearly disputation in the Government House, prepared to deliver a speech in Sanskrit. Wellesley introduced him in the following words:

Sanskrit Learning, say the Brahmans, is like an extensive forest, abounding with a great variety of beautiful foliage, splendid blossoms and delicious fruits; but surrounded by a strong and thorny


\(^{49}\) *Ibid*.

fence, which prevents those who are desirous of plucking its fruits, or flowers, from entering in.

The learned Jones, Wilkins and others, broke down the opposing fence in several places; but by the College of Fort William, a highway has been made into the midst of the wood; and you, Sir, have entered thereby.  

Carey's speech was a fine piece of oratory, both rhetorically impressive and personally revealing. It was the discourse of a man being given the opportunity to fill the shoes of the Orientalist giants who preceded him. But the significance of the occasion transcended that of his personal advancement. Everyone knew that the college was in trouble with the Directors in London. Since Wellesley was to be recalled in a few months' time, this proved to be his last disputation. The best moments in Carey's speech were in praise of the College of Fort William, which had done so much for his fellow missionaries at Serampore and for himself. He said emotionally:

The rising importance of our Collegiate Institution has never been more clearly demonstrated than on the present occasion; and thousands of the learned in distant nations will exult in this triumph of Literature.

The Colloquial Hindoostanee, the classic Persian, the commercial Bengalee, the learned Arabic, and the primaeval Shanscrit, are spoken fluently, after having been studied grammatically by English youths. Did ever any University in Europe, or any literary Institution in any other age or country exhibit a scene so interesting as this?  

Near the end of his speech, Carey seemed to imply that the college might be abolished but that the achievements of the institution could not be undone easily:

Were the Institution to cease from this moment, its salutary effects would yet remain. Good has been done, which cannot be undone. Sources of useful knowledge, moral instruction, and political utility, have been opened to the Natives of India which can never be closed; and their civil improvement, like the gradual civilization of our own country, will advance in progression, for ages to come.  

On November 6, 1805, William Carey was proposed as a mem-

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51 Primitiae Orientales (1804), p. 114.
52 Ibid., p. 115.
53 Ibid., p. 118.
ber of the Asiatic Society, and he was elected by unanimous vote on January 8, 1806. On July 30 of that year, Colebrooke submitted to the college his letter of resignation as Sanskrit professor and expressed his gratitude at having been able to “push the College along in its infancy.” The task of cultivating Sanskrit “and of completing the publications requisite to facilitate the Study of the Sanskrit language may now devolve on Mr. Carey. . . .” Several months later Carey became a full professor, at twice his former salary. The Baptist missionary, son of a peasant and raised with little formal schooling, emerged after years of deprivation and humiliation as an eminent Orientalist in the tradition of the legendary Sir William Jones.

As if to confirm his new height of academic respectability, Carey published in 1806 the first systematic Sanskrit grammar, which H. H. Wilson later called “a singular monument of industrious application.” Carey divided the work into five books. The first dealt with the modification of Sanskrit letters when joined or juxtaposed. The second concerned itself with the rules of declinable and undecinable words. In the third book Sanskrit verbs were conjugated and then described in their derivative function. Carey treated nouns in the next book and demonstrated the formation of derivative words and compounds. The final book was devoted to syntax and to exercises for students. In the appendix, Carey made one of his most important contributions: the compilation of an exhaustive alphabetical list of Sanskrit roots.

Carey’s Grammar, with its authentic Devanagri script, was a pioneering achievement of its kind and was one of the two most influential models for later philologists in Europe. At the first meeting of the British Philological Society, H. H. Wilson regretted that

no note was taken of the grammatical labours of Englishmen residing in the East, and that they found their way slowly and with difficulty even to the few who stood in need of their aid and longed for their appearance. A striking instance of this occurs in the case of the late Professor Chezy who until 1810 had not heard

54 LASB MP, II (November 6, 1805), 21.
55 Ibid., p. 22.
56 PCFW, DLX (July 30, 1806), 161–162.
57 Carey to Ryland, January 20, 1807, Carey Letters, not numbered.
of the existence of Carey’s “Sanskrit Grammar.” In the preface to his excellent edition and translation of the “Sakuntala” he has described, in an animated and interesting tone, the wretched means and unremitting application by which he acquired his first knowledge of Sanskrit, and the delight with which he welcomed the bulky volume of Carey, and the more elegant and available grammar of Wilkins which had been published in London at the end of 1808.  

Carey’s devotion to the Bengali language has been the theme of at least a dozen excellent articles and books by Bengali scholars. Carey chose Bengali not for its inherent beauty but for its potential usefulness as the most effective medium for reaching the masses of Bengal. In 1795, after preliminary observations on Bengali culture, Carey wrote of the Bengali people: “They are very avaricious and deceitful, and cruelty to Animals and to each other are too common evils. Their servility is extreme and their ignorance also, except a very few Learned Men among them. They know nothing of Geography or Astronomy; but are much addicted to Astrology.”

Carey’s letters of the 1790’s were unflattering in references to Bengalis. The superstition, ignorance, and degradation that Carey found so widespread in Bengal convinced him all the more that “Bengal needed Christ desperately.” He wanted to comprehend Bengali culture deeply, but in order to do so he required fluency in their language. Unfortunately he was not enjoying great success acquiring it. On August 13, 1795, he wrote:

One great difficulty in speaking to the Bengali people arises from the extreme ignorance of the Common people who are not able to understand one of their own countrymen who speaks the Language well (without considerable difficulty). They have a confined Dialect composed of very few Words which They work about and make them mean almost everything.

When the college hired Carey in 1801 as head of the Bengali department, every available kind of financial, technological, and human resource was put at his disposal. With an unlimited budget

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60 Among the best scholars on the College of Fort William contribution to Bengali literature are Brajendranath Banerji, S. K. De, and Sajana Kanta Das.
61 Carey to Arnold, March 13, 1795, Carey Letters, Box 3.
62 Carey to the Society, August 13, 1795, Ibid.
and a capable staff of Brahman pundits, Carey found himself in a most enviable position. His dream of creating a cadre of cultural intermediaries who would disclose to him the secrets of indigenous culture while also being inducted to disseminate Christianity to their own countrymen seemed closer to realization.\(^{63}\)

Carey’s first textbook (which would go through five editions in the first half of the nineteenth century) was the *Bengali Grammar*, completed in 1801.\(^{64}\) The first edition was a near-relica of the Halhed work (1778), because Carey had just been hired as an instructor and was hard-pressed to produce a textbook quickly. The second edition, published at Serampore in 1805, was clearly a more original effort. Carey, a self-taught linguist, had by now matured considerably as a philologist. Halhed’s conjectures on Bengali syntax were formulated into rules by Carey, who finally fixed “the chaotic and dialectal variety of the vernacular into definite forms.”\(^{65}\)

Also in 1801, Carey helped to edit and compose a reader for the Bengali students called the *Kathopakathan* or *Dialogues*. The book has since been carefully analyzed for its literary value by Bengali scholars. S. K. De has gone farther, treating the work as a social document depicting the various castes and classes of eighteenth-century rural Bengal.\(^{66}\) The *Kathopakathan* is really much more than that. It was the first book by a European that did not concern itself with Hindu high culture. For the first time the idiomatic language, manners, and customs of merchants, fishermen, women, beggars, day-laborers, and other common folk were given the dignity of “minute and sympathetic observation.”\(^{67}\) It would not be far-fetched to call Carey, as a result of this work alone, India’s first cultural anthropologist.

Equally important, Carey, through the *Dialogues*, was the first European to appreciate fully the special qualities of one Indian regional culture as against another and to describe fully the diversity of the Bengali tradition. He accomplished this chiefly through a faithful reproduction of speech patterns. For example, the slang of Bengali fishermen belongs only to them, while the quarrels of

\(^{63}\) Carey knew Basu in Malda, was assisted by him in early Biblical translations, and attempted—without success—to convert him to Christianity.


\(^{65}\) De, pp. 122–123.


\(^{67}\) *Ibid.*
women reflect the idiosyncratic vituperativeness of Bengali women. The work, though, was too authentic to be that of a foreigner. It was, as Carey himself admitted, a composition by the “natives” themselves in order to portray precisely the ways and attitudes of the people through their speech.\(^8\) Carey wrote, “I believe the imitation to be so exact that they will not only assist the student but furnish a considerable idea of the domestic economy of the country.”\(^9\)

The *Dialogues* reveal a people whose degree of linguistic sophistication and cultural refinement depended largely upon social status and not upon economic well-being. Carey’s Brahmans were priests who were respected for their sacred knowledge but who lived no differently from most people in the villages. The pundits and *munshis* were more eclectic in their choice of linguistic expression but no less bound to their caste duties.\(^70\) In some cases, Carey may have encouraged stereotypes instead of the book’s generally realistic depiction. His Bengali women, for example, were identified as low caste through the vulgarities so common in their speech, whereas higher-caste women possessed a vocabulary incorporating refinement as well as vulgarity.\(^71\) In essence, Carey sought to recapture a Bengali folk tradition that existed prior to or apart from the influence of Calcutta. It is significant that during the next five decades, whenever Bengalis themselves depicted life in a socially realistic manner, they turned their backs on Carey’s area of perception, rural Bengal, and described the new social classes living in a new cultural milieu in urbanized Calcutta.\(^72\)

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\(^{69}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{72}\) See for example, B. Bandyopādhyāy’s *Kali̇kātā kamalālay* (1823) and *Naba-bābu bilās* (1825). Both were social satires on Calcutta Bengalis. New editions of these works have been published by S. K. Das (Calcutta: Ranjan Publishing House, 1937).
The Students at the College:
Indianization and Intellectual Development

The physical establishment of a college, the recruitment of a faculty, the utilization of subsidiary institutions, and the publication of textbooks—all impressive in themselves—were but means to the end of producing a culturally sympathetic and responsive class of public servants. The College of Fort William, as Wellesley conceived it, had as its aim to extend and routinize the Hastings-derived Orientalist credo: to rule effectively, one must love India; to love India, one must communicate with her people; to communicate with her people, one must acquire her languages.

Considering the period and the circumstances, Wellesley's educational program was a unique experiment in the history of European colonialism. The youths who left London expecting to be sent immediately into the jungle districts of Bengal to mirror their predecessors' lives as nabobs were thrust instead into classrooms where veteran Orientalists strove to arouse in them a curiosity about their new environment and to offer them the means of communicating with its inhabitants. Those classes were attended during the early years by Charles Metcalfe, William B. Bayley, William B. Martin, William W. Bird, John Digby, Thomas Fortesque, and many others. Most of them—especially those from Scotland—had had six or seven years of formal education that enabled them "to organize data, to formulate policies on the basis of written reports and to prepare memoranda."¹ A few, notably Bayley and Metcalfe,

¹Embree, p. 22.
were Eton graduates with a formal education that went beyond the prevailing clerical type.²

Students were required to attend lectures every weekday. Courses were conducted in two establishments, the European and the Oriental, but the paucity of available manpower made it necessary for Orientalists to teach Western subjects as well. The only non-Orientalists in the European establishment were Buchanan, who taught Greek, Latin, and English classics, and Dinwiddie, who was responsible for mathematics and the natural sciences.

One explanation for the apparent panicky confusion at the college in its infant years was the pressing need first to organize the alien languages of India in a way that would make them comprehensible to the student, and then to publish textbooks embodying the new principles. In May, 1801, Carey had thirteen students in his Bengali class but not one textbook.³ At first, textbooks were given to students by professors, who later billed the government. In September, 1801, Gilchrist, for example, submitted a demand for 4,212 rupees for books given to his classes in recent months.

Originally Wellesley intended that the College offer the student a balanced curriculum between European and non-European subjects. Actually, the emphasis was Orientalist from the beginning because the faculty had been recruited largely from the Asiatic Society. The crucial need for linguistic research in the Indian tongues forced the college to become the chief patron for an indigenous literary and cultural revival.

Another important factor related to the student’s sudden and direct involvement with an alien culture was the government’s well-publicized offer of monetary and professional rewards.⁴ The government held out the promise of lucrative cash awards as well as future elitist appointments provided that the student mastered Indian languages, customs, and laws.⁵ Five thousand rupees (£ 625) was paid to any student who already knew Sanskrit or Persian and who could pass a difficult examination in Mohammedan or Hindu

³ Dās, p. 110.
⁴ The college awards were recorded in the local press and in Company publications abroad.
⁵ This was the policy of every governor-general from Wellesley to Amherst (1828).
law. High proficiency in any Indian language earned the student 1,000 rupees whereas "simple proficiency" was worth 500. The European establishment seemed to offer only one prize—a gold medal for high proficiency in the composition of an English essay.

The significant feature of the new government-sponsored appreciation of Indian culture was the linking of achievement in Oriental subjects at the college with subsequent civil-service appointments. It should come as no surprise that the bright young men who first learned administration under Wellesley and went on to distinguish themselves in later years were all recipients of the college's monetary rewards in Oriental subjects—principally in languages (see Table 4). This continued to be the case after Wellesley's departure and despite the establishment of Haileybury College. Men at the College of Fort William such as Holt Mackenzie, Brian Hodgson, Andrew Stirling, and Charles Trevelyan carried on the tradition of their predecessors.

If the essays left behind by the students are a true reflection of their attitudes, then the educational process at the college was a success. In these annually published essays written in Indian languages the young men demonstrated remarkable linguistic ability and a persisting affinity with the cosmopolitan ideals of the eighteenth century.

The Metcalfes, Bayleys, and Martins advocated social and cultural change for India but believed that England should first help Asians rediscover the lost roots of their own civilizations. Inspired by William Jones, the men of this generation first developed the revivalistic or renaissance interpretation of Asian history. They argued that Asian civilizations were truly healthy and vigorous in ancient times but that they had somehow degenerated. According to W. B. Martin, one of the early students at the college: "We [the English] shall bring to light their various forms of government with their Institutions, civil and religious; talents, which have hitherto lain smothered under the despondency of neglect now roused into

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6 A list of the students receiving such awards from 1800 to 1842 is in A General Register of the Hon'ble East Indian Company's Civil Servants of the Bengal Establishment, comp. H. T. Prinsep (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1844).

7 Ibid.
Table 4
THE BACKGROUND OF OUTSTANDING CIVIL SERVANTS AT THE
COLLEGE OF FORT WILLIAM, 1800–1813

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Earliest Matriculation Date</th>
<th>Languages and Prizes (Rupees)</th>
<th>Chief Mentor in College</th>
<th>First Civil Service Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barwell, E. R.</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Bengali; 500 Urdu; 500</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Registrar, City Court, Dacca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayley, W. B.</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Urdu; 1500</td>
<td>Gilchrist</td>
<td>Assistant, Governor-general’s office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird, W. W.</td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Sanskrit; honorary</td>
<td>Colebrooke</td>
<td>Assistant to Magistrate, Benares *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown, R.</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Persian; 1500 Urdu; 1200</td>
<td>Gilchrist</td>
<td>Registrar to Calcutta High Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortesque, T.</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant to Governor-general’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haughton, G. P.</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Persian; 1000 Urdu; 1000 Bengali; 1000</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Professor, Oriental Languages, Halleybury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littledale, J.</td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Bengali; 500 Arabic; 1500</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Assistant, Governor-general’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackenzie, H.</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>Bengali; 1000</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Registrar to Calcutta High Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin, W. B.</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Urdu; 5000 Bengali; 1000</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Assistant, Governor-general’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metcalfe, C.</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td></td>
<td>Barlow</td>
<td>Assistant, Governor-general’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monckton, J.</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Urdu; 1100</td>
<td>Gilchrist</td>
<td>Assistant, Persian Translator’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Earliest Matriculation Date</td>
<td>Languages and Prizes (Rupees)</td>
<td>Chief Mentor In College</td>
<td>First Civil-Service Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prinsep, H. T.</td>
<td>1809</td>
<td>Persian; 500 Urdu; 250 Bengali; 250</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Registrar to Calcutta High Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sargent, H.</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Urdu; 500 Bengali; 500</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Secretarial Assistant, Political and Foreign Departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakespear, H.</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Persian; 1000</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Assistant to Judge, Nadia and Burdwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stirlin, A.</td>
<td>1813</td>
<td>Urdu; 1000 Arabic; 1000 Persian; 1000</td>
<td>Roebuck</td>
<td>Assistant to Resident, Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutherland, J. C. C.</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Urdu; 1500 Persain; 250 Bengali; high proficiency Hindu Law; 5000</td>
<td>Lumsden</td>
<td>Registrar to Calcutta High Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swinton, G.</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Urdu, Persian and Arabic; high proficiency</td>
<td>Baillie</td>
<td>Assistant, Governor-general's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tod, A.</td>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Bengali; high proficiency</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Assistant to Judge Provincial Court of Appeal, Calcutta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


exertion, shall be encouraged to produce to the world its prominent events and distinguished characters, with superior splendor.\(^8\)

Some students, such as W. P. Eliot, advocated the introduction of Christian morality and European science into India but wished

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this to be done within the general structure of the Hindu civilization. To Eliot it was folly to expect to Anglicize a people who had their own superior cultural history.

The greatest mistake England could make, Eliot emphasized, was to ignore the achievements of these Asian civilizations. “While the European world were hordes of barbarians,” he argued, “learning and science flourished in higher perfection in the East in some branches, probably to a greater degree of excellence than has ever been since attained.”

The topics chosen by the students for their essays are in themselves interesting, for they reflect the emphasis that the college placed on broadly conceived cultural configurations sited vaguely within the broader framework of a comparative analysis that was still crude. In 1802 a Bengali disputation focused on whether “the Asiatics are capable of as high a degree of civilization as the Europeans.” In the same year a discussion took place, in various languages, “On the best method of acquiring a knowledge of the manners and customs of the natives of India.” Still another topic selected in 1802 was “On the character and capacity of the Asiatics and particularly of the natives of Hindoostan.” In 1803 there were a few declamations in Arabic, in which the finer elements of Arab civilization were defended with great ardent. Richard Jenkins, who was also one of Carey’s best Bengali pupils, spoke in Persian on whether the “natives of India under the British Government enjoy a greater degree of tranquility, security and happiness, than under any former Government.” In 1804 Alexander Tod delivered a brilliant dissertation in Bengali on whether “The translation of the best works extant in the Shanscrit into the popular languages of India would promote the extension of Science and civilization.”

On closer scrutiny, these disputations betray the rudimentary historical background of Europeans in regard to non-European Western cultures that was still characteristic of early nineteenth-century scholarship. The students’ idol, William Jones, had only

10 Ibid., pp. 197–219.
11 Ibid., pp. 45–86.
12 Ibid., pp. 94–131.
13 Primitiae Orientales (1803), pp. 30–46.
14 Ibid., pp. 12–16.
15 Primitiae Orientales (1804), pp. 56–72.
sketched the outline of the many areas for which future Orientalists would have to provide the details. Nevertheless, these colorful specimens of rhetoric should not be dismissed simply as evidence of historical ignorance or as the crude formulations of dimly known cultural patterns. They represented part of a general search for cultural definition that was also evident at this time in Europe. Beneath the veneer of self-assured generalizations on civilizations there was a search for the durable elements in cultures and for the media responsible for their integration into organically interrelated culture patterns.

W. B. Bayley, for instance, viewed the Sanskritic tradition as containing the elements of a high culture which his contemporaries referred to as Brahmanism. Unfortunately, Bayley believed, very little was yet known of the ethos behind this ancient civilization. He hoped that “Sanskrit literature would yield valuable and interesting information.” In the manner of Jones and Colebrooke, he signalled regions still to be explored: “the wide ocean of Hindu mythology remains to be more fully explored and the mysteries of its religion to be more clearly elucidated. Here, then are provinces, in which learning may put forth its utmost strength, and which promise to yield fruits, that will confer glorious immortality on its labours.”

The future governor-general, Charles T. Metcalfe, while a student at the college in 1802 emphasized linguistic research as the best means for probing into the distinguishing features or cultural traits of a people. He believed that the language of the British people was marked by its “openness and boldness of expression.” To him the French language was filled with terms of “politeness and suavity . . . [that] bespeak of disposition and elegance of manners.” India, Metcalfe thought, contained “various races and faiths” and “we have made only a beginning in understanding their languages.”

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18 It is not uncommon to view this renewed interest in Asian cultures as a second European renaissance. See Schwab, pp. 18–28.
18 Ibid., p. 41.
19 Ibid.
21 Ibid., p. 81.
22 Ibid., p. 86.
For William B. Martin, cultural differences were obliterated in a universalistic dimension in which all civilizations shared the same cultural elements. "The Asiaticks," he wrote, "had climbed the heights of science before the Greeks had learned their alphabet." 23 While Europeans lived in forests as savages, Asians "were collected into populous cities, the seats of arts, of luxury and of despotism." 24 The chief difference between civilizations was in their present historical disposition. Martin was a proponent of the concept of renaissance, in which a whole culture, once alive with achievement but now in a dark period, might find resurrection once more. Evincing a strong predisposition for Asian civilization, Martin wrote:

Literature, taste and science originated in Asia and by a general diffusion, in the course of time spread themselves over Greece and Italy. Such then having been once the state of the sciences and arts among the Asiaticks, it cannot be unreasonable to suppose, that their ability still remains unhurt and vigorous; and that those sparks of genius hitherto smothered or enfeebled by the noxious climate of oppression, might under the congenial influence of a milder government and more favorable laws, again be fanned into a flame. 25

In contrast to disputations by students in other departments, those of Colebrooke's students in Sanskrit reflected a more differentiated conception of India's cultures. The others were inclined, in the manner of Jones, to speak of specific Asian cultures on the one hand but to view them also as a greater unity vaguely subsumed under "Asiatic Civilization." Probably as a result of Colebrooke's influence, the popular theme of renaissance among the Hindu-language students became less Asian in scope and more Hindu in identification, while the elements in the renewal of a culture were becoming more specific within the Sanskritic tradition. The tendency was to liken Hindu medievalism to European medievalism and to maintain that Brahmans, like the European monks, kept their peoples in darkness by substituting superstition for religion and by stifling intellectual curiosity that might lead to scientific knowledge. Just as Europe liberated itself by reviving its classical literature, so might Hindu India do the same. According to one student won over to Hinduism by Colebrooke and Carey:

We may confidently hope that the same happy consequences would be the result arising from the translation of Sanscrit works; particularly as it is supposed that they contain many contradictions concerning their present Deities and Devotions. When these circumstances shall have been made manifest to the people, is it not possible that they might forsake and relinquish many of their foolish and idolatrous prejudices and when once this chief obstacle is removed, they might progressively advance in the pursuit of knowledge and learning. . . .

Most of the young men under Colebrooke and Carey seemed to identify India with Hinduism and regarded the Muslims as intruders. Like Martin, they felt that the Hinduism might again become great under British encouragement. In their idea of renaissance, sati and other objectionable Hindu customs were generally seen as examples of the degraded or "medieval" form of present-day Hinduism. Though there were many generalizations about the golden age of Hindu civilization, no one was quite sure just what the Hindu ethos was. Caste was condemned as "medieval" and idolatry was attacked with strong Protestant indignation.

All the students whose essays have been read by the author were convinced that institutions such as the Asiatic Society and the College of Fort William would make substantial contributions toward uncovering and revitalizing Asian cultures. W. P. Eliot summed up the position of his enthusiastic compatriots when he said:

India has been long descending by slow degrees into the gulph of barbarism and ignorance, and learning and the arts have been gradually falling into disrepute and obscurity. The ample field which this Institution [College of Fort William] proposes to itself, comprehending the languages, literature, arts and sciences of all the more polished nations of Asia, will not fail in a few years to assemble the most learned men from all parts, by affording them suitable encouragement. Nor does it end here. The student

27 W. Chaplin, "Suicide of Hindoo Widows by Burning Themselves with the Bodies of their Deceased Husbands, is a Practice Repugnant to the Natural Feelings and Inconsistent with Moral Duty," Primitiae Orientales (1803), pp. 60-61.
28 J. Hunter, "Distribution of Hindus into Castes Retards their Progress in Improvement," ibid., p. 75.
will come into active life with a taste for Eastern literature, and extend that patronage so happily begun; the shoots of science will again spring up and flourish and the East will regain its once well merited celebrity.  

In 1807, the Court of Directors decided that that portion of the College of Fort William teaching the European curriculum should be removed to Haileybury, England, and left a reduced establishment in Calcutta to continue the college’s program of instruction in Orientalist subjects. It was not intended that Haileybury should replace the College of Fort William but that it should function as a sort of preparatory school where civil servants were to be indoctrinated with British socio-cultural values before being turned over to the tutelage of the Calcutta Orientalists. The Court of Directors hoped eventually to decentralize the training program for civil servants even further by founding new colleges in Bombay and Madras. The one important long-range effect of these moves was ultimately to convert Wellesley’s “university of the East” into a college more responsive to the needs of the Hindu intelligentsia in Calcutta.

Between 1806 and 1813 the college continued to provide large grants for student awards, linguistic experimentation, studies of the indigenous culture, and translations of Oriental classics. The Court of Directors permitted the College to spend 150,000 rupees yearly but warned the College Council not to exceed that figure. The Court never interfered with the college’s policy of generous literary patronage, which, for example, amounted to 48,092 rupees during the pre-Haileybury years of 1805 and 1806 and continued at approximately the same sum even until 1815.

One very practical reason that the educational process at the College of Fort William proved more effective than the Haileybury training was that Wellesley had continued the Hastings tradition of reserving certain positions only for the most accomplished Orientalists. Wellesley’s policy of recruiting the best students from the college to serve their administrative apprenticeship in the highest

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30 John Elliot, Essays (1802), p. 32.
32 PCFW, DLXI (September 9, 1810), pp. 220–223.
33 Ibid., DLX (April, 1806, accounts), 143–144.
34 Ibid., DLXIV (October 16, 1816), 199–201.
bureaus of state under his personal supervision helped to create an 
esprit de corps among a small clique into which all later students 
sought admission. This clique, formed in 1803 by Wellesley,\(^{35}\) in-
cluded Charles Metcalfe, W. B. Bayley, Richard Jenkins, and John 
Monckton, and took great pride in its historic mission of building 
a new empire. At the same time, its members remained faithful to 
the Orientalist spirit that they had absorbed during their Fort Will-
iam College days. According to John W. Kaye, who edited Met-
calfe’s correspondence:

Incidents . . . were surely calculated to bind such warmhearted, 
earnest youths as Charles Metcalfe by the strongest feelings of per-
sonal attachment and fidelity to Lord Wellesley. They not only 
worked for him, they worked with him. And the endearment thus 
engendered was reciprocal. No statesman ever took a livelier in-
terest in the intellectual development of the disciples who sat at 
his feet. He watched their progress with affectionate concern: he 
encouraged and stimulated them by judicious praise. He was at 
once their master and their friend; and there was not one of them 
who did not identify himself with his policy, and was not eager 
to contribute to its success.\(^{36}\)

Wellesley’s policy of encouraging bright students with monetary 
awards and the promise of high-echelon posts in the government 
was continued by Lord Minto during his administration (1807– 
1813) (see Table 4, page 98). Many of the students who came 
from Haileybury to Fort William during those years to complete 
the Orientalist phase of their education adopted the Orientalist 
outlook.

Among the best students who graduated from the College of 
Fort William between 1806 and 1813 were Henry T. Prinsep 
(1810), Holt Mackenzie (1810), James C. C. Sutherland (1811), 
Graves C. Haughton (1810), and Andrew Stirling (1813). In this 
group of five, the only non-Haileybury graduate was Haughton, 
who had entered the civil service from the ranks of the Indian 
Army. Of all the leading Haileybury students, Holt Mackenzie 
was the only man who acquired utilitarian views and turned his 
back on Orientalism later in his career.\(^{37}\) From 1823 onwards,

\(^{35}\) The Life and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe, comp. J. W. 
Kaye (London: Smith, Elder Company, 1858), I, 79.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 81.

\(^{37}\) When Mackenzie joined the General Committee of Public Instruction 
in 1823, he began to urge educational reforms on the basis of their utility in
Henry Prinsep, his brother James Prinsep, and Sutherland constituted the hard core of Orientalists under H. H. Wilson’s leadership in the General Committee of Public Instruction.

The Haileybury men who came to Fort William during the Minto administration ascended the hierarchal ranks of the administration precisely as their predecessors had done under Wellesley, accepting as they went the same Orientalist bias. This tradition continued so long as the governors-general were favorably disposed towards Wellesley’s general cultural attitudes. Bayley, Mackenzie, H. T. Prinsep, Bird, Sutherland, and Macnaughton all began their careers as “registers” in the Sudder Dewani Adaulat, became special assistants to the governor-general, and gradually worked their way into one or another bureau of the foreign office. Throughout the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the Persian Department of the government was staffed with the best students from the College of Fort William. It might be noted that the persisting fiction of Moghul rule in India and the continuous use of Persian as the diplomatic-legal language of India ensured the Persian Department of the College of Fort William its paramount position.

Not all members of this group were assigned to desks in Calcutta. Men such as Metcalfe were sent into the field where they experienced actual combat, were entrusted with dangerous diplomatic missions to the courts of Indian princes, or were assigned as residents in potentially explosive regions of the subcontinent.

When Metcalfe was placed in charge of Delhi’s civil and judicial administration in 1811, his achievements proved that cultural responsiveness to Hinduism was not necessarily incompatible with social reform. During his eight years at Delhi, there was not one case of capital punishment. In contrast to the Utilitarians, he doubted the effectiveness of European-style law courts in India, for he believed that the people distrusted and despised them since “Indians were happier under their own freer and more personal

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38 With the advent of the Bentinck administration, Anglicists such as Charles Trevelyan repudiated the Wellesley Orientalist ideals.

39 The Life and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe, pp. 42–87.

40 Ibid., pp. 126–335.

41 Metcalfe served as Delhi Resident from 1811 to 1819 and as Hyderabad Resident from 1820 to 1825.

42 Thompson, p. 123.
regimes." On the one hand, by personalizing justice through his own office, Metcalfe was sustaining the paternalistic policy of the Moghul rulers. On the other hand, he spared the people under his jurisdiction many of the evils seemingly inevitable when an alien legal structure is imported and made to function in opposition to established customs and values. Metcalfe also forbade widow-burning, but he did so not in a spirit of righteous indignation of a crusading European. Instead, he let it be known that he was merely reintroducing a statute that an "Asiatick" emperor, Akbar, had already enacted in the sixteenth century. And, motivated by the same sense of moral disgust that William Jones experienced in 1785, Metcalfe abolished slavery in Delhi in 1812.

While Metcalfe served in the field, his old classmates advanced themselves socially and professionally without ever leaving Calcutta. Thus it is not surprising that among Minto's closest advisers, from his arrival in Calcutta in July, 1807, until his departure in October of 1813, were young members of the Wellesley clique: Jenkins, Bayley, and Adam. Throughout those years, two others in the group, Prinsep and Mackenzie, were assisting Chief Judge J. H. Harington at the Sudder Dewani Adaulat.

43 Ibid., p. 124.
44 Ibid., p. 127.
46 Thompson, p. 128.
The College Environment 
and the Emergence of a 
Modern Intelligentsia in Bengal

The first stage in the evolution of both the traditional and Persianized Hindi literati of Bengal into a modernized intelligentsia was that of professionalization. Confronted by the rapid drying up of the normal sources of patronage, many literati flocked to Calcutta in search of a livelihood. In almost all cases, those without adequate private means sought careers in association with Englishmen. However, a few men independently wealthy by birth, such as Radhakant Deb, avoided professional or commercial contact with Englishmen.¹ Others, such as Rammohun Roy, achieved this independence in middle age after spending years in profitable association with the English.²

Increasingly, after the promulgation of the Cornwallis “reforms,” educated high-caste Hindus in and around Calcutta, whether wealthy or not, chose occupations in newly formed British-oriented institutions. Rusomoy Dutt, born into the respectable Rambagan Dutt family of Calcutta in 1780, began his career as a clerk in an English commercial firm at 16 rupees per week and developed rapidly into an efficiency expert, to use a modern term.³ He started his private fortune with a 10,000-rupee bonus awarded

¹ Radhakant Deb was the adopted son of Gopimohan Deb, son of the fabulously wealthy Naba Krishna Deb.  
² Infra, pp. 196–197.  
³ B. V. Roy, p. 20.
him for recommending ways and means of saving the Company several times that amount.\textsuperscript{4}

The introduction of the private-property principle into Bengal in 1793 and the growing importance of litigation in an expanding judicial system resulted in the creation of a new class of pleaders.\textsuperscript{5} Rammohun Roy’s friend, Rajiblochan Roy, apparently developed into a brilliant pleader by English standards. It was he who successfully defended the Raja against his nephew before the Supreme Court in 1817–19.\textsuperscript{6} The most successful pleader in the first half of the nineteenth century was probably Prasanna Kumar Tagore (born 1800?), who earned approximately 150,000 rupees a year from the practice of this profession alone.\textsuperscript{7}

For those Bengali intellectuals who wished to find support for their scholarly work, the College of Fort William, with its peripheral and satellite institutions, provided a source of literary patronage. The kinds of literati attracted to Fort William were more intellectual or scholarly than their counterparts who were more drawn to the bureaucracy, the agency house, or the law court. Although in addition to its literary patronage the college also offered Bengalis a training center for professionalization, the learned professions themselves were marginal sectors of the Bengal economy. The learned Indian who entered the service of the collegiate institution in 1801 with his store of traditional learning could develop into a teacher, prose stylist, philologist or linguist, compositor, printer, publisher, or librarian. He might earn, aside from patronage, a minimum of 10 rupees a month and a maximum of 200. Even though his income compared unfavorably with that of his educated counterparts closer to the marketplace, he did far better than his peers who taught in indigenous institutions and who lived in a state of genteel poverty.\textsuperscript{8}

In most cases, at first, the literati were hired by the college as pundits with the general responsibility of assisting the professor in

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{5} Misra, \textit{Indian Middle Classes}, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Selections from Official Letters and Documents Relating to the Life of Raja Rammohun Roy}, I, xli.
\textsuperscript{8} The pay of professors of indigenous institutions of higher learning averaged 79 rupees a year, and in depressed areas some elementary-school teachers earned as little as one rupee a year. Adam, pp. 79, 111.
teaching classes, compiling textbooks, and selecting material for readers. The College Council, partly from ignorance and partly from administrative expediency, insisted that its Asian staff be expert in all matters Indian. In practice, however, especially in the Bengali and Sanskrit Departments, the literati developed definitely limited professional interests and skills stemming from the concentration of patronage on what might be termed “problem-solving activities.”

For example, Tarincharan Mitra brought with him to Gilchrist’s Hindustani Department a linguistic endowment seemingly common among that generation of the Calcutta Hindu elite that owed its sudden socio-economic ascendency to the prevailing chaos of the Plassey period. Born in north Calcutta in 1772, he probably learned, as was then fashionable, elementary English in a Eurasian school, Sanskrit at a tol, Persian and Arabic from a munshi, and Urdu as a matter of course in order to communicate with Indian Muslims. He was hired by the College of Fort William on May 4, 1801, as second pundit of the Hindustani Department at a salary of 100 rupees a month. Later that year, when the Chief Pundit Mir Ali died, William Hunter, then Urdu professor, elevated Mitra to this post and increased his salary to 200 rupees per month.

With his great linguistic capacity and achievement, Tarincharan easily developed into one of the finest native philologists that the college produced. Gilchrist’s strong desire to simplify the Urdu language by giving it a regular set of principles based on European models elicited large financial support from the College Council, and Mitra was actively involved in all projects related to this systematization. It was probably this talent and linguistic knowledge, combined with European methods and skills, that helped develop Mitra into a professional. Mitra was, in fact, Gilchrist’s protégé. In the preface to the Oriental Fabulist (1803), Gilchrist wrote: “It behooves me now more particularly to specify that to Tarnee Churun Mitra’s patient labour and considerable proficiency in the English tongue, am I greatly indebted for the accuracy and dispatch with which the collection has been at last completed.”

Tarincharan’s chief accomplishment as a professional linguist was the development of an improved methodology in applying Gil-

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9 Dās, p. 204.
10 Ibid.
11 PCFW, DLXI (January 13, 1810), 186.
12 Gilchrist, pp. xxiv–v.
christ's orthographic innovations to transliteration both from one Oriental language to another and from Oriental languages to English. The principles underlying this methodology were first compiled by Gilchrist with the assistance of Mitra in 1802 and 1803 under the title of "Practical Outlines." It was designed to serve as a practical guide for Fort William students and aimed to teach the written and spoken lingua franca of Hindustan by employing one method. Gilchrist's shortcut to mastering literary and colloquial Urdu was to Romanize the script and to simplify the literary passages by Anglicizing their syntactical structure. Later Orientalists ridiculed Gilchrist's method as an exercise in wishful thinking, since he was actually less interested in disclosing and regularizing the established literary and spoken patterns of the indigenous culture than he was in altering those patterns to fit those of an alien language and culture.

Mitra's utilization of the Gilchrist method was evident in two principal works supported by the college: the Oriental Fabulist (1803) and the Sukuntula Natok (1804). The Fabulist was a polyglot attempt under Gilchrist's direction to demonstrate his "system" by translating universally popular fables, such as those of Aesop, from English. Changing even the customary transliteration for the names of Indian languages, Gilchrist announced on the title page that these fables had been translated into "Hindoostanee, Persian, Arabic, Brui Bhasha, Bongla, and Sanskrit in the Roman Character. . . ." Mitra handled the Bengali, Persian, and Urdu translations.

The Fabulist was a remarkable experiment, notwithstanding its artless simplicity of style and its misleading attempt to show a similarity of grammatical structure between languages that were obviously dissimilar by simply altering them to conform with the English pattern. In Mitra's Sukuntula, also an experiment with Romanized script, one finds the same characteristics of simplicity, lucidity, and close adherence to the English grammatical pattern.

Despite his handicap of having learned the discipline of linguis-
tics from Gilchrist, Tarinicharan gained the modest historical distinction of being among India’s first “Western”-trained linguists. Unlike his compatriots in Carey’s Bengali Department, whose prose styles indicate clearly that they knew only Sanskrit, Mitra was well grounded in several languages. His knowledge of English gave him an opportunity to acquire new skills and professionalize his talent. His preference for the linguistic over the literary in his work is evident not only in his regular application of Gilchrist’s principles but also in the fact that he never felt obliged to write a single original prose work in the languages he dissected and reassembled so skillfully.

The literary worth of the Bengali pundits’ work has often been analyzed by scholars of Bengali literature, many of whom trace the origins of modern Bengali or even other Indian vernacular prose to the college. As has been already pointed out, it is common to bestow on William Carey the honor of having been “father of modern Bengali prose.” Nevertheless, these same scholars generally dismiss the style of the Fort William pundits as being obscure, dull, unintelligible, and prone to be more like Sanskrit than Bengali.

The full sociocultural and intellectual implications of the efforts of Carey and the Bengali Brahmans on behalf of Bengali language and literature have often been overlooked by the literary historian. By divorcing literature from the personal experience of the writer, and by not viewing literature as a reflection of experience, many critics have overlooked the dynamics underlying the relationship. The writings of the pundits reflected first of all a transfer of cultural allegiance from the classical Sanskrit to what the Bengali Brahmans had hitherto called “that Prakrit dialect fit only for demons and women.”

Secondly, Carey’s pundits pursued their interest to the point of becoming modern India’s first prose stylists. While the Asians in other departments of the college translated Oriental classics or flirted with the discipline of linguistics, the Bengal literati, under Carey’s encouragement, went further in transcending their traditional limitations and in experimenting creatively with new literary forms.

Mrtyunjoy Vidyalankar, Carey’s Chief Pundit in the Bengali

18 William Carey’s role in the origins of modern Bengali prose is most authentically reviewed in Dās, pp. 164–168, and De, pp. 140–143.
19 De, p. 46.
Department, who was acknowledged to be the most intellectual and the best scholar of the Asian staff,\textsuperscript{20} epitomized this process of intellectual evolution. Born in 1762 in that part of Midnapore close to Orissa, this Chattopadhyay Brahman probably received a rigid, regionally traditional Sanskritic education at Nator, totally devoid of Persian and European influences.\textsuperscript{21} Though concrete evidence is lacking we can surmise that he left Midnapore sometime in the 1790's and, as did so many other Brahmans, came to Calcutta in search of a livelihood. Mrtyunjay must have impressed Carey, because in May, 1801, when the Asian staff was first recruited, he was appointed immediately as Chief Pundit with a salary of 200 rupees per month.

As has already been intimated, Mrtyunjay was the typical Brahman possessing an unyielding cultural pride and a prejudice in favor of the Sanskritic tradition. On the other hand, Mrtyunjay comfortably assimilated work habits and literary and linguistic techniques from his European mentor. Mrtyunjay was as close to Carey as was any Hindu, spending several hours of every working day in Calcutta as the latter's private tutor in Sanskrit,\textsuperscript{22} as his assistant lecturer at college classes,\textsuperscript{23} and as ghostwriter for some of Carey's publications.\textsuperscript{24} If Carey were ill his chief pundit would substitute for him as instructor, apparently conducting his class entirely in Bengali.\textsuperscript{25} It was probably Mrtyunjay whom Carey chose to sit with him for the famous portrait by Home.

Of the four works attributed to Mrtyunjay between 1801 and 1814, two were original, and these established him as one of the first important professional writers of vernacular prose in modern India. His earliest work, the \textit{Batriś Simbāsan (Thirty-two Thrones)}, which appeared in 1802, is commonly held to be a "translation from Sanskrit . . . into plain, simple Bengali."\textsuperscript{26} This evaluation is partly true but also rather misleading, since it is diffic-

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 183.
\textsuperscript{21} See the introduction of \textit{Mrtyunjay Granthābali}, ed. B. N. Bandypādhyāy (Kaliṅkāṭa: Ranjan Pāblīṣim Häus, 1939), pp. iii–iv.
\textsuperscript{22} De, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{23} The practice seems to have been for the Chief Pundit to sit with the European instructor in class to correct the pronunciation of students or to answer difficult questions. PCFW, DLX (September, 1805).
\textsuperscript{24} S. K. Dās believes that Carey's \textit{Dialogues (1801)} were largely the work of Mrtyunjay; see Dās, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{25} PCFW, DLX (September 5, 1805).
\textsuperscript{26} De, pp. 184–185.
\end{flushright}
cult to determine the precise differences in the early 1800's between
the style of literary Bengali and Sanskrit in the Bengali script. It
is a "plain" and "simple" work primarily because it was a written
version of a collection of popular fables on the qualities of King
Vikramaditya. Brahmans in Bengal, as elsewhere in India, traditionally recited such fables before gatherings of peasants.

The significance of such translations for the cultural historian
lies in the willingness of Brahmans to communicate bits and pieces
of their special fund of knowledge to an unknown reading public
by means of the printed word. Certainly, this process was not new;
pundits had already disclosed fragments of their knowledge to
Orientalists such as Jones and Wilkins. There is, however, one
crucial difference between the objectives of early Orientalists and
those of the College of Fort William. Whereas Jones and Wilkins
translated the Sanskrit classics into English for European readers,
the college—perhaps unwittingly—encouraged translations into the
Indian vernaculars, thereby creating a body of printed material
which would eventually break the intellectual monopoly of the
Brahmans.

The ability of the literati to master the technical skills of alien
occupations which contributed to their new role and outlook was
evident also in the field of printing and publishing in Calcutta. As
in the teaching of linguistics, the College of Fort William seems
to have pioneered in giving the impetus and opportunity for Asian
participation in these practical arts. Calcutta seems to have had no
printing press at all in 1768\(^{27}\) and, as already mentioned, no press
equipped to print indigenous languages until 1778\(^{28}\). The growing
need for reproducing governmental proclamations in the Indian
languages and the rise of journalism helped Francis Gladwin create
the Calcutta Gazette Press in 1783.\(^{29}\) From then on, the industry
developed gradually—although few Indians were involved in its
operations.

It was the College of Fort William that made printing and pub-
lishing in the classical and vernacular tongues possible in India on
a large scale. This development was stimulated by its ever-increasing need for authentic publications and was possible be-
cause it possessed the requisite financial resources. Within its first
decade of operation, Fort William had created an array of peri-

\(^{27}\) "First Establishment of a Press in Calcutta," *Friend of India*, I (February
26, 1835), 65.

\(^{28}\) *Ibid*.

\(^{29}\) *Dās*, p. 31.
pheral and satellite institutions that fostered an atmosphere conducive to the expansion of the communicative arts. In 1801 Serampore Mission Press was launched; in 1802 Gilchrist and Hunter established the Hindoostanee Press; in 1805 Mathew Lumsden received financial aid for a Persian Press; and in 1807, through the initiative of Colebrooke, the Sanskrit Press was established. Every one of these enterprises owed its origin and continued existence to college support. Without these establishments and their years of experimentation and improvement, it is doubtful whether Serampore could have published India’s first vernacular newspaper in 1818 or whether the Calcutta School Book Society could have published the first in its series of textbooks in that same year.

The art of printing Oriental literature in authentic character forms was introduced into India by Charles Wilkins in 1778. He was assisted by a Bengali named Panchanan who was destined by virtue of his unusual technical knowledge to become William Ward’s most prized Asian associate at Serampore.

Panchanan, a low-caste blacksmith, was a transitional figure who linked the pioneering achievements of the Wilkins generation with the needs of the Fort William generation and helped printing and publishing in Calcutta to evolve from its early base. Specialization of skills being rare in eighteenth-century Bengal, Panchanan was compelled to learn all the aspects of his new trade. It is evident that in addition to familiarizing himself with European techniques of printing, Panchanan also acquired skills in metallurgy and engraving from Wilkins. In the 1790’s, Panchanan, like many Bengalis of all castes, was one of Calcutta’s unemployed with a skill or education or both. When Colebrooke was transferred to Calcutta to organize the Sanskrit Department at the college, Panchanan seems to have been employed by him in some capacity—just what kind is not clear. Bengali scholars generally believe that

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30 Supra, p. 72.
31 Gilchrist apparently started the enterprise with "a printing press and other material . . . lent by Mr. Francis Gladwin." PCFW, DLIX (January 30, 1802), 57.
32 Ibid., DLX (September 20, 1805), 45–46.
33 For the first reference to Babooram’s press in college records, see Ibid. (April 11, 1807), 304.
34 Khan, p. 251.
35 Ibid.
36 De, p. 76.
37 M. S. Khan claims, and most other sources agree, that Panchanan was cutting type for Colebrooke; see Khan, p. 249.
Panchanan came to Serampore in 1800 from Calcutta in search of work. The evidence suggests that he was encouraged to leave Colebrooke’s employ by Carey or that Colebrooke acceded to Carey’s argument that Panchanan would be more useful in helping establish the Mission Press.\textsuperscript{38}

Panchanan started to work in Ward’s press in 1800 as a master type-founder, and immediately began cutting fonts for Sanskrit and Bengali. By 1803, when the elderly Panchanan retired from his job, he had succeeded in cutting three different fonts of Bengali characters. One of these was a small-size type that reduced the dimensions of any work in Bengali by one-fourth.\textsuperscript{39} He had also cut a new font of Devanagari type which was reputedly the best anywhere in the world.\textsuperscript{40} In 1803 he passed on his accumulated skills to his apprentice and son-in-law, Monohar Karmakar, who by 1850 had cut type for fifteen Oriental languages (including his gift to Marshman of a Chinese font with 43,000 characters).\textsuperscript{41}

In 1802 John Gilchrist and William Hunter obtained sufficient patronage to found the important Hindoostanee Press. This press was designed to help carry out that “linguistic reformation” involving the revitalization of Hindustani which Gilchrist advocated.\textsuperscript{42} In 1804, when Gilchrist returned to England, Hunter became sole proprietor of the press.\textsuperscript{43} As secretary for both Fort William and the Asiatic Society, Hunter exerted great influence in winning contracts for the press. In 1808, for example, Hunter won the Asiatick Researches contract after demonstrating that the Hindoostanee Press could print the journal better and cheaper than any competitor.\textsuperscript{44} When news of Hunter’s death in Java reached Calcutta in 1813, a rising young Orientalist named Horace Hayman Wilson became director of the Press.\textsuperscript{45}

It was the Hindoostanee Press that first enabled Ram Camul Sen

\textsuperscript{38} The controversy is fully discussed by Khan, \textit{ibid}.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 251.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 252.
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Supra}, pp. 82–83.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Supra}, pp. 84–85.
\textsuperscript{44} LASB–MP, II (February 3, 1808), 35.
\textsuperscript{45} After learning of Ram Camul Sen’s death in 1844, Wilson reviewed their long association together in a public letter of November 2, 1844, in which he said, “When Leyden and Hunter went to Java, I was in charge of the Press. . . .” Quoted by Mitra, p. 43.
to transcend the narrow world of his early youth and to achieve the unparalleled success which has since given him the reputation of a kind of Horatio Alger of the Bengali intelligentsia. \(^{46}\) Claiming to be a Kashatriya and, according to his own account, a descendant of Ballal Sena, \(^{47}\) he left a Hooghly village for Calcutta in 1790 at the age of seven. \(^{48}\) While his father’s proficiency in Persian assured him clerical positions, Ram Camul Sen learned English, Sanskrit, and Persian in the manner of the sons of the Calcutta elite. \(^{49}\)

Ram Camul found his first job in 1803, as a subordinate clerk’s assistant in the Calcutta Chief Magistrate’s office. \(^{50}\) He apparently impressed Blacquiere, the Chief Magistrate, also a member of the Persian group at the Asiatic Society. In all likelihood through Blacquiere, Sen made his first contacts with the Asiatic Society, an institution with which he was to be actively associated for most of his adult life. \(^{51}\) Sen probably became acquainted with Hunter and Gilchrist either at the Society or at the college and was invited the next year (1804) to work in the Hindoostanee Press as a compositor. \(^{52}\) In sharp contrast with the average Fort William pundit, who generally earned 40 rupees a month, Ram Camul was paid 8. \(^{53}\)

Despite his low salary, Ram Camul always performed far more than was requested of him, profited from his knowledge of English and extended his range of contacts. In 1810, after meeting H. H. Wilson at the Press, Ram Camul’s fortunes took a rapid upward swing. The two men developed a warm friendship that lasted until Sen’s death in 1844. Under Wilson’s sponsorship, and utilizing the skills and techniques acquired during his employment at the Hindoostanee Press, Sen began his extraordinary rise as an intellectual entrepreneur. By 1814 he had been appointed the “native” manager of the Hindoostanee Press. \(^{54}\) During the years that followed, he became the most influential Asian in institutions as diverse as the

\(^{46}\) Wilson wrote, “From a compositor, he raised himself by dint of industry, like Benjamin Franklin, to the foremost position among the natives of Bengal . . . .” Quoted by P. C. Mitra, p. 48.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p. 2.

\(^{48}\) Ibid.

\(^{49}\) Supra, p. 62.

\(^{50}\) Mitra, p. 7.

\(^{51}\) Infra, p. 264.

\(^{52}\) Mitra, p. 48.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) According to Wilson, though he was proprietor of the Press, “Sen did most of the work.” Quoted ibid., p. 43.
Asiatic Society and the Calcutta Mint.\textsuperscript{55} When Sen died, he left an estate of 1,000,000 rupees.\textsuperscript{56}

The Sanskrit Press, which Colebrooke helped to establish in 1807, and which we unfortunately know least about, was notable in that it was the first printing firm completely under Indian management. In 1807 Colebrooke chose “Babooram Pundit” from the Sanskrit Department at the college to be manager of the Press. In the College Proceedings of 1809 Babu Ram was listed as proprietor.\textsuperscript{57} The Sanskrit Press appears to have succeeded admirably until 1812, when it may well have been squeezed out by competitors. It owed its survival until then to Fort William’s need to adapt the Sanskrit classics for classroom use. Typical of its work was a 1,600-page version of \textit{Manu’s Institutes}, which the College Council supported without question and for which they paid the Press 3,000 rupees.\textsuperscript{58}

Book-selling establishments came into being largely as a result of the policy of the College of Fort William in promoting the restoration of the classical and vernacular languages of India, which entailed the support of printing and publishing firms to carry out that purpose. It must be stressed that after schools, the most important early agencies for the importation and diffusion of European culture to India were printing and publishing firms, bookstores, and libraries. In this as in the other cases (such as the library profession), Bengalis served their apprenticeship for these trades in the college or its associated institutions.

The first institutional library of Oriental books and manuscripts in India was founded at the College of Fort William in 1801–02.\textsuperscript{59} The gradual increase both in instructional materials and in publications necessitated expansion of available facilities, and in 1805, when William Hunter was made college librarian, he immediately set out to reorganize the library.\textsuperscript{60} College texts were usually expensive, ranging in cost from 5 to 20 rupees.\textsuperscript{61} It appears that by 1807 a

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Infra}, p. 264.
\textsuperscript{56} “The Late Dewan Ram Kamul Sen,” \textit{Friend of India}, X (August 15, 1844), 513–514.
\textsuperscript{57} PCFW, DLXI (May 3, 1809), 93–94.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}, DLXII (July 3, 1812), 182.
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Supra}, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Supra}, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{61} Examples of Fort William book prices are: Basu’s \textit{Pratāpādītya}, 6 rupees a copy, PCFW, DLIX (April 12, 1802), 70; Carey’s \textit{Sanskrit Dictionary}, 8 rupees a copy, \textit{Ibid.}, DLX (January 1, 1807), 230; and a Sanskrit Press version
number of enterprising Indians in Calcutta were "borrowing" books from the college library and re-selling them to students and others for exorbitant sums. On November 18, 1807, the Calcutta Gazette listed the books missing from the library and requested public cooperation in apprehending the "thieves."\(^{63}\)

The thievery seems to have continued, and on December 13, 1810, the College Council issued new regulations for the library in which is was clearly stated that "learned natives" not necessarily associated with Fort William were either "consulting books belonging to the College Library" or were "making extracts."\(^{63}\) Too many books had disappeared, hence it was ruled that "no Book shall be taken from the Library for the use of any Native, excepting Such work as he may be employed in translating for the College, without special order from the College Council under the signature of the Secretary."\(^{64}\)

In 1811 the College Council finally agreed to the creation of a special post of "adjutant librarian" to be filled by an Indian at a salary of 40 rupees a month.\(^{65}\) They chose a Muslim from the Hindustani Department, who was to serve under a Bengali Hindu, Mohan Prasad Thakur, Hunter's assistant librarian since 1807.\(^{66}\) In this way a library staff of Indians was formed at the college with specialized duties depending on their language competence. The books, however, continued to disappear. The surreptitious resale of the books stolen from the college library probably constituted the shady beginning of bookdealing in modern India. Sometime in 1811 the College Council decided to encourage a new class of legitimate dealers in Calcutta to handle surplus publications, with the aim of crippling the thieves' market by establishing a legitimate one and thus recovering part of the original cost of patronage.

Acting Secretary Thomas Roebuck's letter of July 18, 1814, to the governor-general's office described the workings of the new

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\(^{64}\) PCFW, DLXI (December 13, 1810), 420.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., DLXII (September 14, 1811), 32.

\(^{66}\) Bandhyopâdhyây, Phort Oiliyam, p. 35.
system. Four hundred copies of a work by Mathew Lumsden of the Persian Department were found to be “more than will be required for the use of the Student.” Publishing the book had cost the College Council 7,000 rupees. Therefore, Roebuck suggested that a number of copies be released “to the usual book sellers in Calcutta to be sold on account of Government at 20 rupees per copy, this being the price proposed by the Persian and Arabic Professor.” Roebuck assured the governor-general that a market existed. “The Council of the College are the more induced to recommend this measure from its having been intimated to them that several individuals have exercised their desire of purchasing the work in question.”

Regrettably, there seems to be no list naming these early Indian bookdealers in Calcutta. However, it is possible that as early as 1814 and certainly by 1816, Lal Lul Lal and other members of the Sanskrit Press were operating one such business in north Calcutta. The manager or owner of the firm was a man named Ganga Kishor Bhattacharya, who had learned printing and publishing at Serampore Mission Press and had then decided to come to Calcutta to try his luck in the rapidly growing book business. A short biographical sketch of Ganga Kishor appeared in the quarterly series of the Friend of India in 1820:

The first Hindoo who established a press in Calcutta was Babooram, a native of Hindoosthan. . . . He was followed by Ganga Kishore, formerly employed at Serampore Press, who appears to have been the first who conceived the idea of printing as a means of acquiring wealth. To ascertain the pulse of the Hindoo public, he printed several works at the press of a European [Ferris and Company] for which having obtained a ready sale, he established an office of his own, and opened a book-shop. For more than six years, he continued to print in Calcutta various works in the Bengalee language, but having disagreed with his coadjutor, he has now removed his press to his native village. He appointed agents in the Chief towns and villages in Bengal, from whom his books

67 PCFW, DLXIII (July 18, 1814), 174.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 B. N. Bandyopādhyāy, Ganga Kisor Bhattāchāryya (S-s-c series; 1928), pp. 48–49.
73 Ibid.
were purchased with great avidity; and within a fortnight after the publication from the Serampore Press of the *Samachar Dur-pan*, the first Native Weekly Journal printed in India, he published another which we hear has since failed.\textsuperscript{74}

Ramram Basu, perhaps the best known of the Fort William pundits, was a *Bangaja Kayastha* by caste. Of the three Bengali specialists of the period, two maintain that he was born in 1757, while the third suggests 1774 or even 1780.\textsuperscript{75} His place of birth is commonly given as Chinsura, and his early years were spent in a village in the Twenty-four Pargannas.\textsuperscript{76} Ramram’s association with Europeans apparently began in 1780 when William Chambers, Persian Interpreter to the Supreme Court and relative of Charles Grant, employed him as his private *munshi*.\textsuperscript{77} In 1787 Ramram, through the recommendation of William Chambers, became *munshi* to John Thomas, who in Company eyes was an indigo manufacturer at Malda but who was in reality a missionary—precisely as in Carey’s case seven years later.

Ramram’s experiences, first in relation to Thomas and afterwards to Carey, are extremely interesting examples of acculturation. According to both Thomas and Carey, he was already receptive to Christianity. His discontent with Hinduism was shown in his fascination with Persian and Arabic on the one hand and in his sarcastic criticisms of the hated Brahmans on the other.\textsuperscript{78} The first incident that strikingly revealed Ramram’s receptive frame of mind toward Christianity occurred in June, 1788. According to C. B. Lewis, who wrote the generally reliable *Life of John Thomas*, Ramram told Thomas in June, 1788:

He had found Jesus to be the answerer of his prayer. He had cried to Him in sickness, and a speedy cure had been granted. Towards the end of the same month, he brought Mr. Thomas “a gospel hymn of his own composing, the first ever seen or heard of in the Bengalese language,—a lyric which still holds its place in our collections of Bengali hymns.” Ram Basu’s early conversation beto-

\textsuperscript{74} “On the Effect of the Native Press in India,” *Friend of India*, I (September, 1820), 134–135.

\textsuperscript{75} B. N. Bandyopādhyāy and S. K. Dās accept 1757, while De prefers 1774 or 1780.


\textsuperscript{77} Dās, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{78} Bandyopādhyāy, *Rāmrām Basu*, pp. 6–7.
kened also a deep conviction of the truth of the gospel, and there was reason to hope he might soon be an acknowledged follower of Christ.\textsuperscript{79}

When Carey arrived in Bengal in 1793, Ramram became his munshi.\textsuperscript{80} Together the two men entered into a mutually advantageous relationship. Ramram taught Carey Bengali and Sanskrit and helped translate sections of the Bible into Bengali. Carey in turn taught his munshi English and tried at the same time to persuade him to embrace the only “true” religion. Though the two men seemed drawn to one another intellectually, Carey could not ignore the moral deficiency of his Bengali friend. In 1796, when Carey learned that his munshi had seduced a young widow, made her pregnant, and then had the child aborted, Carey dismissed him and wrote:

I have been forced, for the honour of the gospel, to discharge the Moonshi, who ... was guilty of a crime which required this step, considering the profession he had made of the gospel. The discouragement arising from this circumstance is not small, as he is certainly a man of the very best natural abilities that I have ever found among the natives, and being well acquainted with phraseology of scripture, was peculiarly fitted to assist in the translation; but I have now no hope of him.\textsuperscript{81}

A few years later, when the College of Fort William opened its doors to Asians, Ramram Basu reappeared, settled his differences with Carey, and joined the new missionaries at Serampore in their effort to spread the Word.\textsuperscript{82} Ramram entered a new phase of his professional evolution. He now further developed his role of intermediary by introducing and interpreting the indigenous culture to the foreigners at the College of Fort William while passing on foreign cultural influences to other Hindus by means of tracts printed at Serampore. In the process, the former tutor to a missionary now became increasingly professional in response to Fort William’s institutional demands. At the same time, he developed intellectually as a result of the missionaries’ persistent argumentative attacks on what they seemed to regard as his rapidly waning loyalty to Hinduism.

\textsuperscript{79} Thomas, n.d., quoted \textit{ibid.}, pp. 7–8.
\textsuperscript{80} Bandyopādhyāy, \textit{Rāmrām Basu}, pp. 11–12.
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibid.}
As a member of Carey’s Bengali Department at the college, Ramram distinguished himself primarily as a writer of original Bengali prose, for which he was paid handsomely by the College Council. The work not uncommonly considered the first piece of original prose in any modern Indian language was Ramram Basu’s *Pratāpāditya Charitra* (*Historical Sketch of Raja Pratāpāditya*), which was published by Serampore Press for the college in 1802. William Carey, who won Council support for the work, believed it to be “an authentic history of the government of Bengal from the beginning of the reign of Achber to the end of that of Johangeer.”

Literary historians such as S. K. De rightly dismiss Ramram’s *Pratāpāditya Charitra* as “one of the worst specimens of Bengali prose-writing even for this period.” However, from a different point of view the book was remarkable in representing the dawn of historical consciousness in Bengal. Literary scholars have periodically condemned the work for aesthetic reasons, but professional historians of Bengal have been sympathetic to Ramram’s sense of history—however rudimentary in its “Persianised” form. Nikhilnath Ray’s analysis of the *Pratāpāditya*, which appeared in the notes of the 1904 edition of the work, and has been the model historiographic interpretation since, is valuable in depicting the modern quality in Ramram’s historical writing. Ray’s idea is that Ramram wrote a truly historical book even though he tended to combine “fact” with gossip or tradition. Regardless of how crude Basu was as an historian, Ray maintains, “modern research has been able to little alter what Ramram Basu wrote a century ago.” In short, despite Ramram’s shortcomings, which were inherent in the Persian narrative-style history of the day, he was a pioneer of the “historical spirit” in Bengal.

It should not be overlooked, however, that the *Pratāpāditya* was written not for fellow historians but as a much-needed textbook for William Carey’s Bengali classes. Because Ramram’s book was essentially a narrative of the “rise and tribulations” of a Hindu *raja*

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83 Ramram was paid 300 rupees as a bonus for his *Pratāpāditya*, PCFW, DLIX (July 18, 1803), 263.
84 Ibid.
85 De, p. 154.
87 Ibid., p. 199.
88 Ibid.
of Jessore, and because such chronicles of secular rulers were part of a long tradition in Muslim India, it is difficult on the basis of this work alone to prove the influence of a European historical outlook. Mrtyunjay Vidyalankar’s Rajaboli (Story of Kings) seems far more representative of the kind of history written at the College of Fort William by Brahmans who certainly did not share in the Muslim tradition and who, as early as 1810, were not yet demonstrating what we moderns call historical consciousness. In contrast to Ramram’s systematic account of recent events on the basis of documents, Mrtyunjay’s Rajaboli was the work of an eighteenth-century pundit who had attempted to crystallize his random thinking on the Hindu past into the concrete form of the printed word.

Published in 1808, Rajaboli seems curiously uninfluenced by the findings and techniques of Orientalist scholarship. Mrtyunjay seemed pedantic without being erudite; he ignored numismatic and other evidence in favor of the religious texts and mythological accounts; and he made no distinction between the mythological and verifiable event. Much of his history was anecdotal—the commonplace tales of Hindu, Muslim, and British heroes from Kurukshetra to Plassey.

On the other hand, the Rajaboli is important as a document revealing the extent and kinds of historical knowledge prevalent among the eighteenth-century Hindu literati of Bengal. It is significant, for example, that little or nothing was said about Buddhist India, Asoka, the Indo-Greek Bactrian kingdoms, or the age of the Guptas. Of course, considering that accurate knowledge of pre-Muslim India had long since ceased to be transmitted and was still to be rediscovered as scholarship advanced in the nineteenth-century, Mrtyunjay could not have been expected to know about any of this ancient history. Mrtyunjay was, nevertheless, aware of the Sena dynasty, though his primary interest was in reconstructing the legend of the Brahmans invited to Bengal from Kanauj in the tenth century. 89 He considered the Marathas as alien plunderers and viewed their presence in Bengal as sheer aggression. 90 Finally, it might be of some interest to note Mrtyunjay’s attitude toward the rise of the British in Bengal. As a Hindu, he probably favored the British over the Muslims, although there is little in the Rajaboli to

90 Ibid., pp. 181–182.
suggest it. Writing a generation or so before political consciousness awakened and at least two generations before the advent of national consciousness, Mrtyunjay matter-of-factly recorded the events “leading up to the establishment of the Company’s ownership of Bengal.”

By and large, the historical writing of the rising Bengali intelligentsia in the first decade of the century did not express what was most immediate in their intellectual awakening. In Ramram, no less than in Rammohun, what was most deeply felt was best mirrored in the literature of spiritual crisis that grew out of the search for a new cultural identity.

In an early tract for Serampore Mission, to which Ramram gave the title Jñānodoy (Dawn of Knowledge), all the prevailing social and religious errors of Hindu Bengal were exposed with an almost evangelical indignation. The indignation had a peculiarly middle-class tone to it whenever Ramram attacked the twin evils of moral laxity and idolatry. In this Christian-inspired puritanical reaction we can find the germ of an idea generally attributed to Rammohun Roy and finally institutionalized by Debendranath Tagore as the Brahma Samaj. Ramram had already endowed the Vedic Brahma with the attributes of Jehovah, and in Ramram we have reached the first stage leading to the discovery or invention of a monotheistic tradition in Hinduism.

In this pamphlet also, Ramram, a Kayastha, attacked the Brahmins, who were portrayed as conspiring, like the medieval Roman Catholic clergy, to enshroud the world in ignorance and darkness. When Carey sent the pamphlet to Britain, he wrote: “We have another piece nearly ready, written by a native (Ram Bashu), exposing the folly and danger of the Hindu system. This is peculiarly pointed against Brahmunism, something like those thundering addresses against the idle, corrupt, and ignorant clergy of the Church of Rome at the commencement of the reformation....”

During the next few years, Ramram composed several short pieces on Christ’s message and translated a Bengali version of a Life of Christ in Verse. But he continually resisted actual conver-
sion and died a Hindu. “Oh Sir! I am most wretched,” he wrote once in Bengali to a leading Baptist in England. “I understand something of the gospel, and can make it known a little to others, but I cannot leave my caste. This is my great difficulty. . . .”

In these basic features of Ramram’s situation we can recognize circumstances similar to those of at least a dozen members of the Bengali intelligentsia later in the century. Among this intelligentsia, Rammohun Roy seems Ramram’s true successor. Both preferred to reinterpret their own religious tradition rather than to accept an alien faith. Both chose the more uncertain path of cultural purification and condemned members of their own elitist class for rationalizing the existence of moral and social evil. In consequence, both shared the contempt of the Brahman community. Their growing cultural alienation and marginality marked them as intelligentsia. William Carey, who himself felt an increasing disaffiliation with the Baptists in England, was sympathetically aware of the dilemma of the new type of intellectual who was precariously straddling two worlds. He wrote of Ramram in 1802:

Poor Ram Bashoo is always glad to give the Brahmans a . . . blow where he has the opportunity but I fear he is an unenvied man. He is to us what Erasmus was to the Reformation. It would entertain you to see the Brahmans wheel off to the other side of the way when we are disputing in the Streets; and it would grieve you to hear the torrents of abuse and obscenity with which the vile sort frequently assault us. . . . God has however broke the infernal seclusion and I trust a spark is struck in Bengal which will never be extinguished.

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97 College Lane Chapel, Northampton. Letter dated March 7, 1801, from Ramram Basu to Ryland in Northampton Collection of Serampore Letters.
98 Carey to Fuller, January 21, 1802, Carey Letters.
PART IV

The Evangelical Challenge in London and the Orientalist Response in Calcutta
1800-1827
Let me tell you that neither are we 'devils', as the missionaries tell the world we are, nor are they 'angels,’ as they claim to be. The less the missionaries talk of immorality, infanticide, and the evils of the Hindu marriage system, the better for them . . . If, foreign friends, you come with genuine sympathy to help and not to destroy, god-speed to you. But if by abuses incessantly hurled against the head of a prostrate race in season and out of season, you mean only the triumphant assertion of the moral superiority of your own nation, let me tell you plainly, if such a comparison be instituted with any amount of justice, the Hindu will be found a head and shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race.

—VIVEKANANDA
Evangelical Anti-Hinduism
and the Polarization of
Cultural Policy for India

Wellesley’s proposal for establishing the college in Calcutta arrived in London at almost the same time that classes at the college were expected to begin. The immediate reaction to Wellesley’s pet educational scheme was critical, but the real issue seemed to be Wellesley’s tactlessness and haste in making a decision without first gaining the approval of the government and the Company’s Directors at home. The government seemed as worried about the spread of French radicalism in India as was Wellesley. Unlike Wellesley, however, it saw the proposed college as a possible breeding ground for Jacobins. Dundas, still President of the Board of Control, wrote to the governor-general: “Such an assemblage of literary and philosophical men would . . . degenerate into a school of Jacobinism in India. I hate Jacobinism everywhere . . . but in India I should consider it as the Devil itself and to be guarded against with equal assiduity.”

The Board was nevertheless ready to sanction Wellesley’s scheme, and such support usually meant quick ratification. Since 1788 Dundas had slowly been becoming the supreme power in deciding India policy, but it was Wellesley’s misfortune that Dundas was physically exhausted by 1800 and had been warned that the slightest overexertion might bring about his death. On February

1 British Museum, Additional Manuscripts 37275, f. 191, September 4, 1800, quoted in Philips, p. 125.
9, 1801, Dundas informed his superiors that he intended to retire that year, at the very time that Wellesley most needed support for his college.

Wellesley was unfortunate for another reason that was perhaps the most important of all factors involved in the ultimate disposition of the College of Fort William. Since the Charter Renewal Act of 1793, the Company had been fighting vigorously to protect its economic interest in the East against the encroachment of private merchants determined to break the Company's trade monopoly. The war against France compounded the problem by throwing open the India trade to neutral nations such as the United States. The established shipping interests expressed their grievances through a powerful group within the Court of Directors. The situation grew more and more acute between 1793 and 1800. By 1799, the volume of shipments of Indian goods to Europe by foreign traders nearly equaled that of the Company. In the following year, foreign traders, mostly American, doubled the value of their trade in Calcutta.

Dundas and Wellesley were opposed to the shipping interests, for they believed that the Company was no longer in a position to monopolize the India trade to the advantage of British interests. The important objective was to keep British capital in British hands—even if these were private hands. Therefore both men strongly advocated India-built shipping for the Indian export trade.

During the summer and early fall of 1800, the fate of the College of Fort William became inextricably interwoven with the complex private-trade question. At the very time that the Court of Directors was examining Wellesley's college scheme in detail, news reached London that the governor-general had dispatched India-built ships to carry home part of the export trade while at the same time dispatching some of the regular ships of the Company from Calcutta only half-loaded. At about the same time the Court also learned of the deficit consequent to Wellesley's victory over Tipu Sultan. So great was the impact of these developments that there took

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2 Letter from Board to Court, 1, f. 518, n.d. cited ibid., p. 111.
3 British Parliamentary History, XXXIV, 566, March 12, 1799, cited ibid., p. 106.
5 Ibid., p. 108.
7 Ibid., p. 126.
place within the Direction a realignment of forces that ultimately undermined Dundas's power and Wellesley's educational policy. Charles Grant, leader of the neutral clique, abandoned his neutrality and seized this opportunity to join the mounting agitation against the Dundas-Wellesley coalition. For the moment the College of Fort William had become a political football in a larger economic struggle between members of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control.

In the spring of 1803, when London was still undecided as to whether a college should be established in Calcutta, Wellesley had already invested £224,566 in the effort to give institutional form to his ideal. Between 1802 and 1805 the college issue became so crucial that Wellesley more than once threatened to come to London and personally plead his case before Parliament. The controversy, which had begun over Wellesley's unpopular trade policy, slowly acquired other aspects until the College of Fort William became a symbol in the conflict of British cultural attitudes toward India. “The College must stand,” Wellesley warned, “or the Empire must fall.”

In January, 1802, the Court of Directors believed the problem might be solved simply by reestablishing Gilchrist's seminary. The real issue that angered the old shipping interests was Wellesley's inimical trade practices. So long as the governor-general persisted in his hostile policy aimed at destroying Company shipping, any other scheme of his would inevitably be met with disfavor. Wellesley was well aware of his predicament. In a letter to Castlereagh, who had become President of the Board in June, 1802, he wrote, “I apprehend that my conduct on the question of private trade has been the main source of the virulence which has been betrayed by the Court on various other topics.”

On August 5, 1802, Wellesley sent a long and eloquent letter to

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8. Ibid., p. 109.
13. Philips, p. 120.
14. Wellesley to Castlereagh, n.d., quoted ibid., p. 120.
Castlereagh appealing to him, as Wellesley had done earlier to Dundas, to save the college in its entirety. In it, he defended his scheme along familiar lines, justified its expense, and warned of the Court’s shortsighted mercantile mentality, which seemed to him “penny-wise and pound-foolish.”

Wellesley’s dispatches at this time are important in reflecting his concept of government, which he closely associated with the main purpose of the college. His basic argument was that the Company now had a “sacred trust of Governing an Extensive and Populous Empire” which he considered a “permanent succession.” The foundation of the Empire should rest “on internal order,” “a uniform and impartial administration of justice,” a “prudent and temperate system of revenue,” “the encouragement and protection of industry, agriculture, manufacturing and commerce,” and the “judicious management of financial resources.” These objectives would never be attained unless regular training of a cadre of civil servants was assured at the College of Fort William. According to Wellesley: “Many of these objects have already been accomplished by the effects of the institution under the eyes of this Government, and all of them promise to be secured by the continuance and stability of the same system of discipline and study.”

In a private letter to the Earl of Dartmouth dated August 5, 1802, Wellesley sought to preserve his scheme by enlisting the support of high officials in the British government. He made it quite clear that he considered the college the most important achievement of his administration. After threatening to take the issue before Parliament if the Court abolished the college, he wrote: “So convinced am I of the necessity of this institution, that I am determined to devote the remainder of my political life to the object of establishing it, as the greatest benefit which can be imparted to the public service in India, and as the best security which can be provided for the welfare of our native subjects.”

15 Wellesley to Castlereagh, August 5, 1802, quoted in Roebuck, pp. xxvii–xxxix.
16 Wellesley to Castlereagh, August 5, 1802, quoted in Ranking, Bengal Past and Present, VII, 23.
18 Ibid., p. 28.
19 Despatch from Wellesley to Court, August 5, 1802, quoted in Memoirs of Wellesley, p. 209.
20 Wellesley to Dartmouth, August 5, 1802, quoted Ibid., p. 214.
Wellesley’s August 5 letter to the Board reached London in January of 1803 and Castlereagh immediately decided to defend Wellesley’s general policies—including the appeal to save the college.21 Years earlier, under the powerful Dundas, such support was an assurance of success. Now the shipping interests in the Court had become powerful and were successfully resisting the Board’s encouragement of private trade.22 In addition, Wellesley’s aristocratic insinuations about the Directors’ mercantile mentality seemed to fan the flames of their collective indignation. In July of that year the Directors wrote to the Board: “The Court distinctly and strenuously disclaims the imputation . . . that they are governed in this matter by the narrow views of commercial habits. It is a stale and unjust imputation . . . their establishments civil and military in India are on a scale more ample probably than that of any state in the world.”23

The Court, powerful as it was, now found itself vulnerable on the increasingly well-publicized need for civil-service reform.24 Not only did Wellesley have the support of the Board and many high-ranking government officials, but he had taken the initiative in offering an undeniably sensible educational program. It was also no longer possible to react only in a negative manner to Wellesley’s well-documented and well-articulated challenge. The Court needed its own plan—a plan that would thwart Wellesley on the one hand while adapting his basic idea to the Court’s advantage on the other.

It was Charles Grant who came forward to submit a brilliant solution to the thorny problem. After his return to England in 1794, Grant immediately began promoting Christian influence in India by associating himself with the Clapham sect. From his seat on the Court of Directors during the next few years, Grant advocated a bishopric for Calcutta, freedom of entry and movement for missionaries in India, and the admission of teachers there “to transform and deliver a whole people from superstition to light through the educational process.”25 With his Clapham neighbors, Wilberforce, Shore, Zachary Macaulay, Henry Thornton, and John Venn, Grant effectively enunciated for the first time the evangelical mission of Britain, modeled on Rome’s example of civilizing the

21 Philips, p. 127.
22 Ibid.
23 Court to Board, July 1, 1803, quoted ibid., p. 128.
24 Embree, p. 178.
world. The challenge to the Hastings-Wellesley policy of rapprochement with indigenous culture had begun in earnest.

Unlike most of his peers sitting in the Court, Grant represented an ideology that had earned him a reputation both as a reformer and as an intellectual. His views on the necessity of government-sponsored education in British India were well known, and it was difficult to accuse him of shallow commercialism. As a matter of fact, there is some evidence to suggest that Wellesley modified his college establishment to win Grant’s support. At the helm of the college, Wellesley put Brown and Buchanan, two clergymen who were sent to Bengal by Grant and who corresponded with him regularly.

However, neither clergymen in high positions nor timely pious utterances by Wellesley satisfied Grant. Many writers have analyzed the Wellesley-Grant feud in terms of economics, administration, and the general difference of political views. They have underestimated the basically irreconcilable cultural positions these two men held with reference to India. Both men agreed on the necessity for a highly trained civil-service elite relating intimately with the people of India in ways beneficial both to Britain and her subjects. Wellesley, whatever his original motives, placed himself squarely in the Hastings-Jones tradition by sponsoring an Orientalist kind of approach that stressed acculturation.

To Charles Grant, an avowed Evangelical, such cultural relativity or pluralism was alien and distasteful. In his mind, Indian civilization was barbaric because its religion was degrading. It was both dangerous and a violation of the Christian spirit even to tolerate such a culture. The British civil servant was to be an agent of cultural change and not an agent in the perpetuation of Hinduism as then conceived or even in its revivalistic form. He feared that the kind of flirtation with Orientalism encouraged

28 N. K. Sinha, “Beginning of Western Education,” Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta, I, 5.
27 Ibid., pp. 95–120, 141–57.
28 Ibid., p. 189.
29 For an economic interpretation of the Grant–Wellesley feud, see Philips, pp. 118–151; for a view on administrative and political differences, see Embree, pp. 178–230; for Grant’s cultural attitudes toward India, see Stokes, pp. 30–35.
30 Embree, p. 148.
31 Ibid.
under Warren Hastings might lead to the “Indianization” of British youth. They might undergo an “assimilation to Eastern opinions” instead of “retaining all the distinctions of our national principles, characters and usages.”

Grant was apparently not to be misled by the letters he received from those of Wellesley’s men who were also friendly to himself and who predicted that the college would be the instrument for the evangelization of India. His knowledge of the real nature of Wellesley’s college was excellent. Reports on the cultivation and dissemination of profane Oriental literature at Serampore, for example, must have made him wonder whether the college was helping to evangelize India or to Indianize Evangelicals.

On September 19, 1804, the Committee of Correspondence was asked by the Court to offer suggestions on a revised plan for training Company servants. Two weeks later the Committee recommended the establishment of an institution in England for educating candidates for the Company’s service. According to Ainslee Embree, “there was never any question in the minds of those familiar with the Company’s administration that Grant was the driving force behind the move to establish a College and was the author of the Report that outlined its constitution.” The Court gave the scheme its immediate approval. On September 10, 1805, Castlereagh finally agreed to the Court plan and Haileybury College was on the way to being founded.

Grant did not abolish the College of Fort William; he seemed satisfied, for the moment, to transfer the European part of the institution’s curriculum from Calcutta to Hertford. He also shifted the burden of student orientation from the shoulders of the Orientalists, who dominated the Calcutta college, to those of Cambridge clergymen, who were expected to indoctrinate the boys well in England before sending them off to India. Grant’s report provided that “Overarching the whole curriculum . . . was to be a concern for religion and morality, for without a full attachment to the principles and truths of the Christian faith . . . the young civil servants

38 Extract from Public Letter to Bengal, May 23, 1798, quoted ibid., p. 190.
40 Minutes and Reports of the Committee of Haileybury College, I (October 26, 1804), 1–2, cited by Embree, p. 195.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Board Minutes, 3, f. 141 (September 10, 1805), cited by Philips, p. 130.
would not be able to fulfil their trust either to Great Britain or the people of India.”

The massacre at Vellore in 1806 created a furor in England which led to a polarization of ideas between Orientalists and Evangelicals concerning the best means of morally and culturally rehabilitating the Hindus. The debate was carried on between 1807 and 1813 in the Court of Directors, in Parliament, and by means of books, pamphlets, and petitions which brought the Hindu and missionary questions into print for the first time before the English public.

In March, 1807, Elphinstone, Chairman of the Court of Directors, informed the younger Dundas, President of the Board, that the Vellore mutiny seemed to have originated in “opposition to the innovations in the customs and religious institutions of the sepoys, fanned to heat by general rumors of their forced conversion to Christianity and by the family and adherents of Tipu Sultan at Vellore.”

A month later the Court decided that both Cradock, the Vellore commandant, and Bentinck, the governor of Madras, had been guilty of forcing the sepoys to change their personal habits of dress and hygiene against their will and especially reprimanded Bentinck for neglecting to profit from previous signs of discontent. Both men were immediately recalled.

Grant and Parry, the two leading Evangelicals in the Court, tried to belittle any attempt to associate the mutiny with missionary activity. They were apparently succeeding well when Thomas Twining, a powerful enemy of Grant, decided to implicate the missionaries publicly in the debate. Twining, who had served in the Bengal civil service from 1792 to 1805, did not choose so much to defend the validity of Hinduism in his pamphlet as to warn the Court against the inevitable revolution that would result from missionary interference: “If ever the fatal day shall arrive when religious innovation shall set her foot in that country, indignation will spread from one end of Hindoostan to the other; and the arms of fifty millions of people will drive us from that portion of the globe with

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38 Minutes and Reports of the Committee of Haileybury College, October 26, 1804, cited by Embree, p. 198.
39 Philips, p. 160.
40 Ibid., p. 161.
as much ease as the sand of the desert is scattered by the wind. . . .”\(^{41}\)

Twining’s blast against the missionary party produced what is generally referred to as a “pamphlet war, in which over twenty-five writers took part.”\(^{42}\) From the single issue of the Vellore Mutiny, the argument developed into a full altercation in which the Orientalism of the Asiatic Society, the Bengal Civil Service, and the College of Fort William were confronted by the evangelical attitudes of the Grant-Parry-Wilberforce faction, the Baptist Mission Society, and the Foreign Bible Society. Grant’s powerful position in the Court of Directors (maintained successfully since 1804) enabled him to bring the matter to a head in January of 1808. He defeated his antagonists 13 to 7 “in favor of the status quo as it affected the missionaries.”\(^{43}\) Toone reported to his Orientalist colleague Warren Hastings: “We were beat . . . the Saints are elevated. I never loved them, but now I detest them.”\(^{44}\)

Though the missionary problem was temporarily settled within the Court of Directors, the pamphlet war had, in fact, just begun. Major Scott Waring, a former member of Warren Hastings’s personal staff in Bengal and later a Member of Parliament, was a fiery, controversial figure. Quite willing to represent Orientalism openly, he wrote a number of powerfully worded tracts filled with extreme allegations. First he reiterated Twining’s basic position that “any attempts to interfere with the religion, the laws, or the local customs of India, must inevitably tend to the destruction of the British powers.”\(^{45}\) Then he implied that the massacre at Vellore was caused by a number of Baptist Missionaries who “appear to be illiterate, ignorant and as enthusiastic as the wildest devotees among the Hindoos.”\(^{46}\)

Interestingly enough, it was Scott Waring, presumably searching for a scapegoat, who helped to bring the name of William Carey to the attention of the English public: “The head of this


\(^{42}\) Philips, p. 164.

\(^{43}\) Ibid.

\(^{44}\) Toone to Hastings, Additional Manuscripts, 29183, f. 153 (January 30, 1808), quoted ibid.


\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 342.
mission is a Mr. William Carey who enjoys a salary from the Company of eight hundred pounds a year, as teacher of the Bengalee and Sanscrit languages." Waring was puzzled as to how a missionary—a Baptist one at that—who had no legal right to be in India was actually deriving money from the Company. He found himself at a loss to understand precisely what Carey’s title was: in the Company’s list, he was styled Mr. William Carey; in the college he was known as Professor Carey; while the “Bible Society have given him the dignified title of ‘Reverend.’”

Scott Waring viewed with alarm what he described as a conspiracy between the Bible Society, the Serampore Mission, and the Evangelicals, all of whom seemed determined to undermine British rule in India. He advocated the immediate recall of these “ignorant and bigoted sectarian English Missionaries.” In a later pamphlet Waring modified his stand concerning Carey’s ignorance or lack of intelligence. He now claimed to have evidence that Carey was “the brains” behind a “conspiracy” at Serampore in 1806:

He may be a dissenter of great piety, a good man and a competent teacher of the Bengalee, Sanscrit, and Mahratta languages in the College of Fort William, but he had the presumption to act in defiance of the fixed regulations of the Company; and the time he chose to act with so much contumacy was when Lord Wellesley had resigned the Government, when Lord Cornwallis was dying at Ghazepure, when Sir George Barlow was on his way to Benares, and Mr. Udney was left in the sole charge of the Government.

These accusations by Waring against the Serampore missionary aroused Andrew Fuller of the Baptist Mission Society to defend Carey and his colleagues. In three *Apologies for the Late Christian Missions to India*, Fuller (with the benefit of Carey’s voluminous correspondence before him) was perhaps in the best position of anyone then in England to represent and defend the Serampore trio. Fuller’s main purpose was to demonstrate that the charge of missionary conspiracy was baseless and that the Baptists had nothing at all to do with Vellore. Then he sought to show that, though Carey was a professor at Fort William, he was basically a mission-

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48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., p. 588.
ary working not for rebellion against the British government but for spreading "the mild and tolerant spirit of Christianity." If there was a conspiracy, Fuller argued, it was hatched by deists against the followers of true religion. Carey had reported to him in a letter of February 13, 1807, that "India swarms with deists; and deists are in my opinion, the most intolerant of mankind. Their great desire is to exterminate true religion from the earth. I consider the alarms which have been spread through India as the fabrications of these men. . . ."

Fuller argued that the Twinings and the Warings were dangerously misleading because they believed that Hindooistan's present condition, in which millions suffered under what he held to be the evils of Hinduism, was more conducive to the stability of British rule than a Hindustan whose enlightened subjects were bound to England by a unity of the Christian spirit. He attempted to reassure people who still feared an uprising by Hindus by a portrayal of Hindu social structure, as he saw it:

Hindoos resemble an immense number of particles of sand, which are incapable of forming a solid mass. There is no bond of union among them, nor any principle capable of effecting it. Their hierarchy has no head, no influential body, no subordinate orders. The brahmans, as well as the nation at large, are a vast number of disconnected atoms, totally incapable of cohesion. . . . When to this are added their natural imbecility, and the enervating influence of Climate, it will be evident that nothing is less to be apprehended than a steady concerted opposition to the spread of Christianity. . . .

The Orientalists were never as well organized as the Evangelical forces. Apparently apprehensive of being condemned as anti-Christian during a period of hostility in England to the ideals of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the Orientalists gave anonymous support to those of their comrades who did expose themselves in print. Fuller was obviously disturbed by men who may well have been friends or even students of William Carey at the College of Fort William and who were now covertly defending Hinduism against the anti-Hindu onslaught of the missionaries. Fuller charged that behind Waring and other Orientalists stood "many former recently returned civil servants with an anti-mission

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52 Fuller, Complete Works, p. 576.
53 Carey to Fuller, February 13, 1807, quoted Ibid., p. 576.
54 Ibid., p. 579.
55 Ibid., p. 583.
bias". "I know not who these gentlemen are, and therefore can have no personal disrespect to any of them: but whosoever they be, I have no scruple in saying that their reports, as given in the performance before me, are utterly unworthy of credit."

As the controversy continued, the pamphlet that epitomized the Orientalist view was written by Colonel "Hindoos" Stewart, whose *Vindications of the Hindoos, by a Bengal Officer* greatly infuriated the opposition because of its frank support of Hindu civilization. Stewart's thesis was that any attempt to convert the Hindus "must inevitably prove abortive," because "on the enlarged principles of moral reasoning, Hinduism little needs the meliorating hand of Christianity to render its votaries a sufficiently correct and moral people for all the useful purposes of a civilized society." Stewart not only accepted the Hindu pantheon as composed of gods who represent "types of virtue," but also defended the theory of transmigration of the soul over the Christian notion of heaven and hell. On the subject of Hindu mythology, which missionaries ridiculed at every opportunity, Stewart commented: "Whenever I look around me, in the vast region of Hindoo Mythology, I discover piety in the garb of allegory: and I see Morality, at every turn, blended with every tale; and, as far as I can rely on my own judgement, it appears the most complete and ample system of Moral Allegory that the world has ever produced."

Stewart did not believe that Hinduism encouraged idolatry. It was true that Hindus worshipped the Diety through images, but "we satisfactorily learn from the Geeta, that it is not the mere images, but the invisible spirit, that they thus worship." Stewart's cultural attitude was, in fact, the outspoken expression of an "Indianized" Englishman, not uncommon since the period of Warren Hastings, and very hostile to the ethnocentric attitudes of the Evangelicals.

Stewart, as in the case of all Indophiles and Orientalists, had to face the problem of Hindu decay evident at that time. His own solution to this problem was remarkably similar to that of the College of Fort William students, as expressed in their disputations.

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56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
59 Ibid., pp. 10–11.
60 Ibid., p. 97.
61 Ibid., p. 44.
Stewart’s sources of information were clearly the scholarly works of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. “That there are many reprehensible customs among the Hindoos, the mere offspring of superstition, cannot, unhappily, be denied,” Stewart wrote.\(^{(62)}\) However, he pointed out that the scriptures of the Hindus, particularly the Vedas, do not enjoin such practices but demonstrate (as Colebrooke reported in 1804 and 1805)\(^{(63)}\) the unity of the Godhead.\(^{(64)}\) In Stewart’s opinion, cultural change must not be imposed upon the Hindus by the intrusion of alien institutions, thoughts, or values but must come through a reform of the indigenous civilization: “I would endeavour to enlighten them on these points, through the medium of their priests. An injunction from the seat of Government, to the Colleges of Nuddeah, Benares, and other places, to take into consideration the obnoxious points that grate the feelings of humanity, would be an expedient of more effect than the prohibitionary mandate of our Government.”\(^{(65)}\)

The controversy reached Parliament when the Company’s charter came up for renewal in 1813. Former governors-general such as Hastings, John Shore (later Lord Teignmouth), and Wellesley joined the throng of Anglicists and Orientalists arguing the kind and degree of cultural change that should be envisaged under the Charter Renewal Act. Hastings argued quite naturally for the Orientalist position of rehabilitating Hindu civilization from within, while advocating strict neutrality on the part of the Indian government in the support of mission activity.\(^{(66)}\) Lord Teignmouth, President of the Foreign Bible Society and a resident of Clapham since 1802,\(^{(67)}\) supported the Evangelical posture, but with moderation. He maintained that it was quite ridiculous to believe that Hindus would not embrace another religion, since the Indian Muslims were once probably Hindus.\(^{(68)}\) As a Clapham Evangelical, he based his defense of missionary activity on the great need among Hindus for moral reform.\(^{(69)}\) Only the strong ethical content of

\(^{(62)}\) Ibid., p. 69.
\(^{(63)}\) Supra, pp. 40–41.
\(^{(64)}\) Stewart, p. 69.
\(^{(65)}\) Ibid., p. 70.
\(^{(67)}\) Memoir of the Life and Correspondence of John, Lord Teignmouth, p. 35.
\(^{(68)}\) Ibid., p. 141.
\(^{(69)}\) Ibid., pp. 142–143.
Christianity could eradicate the deeply rooted deceit, obscenity, and tendency toward corruption that he found so common in Hindus. Wellesley, though defending the Serampore missionaries whom he had supported in the past, seemed more concerned with rehabilitating the College of Fort William into the institution that it was before 1807. He actually published a collection of his papers on the subject as a reminder of his formerly glorious “university of the East.”

The two men most effective in winning Parliament over to the Evangelical cause were Charles Grant and William Wilberforce. Both had similar attitudes toward Hinduism, and it is not unlikely that the active Wilberforce, who had little time for direct experience with India, derived both his information and his prejudices from Grant. The writings and speeches of the two men portrayed Hinduism as rotten to the core and incapable of any sort of restoration, reform, or renaissance. As Wilberforce argued in his famous speech before Parliament in June, 1813, “The Hindu divinities were absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness and cruelty. In short, their religious system is one grand abomination.”

It was Grant who supplied Parliament with a reform program and Wilberforce who provided the organizational experience gained in twenty-eight years of championing unpopular causes of a philanthropic nature. The differences between the two men are significant. Grant was a veteran India man with an economic and political interest in Company affairs. His scheme for Anglicizing the inhabitants of India was fully expounded in the *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain*, which Grant submitted to Parliament in 1813. Grant may have sincerely believed that the permanence of British rule in India was

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70 Ibid.
72 Great Britain, *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates*, XXVI (June 22, 1813), 164.
73 The Evangelical Party was formed in 1785, the same year in which Wilberforce entered Parliament for the first time as a Member from Hull. See F. K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians: The Age of Wilberforce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 149.
74 The *Observations* were largely completed by 1792, printed privately in 1797, and submitted to Parliament as evidence for Charter-renewal agitation in 1813–1832.
not possible unless the subject peoples were converted to Christianity, thereby establishing unbreakable ties between the two nations. English education and Christian conversion would also make the people more industrious, help eliminate poverty, and, incidentally, create a market for British manufacturers.\textsuperscript{78}

Grant, an influential Director in the Court, expostulated the Evangelical cause for India out of practical motivations, but Wilberforce acted apparently from the inner promptings of a man constantly and unyielding at war with the world’s moral corruption. For Wilberforce, cultural change in India was but one of dozens of philanthropic causes for which he had struggled since the formation of the Evangelical party in 1785. Among the original Evangelicals—Hannah Moore, John Thornton, and John Newton—organized opposition to moral corruption was the answer both to the Enlightenment and to French revolutionary thought.\textsuperscript{79} It should not be overlooked that the Wilberforce who concerned himself with the liberty of the African slaves and the heathen millions of India was the same Wilberforce who repudiated liberty in England by supporting the acts of repression and the suspension of habeas corpus.\textsuperscript{77}

Liberals and Radicals despised him and called him a hypocrite.\textsuperscript{78} “Oh, that our skin were black” Daniel O’Connell exclaimed on behalf of the Irish peasantry while giving vent to his dislike of the great philanthropist.\textsuperscript{79} Nor should it be overlooked that one of the works condemned as “licentious” by a Wilberforce moral reform organization was Tom Paine’s \textit{Age of Reason}.\textsuperscript{80}

Wilberforce, a crippled, half-blind little man with an oratorical gift, was a member of at least seventy philanthropic organizations primarily interested in fighting moral corruption in England.\textsuperscript{81} Though many missionaries such as Ward were quick to point out the wretched position of women in India, Evangelicals never offered a satisfactory explanation as to why this same wretchedness existed in a Christian country such as England. At the same time


\textsuperscript{79} Brown, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 8.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., p. 112.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p. 113.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 86.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p. 71.
that Wilberforce and Grant fought so desperately to "save" Hindu women, London was swarming with at least 50,000 prostitutes and 400 individuals who "made their living by getting females from eleven to fourteen years old for prostitution." As a point of fact, Wilberforce and his associates did not overlook England in their scathing condemnation of world-wide immorality. Britain was "One great lazar-house of moral and intellectual disease . . . one hideous bloated mass of sin and suffering—one festering heap of corruption infecting the wholesome air which breathes upon it, and diffusing all around the contagion and terror of its example." 

Clearly, then, Wilberforce viewed Hindu decadence from the same standpoint of moral indignation that reprehended the ethical disease of his own countrymen. After his successful campaign in 1807 for the abolition of the slave trade, he sought to lay the foundation for the "communication to our Indian fellow-subjects of Christian light and moral improvement." Knowing full well the power of public opinion, he appealed to the organizations that had known him for years and had learned to respect what William Pitt had called "the greatest natural eloquence in English." Between March and June, 1813, the months during which Parliamentary committees were investigating the "missionary and Hindu questions," Wilberforce had received 837 petitions from societies throughout the realm supporting the Evangelical position on India. This extraordinary manifestation of pressure politics in a free society had a profound effect on the government. On May 26 the Earl of Buckinghamshire, president of the Board of Control, informed Wilberforce that the Ministry was willing to establish a bishopric in India and to grant licenses to missionaries who wished to work there.

82 Ibid., p. 25.
83 Wilberforce, n.d., quoted ibid., p. 41.
84 Ibid., pp. 70–71.
85 Wilberforce, n.d., quoted ibid., p. 108.
86 Pitt, n.d., quoted ibid., p. 3.
87 Phillips, p. 189.
88 Ibid.