The Great Indian Education Debate

Documents Relating to the Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy, 1781–1843

EDITED BY LYNN ZASTOUPIL
AND MARTIN MOIR

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Preface

> *... a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.*[1]

These harsh words by a man who confessed that he could not read the literature written in the languages of India and Arabia have stirred strong feelings ever since they first appeared more than a century and a half ago. Penned by Thomas Macaulay in 1835 as part of his minute on Indian education, this and other similar passages have made that document one of the most famous (or infamous) official essays in the long history of the British empire. Oft-discussed and readily available in print today, Macaulay's minute remains an important part of the history of cultural imperialism.

Less famous, and certainly less accessible, are the views of those who both disagreed and agreed with Macaulay. While the context for Macaulay's minute has been thoroughly explored by various scholars and biographers, little attempt has been made to bring back into print (or, in some cases, publish for the first time) the views of British officials and private Indians who also took pen to paper to address the same heated issue that animated Macaulay in 1835. That issue, of course, was what kind of public education should the British promote in their growing Indian empire. Controversy on the matter had been brewing for some time before erupting in 1834 into a bitter debate between orientalists (who respected Indian classical education and wished to engraft western knowledge onto it) and anglicists (who saw little good in traditional Indian education and wished to modernize India by introducing English-language education as widely as possible). Macaulay's minute, while brilliant rhetorically, conveys a very incomplete and partisan impression of the complex and important arguments advanced by various participants, British and Indian alike, in a controversy whose roots extended back into the eighteenth century.

Furthermore, some of the best arguments by Macaulay's opponents were developed in response to his minute and could not have been fully

anticipated by him. Among these responses are informative pieces by H. H. Wilson and John Stuart Mill, two unlikely allies in the Indian education controversy. Their challenging ideas regarding the need to preserve and rejuvenate the national literature of India by cultivating the classical languages of Sanskrit and Arabic have remained buried (to all but research scholars) in an obscure nineteenth-century journal and a fair copy of a handwritten manuscript housed in the India Office Records section of the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections, respectively. The fact that these two leading intellectuals challenged Macaulay's ethnocentric perspective has generally been neglected by those captivated, or horrified, by the power of Macaulay's better-known prose. Wilson's piece in particular, with its suggestions of modern multiculturalism, has suffered from this neglect.

Another problem with Macaulay's minute is the impression of finality that it created. John Clive exemplifies the common assumption that, despite the opposition of Mill and the orientalists and '[b]arring a few sops to Indian public opinion,' the anglicist victory was secure, and 'so it remained' in the years to follow after Lord Bentinck made his 1835 decision in favor of English-language education.[2] But a closer look at the educational policy actually pursued in the aftermath of the controversy suggests that the orientalists' struggle to preserve at least key parts of their program was more successful than Clive and most others have recognized. Rather than a complete victory for the partisans of English, the policy implemented after 1839 was a compromise one in which important orientalist measures were retained. In exposing the extent to which the orientalists successfully fought back after 1835, this volume seeks to undo the false impression that Macaulay had the last word on the matter of education.

Also missing from most accounts of the controversy are the voices of Indians who both contributed to and contested British educational policy. To be sure, Rammohun Roy's 1823 letter to the Bengal authorities requesting more western education has received considerable attention in recent years, but the fact that Indians helped fashion both orientalist and anglicist thinking from the start has received scant attention. Useful here is the perspective of a growing body of scholarship that denies that Indians were passive victims of orientalist discourses and instead explores the various ways in which they participated in the construction of imperial policies and attitudes.[3] Employing this new concept of a dialogic encounter between the British and their Indian subjects in the early days of the raj makes it possible to demonstrate that what is usually assumed to be a 'British' debate actually involved a good deal of Indian participation. From the start, Muslims and Hindus alike worked closely with British officials on both sides of the education debate, pushing British officials to acknowledge Indian traditions, contesting official interpretations, and offering ideas and suggestions – even inspiration in key cases – that

influenced the course and content of the debate. Part of what Indians had to say about education survives in documentary form and is printed here (for the first time in some cases); in other cases, their contributions to this debate exist only as subtexts and marginalia in documents and essays written by British officials. Recovering as much as possible these South Asian voices is one of the major objects of this volume; in doing so, the goal is to improve our understanding of how imperial discourses arose in a process of negotiation between the colonizer and the colonized.

This new edition of the most important documents pertaining to the Indian education controversy has been prepared with these various ends in mind. Many of the documents included here first appeared in a 1920 volume edited by H. Sharp and published by the British government in India.[4] Long out of print in the west, Sharp's volume was republished by the National Archives of India in 1965 as a photo litho edition; while still important for the wide range of materials pertaining to Indian education it presents, Sharp's volume contains a few errors in need of correction. Moreover, Sharp left out some crucial documents, including several of the petitions from the Indian community, the above-mentioned pieces by Wilson and Mill, a spirited defense of the reformers' position by Charles Trevelyan (who played a key role in the anglicist victory) in his 1838 book, *On the Education of the People of India*, and a cogent plea for vernacular education by Brian Hodgson. It is hoped that by bringing together into a single volume essays not easily obtained, long out of print, never before published, or scattered about in sundry books and journals, the imbalance created by undue attention to Macaulay's captivating minute can be redressed. Modern readers will thus be better able to judge the relative merits of the orientalist and anglicist programs – and see connections to current debates about multicultural studies – by reading otherwise neglected essays penned by important figures such as Wilson, Mill and Trevelyan. In addition, easier access to the ideas of Indians such as Rammohun Roy and thousands of anonymous petitioners will help undermine the prevalent impression that the controversy was simply an exercise in colonial power involving Europeans only.

This volume has been a collaborative work in all respects. All of the major ideas, documents and editorial materials were agreed upon during the many lengthy discussions that took place over the past several years. Differences of opinion on matters of interpretation remain, of course, and readers so inclined may wish to take note of the fact that the editorial material pertaining to the documents (including textual introductions), as well as the note on sources and editing methods, the biographical notes and the glossary are almost exclusively the work of Moir, while the general introduction was mainly written by Zastoupil (although important segments – especially regarding the circumstances surrounding documents twenty-five, twenty-nine and thirty – bear equally the mark of each).

We have accumulated many debts while working on this volume. We wish to thank the following individuals and institutions for their valuable aid and advice over the past several years: Richard Bingle, Michael Drompp, Anthony Farrington, Michael Fisher, Jill Geber, Sanjukta Ghosh, David Harvey, David Lelyveld, Javed Majeed, Michael O'Keefe, Catherine Pickett, Avril Powell, Peter Robb, Dietmar Rothermund, Graham Shaw, the faculty development committee at Rhodes College, the staff of the India Office Records section of the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections and Nancy Hunt, who prepared the index. Our spouses – Zawahir Moir and Margot Lueck-Zastoupil – require special mention for their intellectual support and technical advice on matters ranging from the meaning of Arabic terms to the proper use of modern computer technology (each deserves credit as well for enduring with great patience numerous phone conversations and endless mention of 'the education book'). And Peter Zastoupil has served as an important reminder of why education and cross-cultural understanding remain to this day vital subjects of study.

Some of the ideas and information presented in the introduction were first published as part of an essay by Lynn Zastoupil entitled 'India, J. S. Mill and "Western" Culture' in Martin Moir, Douglas Peers and Lynn Zastoupil, eds., *J. S. Mills's Encounter with India* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

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Lynn Zastoupil, Memphis
Martin Moir, London

Notes

1 For the full passage from which this is taken, see document fourteen below, p. 165.
2 Clive, *Macaulay*, p. 399.
3 For examples of this new scholarship, see Irschick, *Dialogue and History*, Bayly, *Empire and Information* and Dirks, 'Colonial Histories and Native Informants.'
4 *Bureau of Education, India. Selections from Educational Records. Part I 1781–1839*. One document, number thirty, was published in the companion volume to Sharp's, edited by J. A. Richey (*Bureau of Education, India. Selections from Educational Records. Part II 1840–1859*) and published by the government of India in 1922.

Note on Sources and Editing Methods

Almost all the texts or documents presented in this volume have been transcribed or reproduced from archival/manuscript materials and early published works held in the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections (OIOC). In fact, in many cases the sources used are official minutes, letters, dispatches, petitions, etc. drawn from archive series originally belonging to the London offices of the East India Company and the Board of Control – the government body which supervised the company's activities between 1784 and 1858. All such archives now form part of the India Office Records (IOR) section of the OIOC.

Full information about the sources for particular texts, whether archival or published, is given at the end of each textual introduction under the heading **SOURCE(S)**. This includes the detailed references for the main source used, as well as other known copies; archival and bibliographical data affecting dating, reliability, etc.; and, where appropriate, select references to previous publications of the item(s) concerned.

In making our selection of texts from the extensive body of documentation and literature originally generated by the orientalist-anglicist controversy, we initially had two general objectives in mind: firstly, to represent the broad history of the controversy from its origins to its partial resolution, using key contemporary materials; and secondly, to illustrate, as clearly as possible, the variety and intensity of the views held by the main participants. However, in the course of working through the documentation and preparing the general introduction, we also gradually identified a number of subthemes – thrown up, as it were, by the materials themselves and in some respects insufficiently acknowledged by various previous studies of the subject. These aspects included a clearer, record-based perception of the process through which the first powerful triumph of anglicist policy in 1835 was fairly quickly followed by its substantial modification. This in turn is linked to a more focused awareness of the several interrelated factors that contributed to that process of modification, viz.: the resistance organized by the British orientalists and their Indian allies; the increasing tensions

between the ideological and security concerns of the company raj; and the divided response of the company and board authorities in London. Other more specific subthemes to emerge more clearly are the key personal contributions to the debate made through the writings of Horace Hayman Wilson, Charles Trevelyan, John Stuart Mill and Brian Houghton Hodgson.

Any attempt to represent the way in which the orientalist-anglicist controversy developed cannot ignore the two pioneering volumes of documents edited by Henry Sharp (*Bureau of Education, India. Selections from Educational Records. Part I 1781–1839* [Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, India, 1920]) and J. A. Richey (*Bureau of Education, India. Selections from Educational Records. Part II 1840–1859* [Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, India, 1922]). Our special debt to Sharp's work in identifying many of the major documents for the history of the controversy is naturally considerable. There is also an obvious sense in which many of the documents first assembled by Sharp (and Richey) in an accessible printed form – such as Macaulay's minute of 2 February 1835, the government resolution of 7 March 1835, Auckland's minute of 24 November 1839, the Court of Directors' dispatch of 1841, etc. – can hardly be omitted from the scope of any subsequent serious documentary treatment of the great Indian education debate. At the same time, whilst many of the documents in the present volume were first brought to light in Sharp's work (and one – document thirty – was printed in Richey's volume), nearly half are either not included (documents eleven, sixteen, eighteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-six, twenty-seven and twenty-eight), or only partially printed in Sharp or Richey (documents three, five, twelve and thirteen). In fact, to the best of our knowledge, much of this latter material is 'new' in the sense that either it has never before been published in extenso or is now reprinted for the first time since its original publication in the nineteenth century. Its significance in illustrating the various historical subthemes explored in this book has already been indicated.

One other general point needs to be emphasized in connection with those items which were previously published in Sharp's *Selections*. That is, whereas – as has already been mentioned – almost all the items reproduced here have been taken from sources in the British Library, Sharp's texts were largely based upon archives and publications held in India, especially in the Imperial Record Department, now the National Archives of India. A useful opportunity thus presented itself for comparing the alternative available copies. Our findings, in terms of minor verbal discrepancies and suggested reliable readings, are incorporated in the editorial notes for the texts concerned.

For those unfamiliar with the richness and complexity of the India Office Records, the variety of archival sources used in the present volume may also come as a surprise. This complexity is particularly reflected in the existence of more than one officially attested archive copy of the same document. For

example, for the period covered by this study, letters between the East India Company's Court of Directors in London and the British governments in India (in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay) are usually preserved in the India Office Records in at least two separate groups of documents, viz.: those maintained by the company itself (IOR: E/4) and those originally kept by the Board of Control (IOR: L/E/3, L/P&J/3, etc.). Similarly, in the case of minutes recorded by high officials in the British Indian governments, as well as letters received by those authorities from local sources, the India Office Records usually possesses two equally authentic archival copies, one entered in the relevant set of official Consultations regularly sent by ship from India to London for the information of the home government (IOR: P), and the other filed away in the London series known as the Board's Collections (IOR: F/4). It is interesting to note that down to 1830 this last series largely consists of copies made in London from the Consultations received from India; thereafter it comprises copies made in Calcutta, etc., and sent in advance of the regular Consultations by the authorities in India in the form of enclosures to their letters addressed to the Court of Directors. In addition to this extensive duplication of manuscript documentation, the company was also called upon from time to time to arrange for further copies of its administrative records to be printed for the use of parliament. See also Bibliography.

Transcription of Documents

As regards the transcription and editing of the archival materials presented here, we have generally followed the practice of adhering as closely as possible to the form and style of the original manuscripts and printed texts. This includes retaining the original spelling and, as far as is feasible, the original punctuation. Only in a fairly limited number of cases, where the copyist's failure to provide adequate punctuation actually hinders the modern reader from grasping the sense, has it seemed necessary to make appropriate minor corrections or insertions in square brackets. Likewise, we have for the most part retained the generous sprinkling of capital letters, particularly on display in the earlier documents, except sometimes where the use of capitals merely seems to reflect the personal idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies of the individual scribes. Obvious errors in spelling or verbal omissions are indicated either within square brackets in the text or in editorial notes.

Editorial Notes and Footnotes

Editorial notes have been placed at the end of documents, in contrast to original footnotes or marginal notes (i.e. those made by the original

writers), which are given as footnotes on the appropriate pages of the texts as printed here. Any necessary editorial material or comments on these original footnotes have been italicized within square brackets.

Glossary

Words of Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, etc. origin, occurring in the documents, are briefly defined in the glossary, where they are given in **bold** form but without diacritics.

Place and Personal Names, and Foreign Terms

Place and personal names referred to in the Introduction, the textual introductions, and the editorial notes are usually given in their standard modern spellings, or occasionally in more familiar forms, e.g., Benares rather than Varanasi. In general foreign words – especially those of South Asian or Middle Eastern origin – have not been placed in italics, since most of these will be familiar to English readers, or definitions are provided either in the text or in the glossary.

Abbreviations

GCPI	General Committee of Public Instruction
IOR	India Office Records
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collections (of the British Library)
PC	Previous Communication

INTRODUCTION

Origins of the Controversy

When the East India Company came into political power in eighteenth-century India, it did so within the confines of a well-established political and social order. If other empires have had their origins in outright conquest that resulted in the imposition of new institutions and traditions, the British raj was characterized in its founding period by shrewd adaptation to, and skillful manipulation of, existing political institutions, social customs and cultural symbols. The precariousness of British power in a distant subcontinent had much to do with this situation, but the tenuous nature of the British presence was as much an effect as cause of company policies aimed at making maximum use of indigenous resources to keep costs down while securing its burgeoning trade with India. Long before company officials had to worry about ensuring the loyalty of Bengalis by keeping up familiar judicial and revenue practices, they had learned to work with Indian merchants, bankers, rajas and soldiers, merging their own interests with those of various indigenous groups throughout the subcontinent and absorbing from these groups valuable resources as well as vital information and skills needed to function effectively in a foreign culture.[1]

In a new study C. A. Bayly has provided further insights into the relationship between Indian society and the making of the British raj. Arguing for the existence of a public arena in pre-colonial north India, Bayly demonstrates that one of the major factors in British expansion was their ability to manipulate an existing and well-functioning information order. This public arena – what Bayly calls the Indian ecumene – was quite diverse, involving literate classes and learned scholars as well as itinerant bards, bazaar rumor-mongers and others operating more in the realm of oral and popular culture; it was just as capable of providing critical opposition to public policies as any modern public in the west, Bayly argues, despite the fact that printed media would not take hold until well into the nineteenth century and under European auspices. British military and diplomatic successes owed much to their ability to work with,

and learn from, the literate classes in the upper ranks of the ecumene, as well as their facility in using the various methods for gathering strategic information long employed by Indian rulers.[2]

Crucial intermediaries in this process were the munshis, or the community of writers whom Bayly demonstrates played such an important role both in the pre-colonial ecumene and the early colonial period. Mostly Muslims in north India, but often Hindus in other regions such as south and western India, these munshis were keepers of what might be called the administrative culture of eighteenth-century South Asia. Skilled in Persian language and literature – both of which were essential parts of diplomatic, court and elite culture throughout the subcontinent – the munshis were desperately needed by the British as they maneuvered their way through diplomatic exchanges and political intrigues in their rise to power. For their part, the munshis saw themselves as educating their British employers and thus keeping alive the political culture of which they were the guardians.[3]

This engagement with, and indebtedness to, knowledge-rich local informants was not only crucial to the military and diplomatic successes that helped propel the British to power. It was also a vital part of the calculated attempts by the British to win popular support after they made the transition to power. This is manifestly the case with educational policy: hardly an example of Europeans imposing their views on an inert population, the first British efforts at public support of educational institutions in India are a clear example of what Eugene Irschick has called the dialogic process by which imperial policies and attitudes were constructed jointly by rulers and ruled.[4] Very dependent upon their munshis and quite accustomed to interacting with local groups of Indians whose interests often merged (if only temporarily and imperfectly) with their own, British officials were very receptive to local suggestions that it was their duty, as the new rulers of Bengal, to take up established traditions of public support for educational purposes.

British engagement with the South Asian educational tradition began with Warren Hastings, the first governor-general of British India (1773–1785), who established orientalism as the official policy and unofficial mood of the fledgling British government in Bengal. Acutely aware of the precariousness of British power and personally sympathetic to Indian culture (he was noted for his special interest in Islamic art and literature and his patronage of scholars and poets, both Indian and British[5]), Hastings was instrumental in forging an imperial vision that lasted well into the middle of the nineteenth century in some circles. In this vision of empire, the British were to secure their power by trying to act like Indian rulers, accommodating themselves to Indian laws, opinions, customs and attitudes. Hastings thought this policy politically necessary both because it would be impossible to impose British laws and institutions upon India and because their Indian subjects seemed to expect the British to act like

South Asian rulers. The influence of the munshi community seems apparent in the latter argument, but Hastings and his followers were already receptive to the idea of Indianizing British rule because of their own intellectual fascination with aspects of South Asian culture. Hastings promoted various scholarly enterprises, including an attempt to found a Persian professorship at Oxford, the translations of Arabic and Sanskritic legal texts into Persian and English, and the preparation of a grammar of Bengali.[6] If these and other projects both served British political interests and helped satisfy the intellectual curiosity of Hastings and the orientalist scholars whom he patronized, it is probable that the guardians of pre-colonial administrative culture found some satisfaction in the scholarly pursuits and early political measures of their new rulers.

This latter supposition is borne out by the events surrounding Hastings' decision to found an institution of Muslim higher education in Calcutta, where the commingling of British political and intellectual interests with those of the literate classes of the Indian ecumene is apparent. In 1780 Hastings was approached by a delegation of Muslims who asked him to found a madrasa for the study of Islamic law and other traditional subjects. The surviving English abstract of their petition[7] and Hastings' minute of April 1781 (the latter reprinted below as document one) indicate that the delegation advanced several reasons why the governor-general should found an institution of Islamic studies: a famed scholar was in Calcutta who could be convinced to stay and help found a madrasa; the British had succeeded the nawabs of Bengal, who had supported two madrasas during their period of greatness in the eighteenth century; the British city of Calcutta was becoming 'the Seat of a great Empire' and 'it had been the Pride of every polished Court and the Wisdom of every well regulated Government, both in India and in Persia to promote by such Instructions the Growth and Extention of liberal Knowledge'; a favorable impression would be created among the general public; the British needed well-trained individuals to assist in the judicial administration of Bengal; and Hastings was well known for his patronage of oriental learning. This appeal to Muslim tradition, public opinion, practical need and Hastings' fame as a benefactor of oriental studies was successful: Hastings advanced personal funds to help found what became known as the Calcutta Madrasa in 1780; later he convinced the London authorities to support the institution with a grant of a permanent endowment of village revenues.[8]

Eleven years later Jonathan Duncan – obviously following the example set by Hastings – suggested in a letter, accompanied by a set of proposed rules (both reprinted below as document two), that the company establish what became known as Sanskrit College at Benares. The two main benefits foreseen by Duncan were similar to those suggested by the exchange between Hastings and the Muslim petitioners. First, founding such an institution would be valuable for 'its Tendency towards endearing our Government to the native Hindoos.' Here Duncan went one step

further than Hastings: while the governor-general had responded to an appeal to uphold a tradition among rulers throughout the Islamic world, Duncan argued the British should outdo their Hindu predecessors by founding the first public institution of Sanskritic learning in Benares. The second benefit foreseen by Duncan – one clearly political in nature – was that of 'preserving and disseminating a knowledge of the Hindoo Law, and proving a Nursery of future Doctors and Expounders thereof to assist the European Judges' in the administration of justice. But the scholarly fascination that Duncan shared with Hastings is also evident in his comment that the British might accumulate at little expense 'a precious Library of the most ancient and Valuable General Learning and Tradition now perhaps existing in any part of the Globe.'[9]

Peter Marshall has argued persuasively that Hastings' imperial vision was informed by a profound concern for reconciliation. Linking both his practical concerns for conciliating Indians and his personal scholarly activities was a systematic attempt to reconcile the people of both South Asia and Britain to the newly emerging British raj: 'Indians were to be reconciled to British rule by finding that Englishmen respected and admired their laws, their religion, and their institutions. Englishmen in India and, even more important, the British public at home were to be reconciled to Indians through a true understanding of Indian law, religion, and institutions.'[10] Keeping in mind Bayly's persuasive arguments regarding the role of munshis in maintaining Indian political and diplomatic culture, it seems likely that this vision of reconciliation owed more than a little to those whose task it was to reconcile the British to South Asian culture by instructing them in its basic as well as finer points. A case in point is Ali Ibrahim Khan, an influential munshi who was personally involved in the negotiations and intrigues of the war between the British and the Marathas during Hastings' administration, who worked with Duncan in Benares and served as diplomatic intermediary there for exiled members of the Mughal court, and who was mentor to other munshis who held important posts under the British. Ali Ibrahim, as Bayly notes, viewed it as his task to educate the British into good government because the latter, as he saw it, were the servants of the Mughal emperors to whom his loyalties were firm.[11]

Hastings' vision of empire gained additional support when Lord Wellesley founded the College of Fort William in 1800. Although its students were European and its aim was to train newly arrived East India Company officials, the college was steeped in the orientalist perspective that Hastings and others had helped foster under the tutelage of munshis such as Ali Ibrahim. Over the next two decades, this institution was a center of educational activities and cultural exchange, as noted scholars such as H. T. Colebrooke, William Carey and H. H. Wilson served there alongside of pandits and munshis (some of whom were connected to Ali Ibrahim and his circle of munshi contacts)[12] who assisted the orientalists

in their professorial and research pursuits. The college was instrumental in spreading orientalist views among the local community, both European and Indian, with its sponsorship of various scholarly activities.[13] As we shall see, several of those associated with the college, including several of its best students, would go on to play important roles in sustaining Hastings' views on public education in India.

But almost from the start an alternative vision of empire challenged the general views of Hastings and the orientalists. Rooted in evangelical convictions, but finding expression later in the more secular formulations of free traders and the utilitarians, this reform movement would come to the fore in the early nineteenth century as British paramountcy in the subcontinent became apparent. Confident in the supremacy of British power, culture and religion, those who held this new imperial vision were far less concerned with reconciliation than with importing into India what was deemed to be the superior institutions, ideas and faith of Britain. Secure in the belief that they had much to teach, and little to learn from India, the proponents of this new imperialism quite naturally challenged the educational program of Hastings, especially the former governor-general's goal of educating both rulers and ruled through a revival of the classical languages and literature of South Asia.

This is readily apparent in the case of the influential eighteenth century evangelical, Charles Grant. Grant served twice with the East India Company in India, from 1768 to 1771 and again from 1774 to 1790. In 1776, facing growing personal debt and grieving over the death of two of his children, Grant underwent a religious conversion in Calcutta that would eventually lead him into public prominence as a key member of the evangelical movement in Britain. His newfound religious views led Grant to active involvement in the campaign to abolish the slave trade, but also put him sharply at odds with the dominant imperial ethos established by the early orientalists and their Indian collaborators. After his conversion Grant could no longer tolerate the idea that the British must act like South Asian rulers, respecting and upholding Indian traditions and institutions. Instead, he was firmly convinced that India was very backward precisely because in his view the religion of Hinduism (his main concern) was depraved and acted as a brake on all social and material progress. These views are apparent in Grant's influential 1792 work, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain* (portions of which are reprinted in this volume as document three). Grant depicted South Asian religious and social life in bleak terms, deploring how the British had become 'passive spectators' of the 'unnatural wickedness' practiced by their Indian subjects. For too long the British had been preoccupied with maintaining their power and enhancing their financial position; blinded by the policy of conciliation, they had ignored the happiness and moral improvement of their Indian subjects. 'Are we bound for ever to preserve all the enormities in the

Hindoo system?' Grant asked. Answering in the negative, he recommended the introduction of Christianity and western learning as necessary steps in the improvement of the Hindu population. Grant's *Observations* was written as part of the evangelical attempt to persuade parliament, at the time of the debates over the East India Company's charter renewal, to require the company to open up its territories to missionary activity. Although unsuccessful in 1793, twenty years later the evangelicals were powerful enough to get the parliament both to print Grant's *Observations* in its entirety and to renew the company's charter on the condition that henceforth missionaries would be free to operate in British India.[14]

Also part of the 1813 Charter Act was a provision for public education in India. This too bore the mark of Grant, who had argued strongly that the British were morally obligated to introduce their Indian subjects to what he saw as the superior truths of Christianity and western culture. Grant was sensitive, however, to the political concerns that had led Hastings and others to view caution on religious matters as vital to British rule. Hence Grant rejected the notion of using force to uproot caste practices or destroy religious symbols; reason and argument should be employed instead to expose the errors of Hinduism. 'The true cure of darkness, is the introduction of light' and this could best be accomplished by means of education. The *Observations* makes clear that Grant saw the diffusion of the English language as an essential first step: English would provide direct access to the superior ideas of western literature and science, which would in turn naturally lead to a more rational, scientific and Christian perspective. Growing familiarity with western learning, made possible by increasing knowledge of the English language, Grant insisted, 'would silently undermine, and at length subvert, the fabric of error' that held Hindu society together. The diffusion of English would also lead to significant material improvements as the people of South Asia came to learn about, and adopt, the advanced technological and agricultural practices of Britain.[15]

But Grant's imperial vision also owed something to the South Asian heritage. As already noted, Persian was the language of diplomacy and political culture throughout most of the subcontinent when the British rose to power. It was the Mughals who first brought Persian language and culture to the political scene in India, but its popularity as the preferred medium of political communication and information gathering outlasted the empire; moreover, Persian also became the language of the educated elites who occupied the upper ranks of the Indian ecumene, drawing Hindus and other non-Muslim groups to the study of Persian for the literary and social, as well as political, benefits that accrued to those conversant with the language of refinement and power. Grant took notice of these facts, remarking that in these circumstances Hindus not only 'readily learnt the language of government,' but became teachers of

Persian as it spread throughout South Asia.[16] Encouraged by the enduring popularity of Persian, and confident that self-interest would lead Hindus to turn to English if it became the language of government, Grant urged the British to follow the example of their Mughal predecessors and introduce a new language – their own – into public affairs. This act alone would go a long way towards diffusing a knowledge of English, and with it western knowledge, throughout the land. Important here is the fact that Grant was no less indebted than Hastings to lessons learned from the Indian ecumene for a key part of his imperial vision. As we shall see, the conclusions regarding English that Grant drew from the history of Persian in South Asia were not without merit; furthermore, later reformers would prove to be no less inspired than he by the manner in which Indians took to learning foreign languages.

The two very different notions of empire and education espoused by Hastings and Grant both found their way into section 43 (reprinted below as document four) of the 1813 Charter Act. This act enjoined the East India Company to devote one lakh of rupees to public education in its Indian dominions. While the evangelicals were a powerful enough lobby to force both the opening up of British India to missionaries and a requirement that the company promote scientific education in India, they could not suppress altogether the voices of those trained in Hastings' school of empire. Hence the compromise statement of educational goals in section 43: each year the company was to set apart at least one lakh (100,000) rupees of its revenues and apply these funds 'to the revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.' As some scholars have noted, the 1813 act thus fostered two seemingly different goals at once: the revival of traditional learning and the introduction of western science.[17] This was manifestly the result of a compromise between two competing visions of empire.

It is also interesting to note that the British parliament thus required the East India Company to take responsibility for public education in India twenty years before the British government would do the same in Britain. It has been usual to attribute this simply to evangelical influences.[18] Such a reading, however, reinforces the notion that South Asians were the passive victims (or beneficiaries) of European ideas and rarely contributed to the evolution of imperial ideas and policies. A brief look at the Muslim tradition that Hastings drew upon in founding the Calcutta Madrasa helps correct that impression.

The first principal of the Calcutta Madrasa was a graduate of the Farangi Mahall, one of the most important institutions of Islamic education in eighteenth-century India. The family who established the Farangi Mahall (named after a mansion in Lucknow) in the early eighteenth century were famous for their religious learning and had long

enjoyed the patronage of the Mughal court at Delhi, beginning with the sixteenth-century emperor Akbar. The move to Lucknow was no exception, as lands were given by the emperor Aurangzeb to endow the school. Later in the century, as Mughal authority declined and a more or less independent ruler (known as the nawab of Awadh) emerged in the region, political support for the Farangi Mahall shifted to the nawab's court at Lucknow. This trend continued throughout the eighteenth century, as religious scholars trained at Farangi Mahall increasingly sought the patronage of other regional rulers who rose in influence and stature as Mughal power waned. Financial aid was usually not difficult to obtain, since patronage of the arts and learning was valued by most Muslim rulers, such as the Pathan dynasty in Rohilkhand which at its height helped support nearly five thousand scholars.[19] As noted above, the petition by the Muslim delegation that approached Hastings about establishing a madrasa (under the guidance of a distinguished scholar trained at Farangi Mahall)[20] indicates that the petitioners saw the East India Company as a successor to the Muslim state of the nawabs of Bengal and, as such, obligated to uphold the well-established tradition of royal patronage of Islamic education.

It is thus clear that early British educational efforts in India reflect the confluence of South Asian and British traditions, perspectives and needs. Accustomed to drawing upon Indian resources and working closely with various segments of the Indian public, including educated elites who could provide vital instruction in cultural knowledge, the British were easily swayed by the arguments of the literate members of the Indian public; even reformers such as Grant could not escape the influence of the munshis who played such an important role as cultural mediators between the British and their new imperial subjects. What needs to be kept in mind, however, is the awkwardness and uneasiness of the arrangement – the instability of the mixture of Muslim and Hindu tradition, imperial needs, oriental scholarship and evangelical mission – which has led various scholars to comment upon the conflicting mandates of the 1813 act. The controversy over education in the 1830s was in many respects about discarding this particular attempt to mix South Asian traditions and divergent European perspectives in favor of a new blend, one in which the interests of a rising class of Bengali Hindus and changing British imperial needs merged to create a new educational policy predicated by a shared culture of English.

The Hey-day of Orientalism

Despite the growing strength of the evangelicals, educational policy in India remained a minor concern of the East India Company until 1823 and then was largely set by the orientalists for another decade. There are

various reasons for this turn of events. The College of Fort William continued to draw support from important administrators, especially Lord Moira (later marquis of Hastings), who encouraged the orientalists in their activities while he was governor-general (1813–1823).[21] No less important is the fact that the British remained as dependent as ever on munshis and other literate members of the Indian ecumene during this period. Moreover, Warren Hastings' pragmatic concern to conciliate Indian opinion continued to animate company officials, as is quite evident in an 1814 dispatch to India (portions of which are reprinted in this volume as document five) sent by the London authorities to provide officials in India with guidance regarding the educational clause of the 1813 act. Citing the need 'to consult the feelings, and even yield to the prejudices, of the natives,' the Court of Directors recommended upholding various Indian traditions, including home schooling, honorific titles or public presentations of dress for distinguished scholars, and scholarships for needy students. They also advocated learning more about the 'ancient' system of education in Benares and cultivating Sanskritic learning because of the many valuable works written in that classical language. The diffusion of western science is barely mentioned, except in the hope that, through increased intellectual contact between the pandits and British officials trained in Sanskrit, 'the natives might gradually be led to adopt the modern improvements in ... [the] sciences.' This hope that traditionally educated scholars might slowly adopt western learning became known as the policy of engraftment, a key element in the orientalist educational program of the 1820s.

But before engraftment could be attempted, political events in the subcontinent directed the company's attention away from educational matters. War with Nepal was the chief concern of government from 1814 to 1816. Shortly thereafter British rivalry with the Marathas, a confederacy of powerful Indian states, erupted once again into the third Anglo-Maratha war of 1817–1818. The successful termination of the latter war gave the company large new territories to administer and many new disgruntled subjects to placate. The British authorities in India were thus preoccupied with settling the Maratha country for several more years, leaving the matter of educational policy in abeyance until 1823.

The final Maratha war had an indirect impact on the evolution of educational policy nonetheless. During and after the war a new school of British administrators rose to prominence who shared an imperial ideology that can be summed up by the phrase 'an empire of opinion.'[22] Key members of this group included Thomas Munro, John Malcolm and Mountstuart Elphinstone, who occupied high offices and played major roles in the administration of India in the 1820s. The ideology they shared was in many respects an extension of Hastings' views and policies, since much attention was paid to conciliating disaffected South Asian elites, respecting local customs and institutions, promoting tolerance for –

preferably friendly relations with – Indians of all classes, and generally rejuvenating what was believed to be an ancient civilization gone temporarily bad in modern times. They believed that the British empire was one of opinion, meaning that it would stand only so long as British power was unchallenged and the British could secure the good opinion of their Indian subjects. Like Hastings and the early orientalists, the empire-of-opinion group worked closely with their own munshis and other learned elites who could instruct them in the nuances of local public opinion.

The empire-of-opinion group contributed significantly to educational policy. Crucial here was their profound conviction that favorable impressions among Indians had to be cultivated if the raj was to last. They were distrustful of reformers and missionaries in India, viewing both as likely to offend the company's subjects. They encouraged instead respect for Indians and their culture, arguing always that the British should build their rule upon the solid foundation of South Asian traditions and institutions. While some improvements based upon western models were desirable, these were to be slowly and cautiously introduced, and only after the British had familiarized themselves with what was good and useful in established customs and institutions. On the whole, they thought the British mission was to reinvigorate, not replace, South Asian civilization. They thus strengthened the tendency to emphasize the revival of traditional Indian culture that had largely characterized the East India Company's educational policy since Hastings. Their views gave firm support as well to the notion of engraftment – of slowly and carefully introducing western ideas and practices – which was hinted at in the 1814 dispatch as a way to resolve the conflicting educational goals of the 1813 act.

Munro, Malcolm and Elphinstone also played a direct role in the development of policy after 1823, when the East India Company finally turned to implementing the educational provisions of the 1813 act. Munro was governor of Madras from 1820 to 1826, while Elphinstone was governor of Bombay from 1819 to 1827, when he was succeeded by Malcolm who served as governor of that presidency until 1830. This period when they were in power was an unsettled time in British India. Munro, Elphinstone and Malcolm were keenly aware of the fragile nature of British power in the aftermath of the Maratha wars, and hence were much inclined to follow Hastings' policy of conciliation. Yet pressures for reform were growing throughout the 1820s, especially among those groups who were increasingly confident of western cultural, economic and political supremacy. Chief among these were the free traders and the utilitarians (especially James Mill, who emerged in the early 1820s as an important figure in the London offices of the East India Company); both of these groups became increasingly influential with their own secular version of Charles Grant's notion that the British had a duty to rescue India from a supposed depraved state by assimilating it to western civilization.[23] Furthermore, missionaries – who, after gaining entry into British India

after 1813, had focused much of their efforts at founding English schools and distributing textbooks – were increasingly successful in drawing certain segments of South Asian society into their schools. The result of this was a small, but growing percentage of the local population (located mostly in the presidency cities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay) possessing a western education. The growing conviction among many Indians too that the British were the dominant power in the subcontinent also contributed to an increased demand for the western education provided by the missionaries, as more and more families saw economic and political value in learning the language and culture of their new rulers.[24]

Despite these increased calls for reform and westernization, some of them voiced by segments of the South Asian population, high officials such as Munro, Elphinstone and Malcolm were mostly inclined to adhere to Hastings' imperial vision. While they could condone some gradual and cautious changes, their primary emphasis was on conciliation. Here the influence of their munshis and other learned members of the local ecumene is quite apparent. Malcolm, for example, cited favorably a Brahman in central India who suggested that it would be wise to follow the lead of the famous regent Ahilyabai Holkar, who had become a legend in Malwa for her charitable contributions in support of Hindu religious institutions and learning.[25] Such advice was heeded by the British authorities. In Bombay presidency, for instance, Elphinstone encouraged the founding of a Sanskrit college at Pune (Pune College) and continued the Maratha custom of distributing prize money (called dakshina) to Brahmans as a reward for distinguished learning. When James Mill led an attack on Pune College for its traditional Sanskritic curriculum, Elphinstone saved it with a vigorous defense. Chief among Elphinstone's motives was a desire to conciliate the Marathas by promoting the traditional Sanskritic learning they held dear. Indeed, he made clear that the local community had little desire for the kind of curriculum Mill had in mind: the choice was not whether to teach western or traditional subjects, Elphinstone noted, but 'whether we are to encourage Brahmin learning or none at all.'[26] This learning had been generously supported by the peshwas, the Brahman rulers in Pune whom the British had deposed, and Elphinstone thought it politically wise to take on the peshwas' role of patrons of learning, much as Hastings had done in regard to Muslim rulers when establishing the Calcutta Madrasa. Elphinstone also saw the need to promote education as a way of drawing the local population into British administration, thus mitigating the wounded feelings of those elite groups who had formerly held political appointments under Maratha rulers. He also developed a plan for improving and extending the existing system of vernacular education in village schools. (Here Elphinstone was following in the footsteps of Munro, who favored the idea of concentrating government funds on rejuvenating the existing village schools of the Madras region).[27]

Apparent in these measures is an administrator with a keen ear for local opinion. But the Bombay governor's readiness to engage in dialogue with leading members of the Indian ecumene is no less apparent in his cautious support for some western learning. Elphinstone believed that the latter might be slowly introduced by various means, including using some of the dakshina funds to encourage traditionally educated Brahmans to take up the study of the European sciences; unofficially and, later directly, supporting missionary educational efforts; and establishing schools, including an advanced English one in Bombay, which would provide instruction for future teachers in the vernacular schools, who would thus diffuse the ideas of western literature and science among the general population. But this was to be done with great care and primarily through the encouragement of vernacular education in the village schools. These tentative measures in support of western education evolved from Elphinstone's consultation with wealthy members of the Indian community in Bombay who, as noted, were taking to the study of English and western learning. Elphinstone was in close contact with some of those who were actively involved in early attempts to diffuse western knowledge through a variety of educational initiatives and literary societies in Bombay, including Jagannath Shankar Shet, Jamsetji and Framaji Cowasji and Mohammed Ibrahim Makha. Some of these he worked with privately as a member of the Bombay Education Society (which promoted western education), while others he sought out for advice when framing his general policy on education for Bombay presidency.[28]

But Elphinstone's support for a new curriculum was too tepid for Francis Warden, a member of the Bombay council who favored the rapid and wide-spread introduction of western learning by means of instruction in English. When Malcolm succeeded Elphinstone as governor of Bombay, he too argued with Warden, who believed that a significant demand for English-language education had emerged among their Indian subjects. As evidence, Warden cited the ease with which a group of Indians raised considerable funds to establish a school with a western curriculum to honor Elphinstone upon his retirement (the institution was eventually known as Elphinstone College). Malcolm succeeded, however, in persuading the London authorities that it would be wise to move with caution, adhering to Elphinstone's pragmatic policies rather than rapidly introducing western education as Warden urged.[29] While it appeared that the voices of conservatism had won out, this may reflect only the last gasp of the old system: Malcolm was one of the firmest supporters of the policy of conciliation and seemed to work especially closely with munshis and other members of the old information order. Not to be neglected in these exchanges is the fact that Indians actively promoting western education were able to get the favorable attention of important administrators on the Bombay council, including the governor, Elphinstone. The days when the

British took their instruction solely from the guardians of the old ecumene were obviously coming to an end.

But it was in Bengal, the seat of British government in the subcontinent, that the growing pressure for western education and, at the same time, official reluctance to depart from Hastings' policies were most pronounced. As in Bombay, the increasing demand for English schools in Bengal was clearly a joint production of western reformers (including missionaries) and select segments of the local community, each viewing English education as desirable from their own distinct vantage point. This was thus no simple case of cultural imperialism, of western authorities imposing their language and culture on an inert population. Rather it is evidence of the resiliency and adaptability of the Indian ecumene, as Charles Grant had suspected when he argued that Hindus would take to English as they had to Persian. The process was more complicated than Grant's hopeful reading of South Asian history indicated, as Bayly's recent investigation of the manner in which the Indian public embraced the use of printed media from the 1820s onward demonstrates. Hardly broken or rolled under by an onslaught of European culture, members of the Indian ecumene absorbed the ideas and technologies of their British rulers and used these for their own purposes, creating in the process a new public arena in which political and social issues would continue to be discussed and contested as before. Crucial actors in this process were a new class of munshis, conversant more so in English language and culture than Persian, but still working as important assistants to British officials and acting as cultural brokers between rulers and ruled.[30] The founding of Hindu College in 1816, and the careers of Ram Camul Sen and Rammohun Roy, provide excellent evidence to support Bayly's contention that the Indian ecumene did not disappear – but instead reinvented itself – during the age of liberal reform.

As various commentators have noted, by the early nineteenth century several groups in Bengali society had come to see English education as vital to their future well being. Chief among these were the Hindu upper castes, or the bhadralok (literally, 'respectable people'), who had traditionally supplied both Muslim and Hindu rulers with well-educated administrators. Ram Camul Sen, for example, was the son of a sheristadar (a head judicial clerk whose position demanded knowledge of Persian), who rose to intellectual prominence through his excellent command of English and his close contacts with key figures in the British community such as H. H. Wilson. Some banking and trading castes also quickly adapted to the rise of the East India Company and took up the study of English to secure their fortunes.[31] While some scholars might argue from a Gramscian perspective that these individuals and groups were collaborators in the cultural subjugation of their nation,[32] there are good reasons for agreeing with those who prefer to grant a more active and positive role to Indians in their intellectual encounter with the British.

Indeed, Indians had their own agendas as they sought alliances with British merchants and administrators from the eighteenth century onward. The Tagore family, for instance, were members of an ostracized Brahman subcaste who found wealth, influence and new social status by hitching their wagon to the fortunes of the British.[33] Furthermore, the Bengali bhadralok were famous throughout the nineteenth century for maintaining a powerful attachment to Bengali language and literature alongside of their interest in English education. Dwarkanath Tagore, for example, was intimately involved in business activities with Europeans and supported the free trade movement to the point of agreeing that increased English colonization would benefit India culturally as well as economically. Yet Tagore joined the Gaudiya Samaj, established in 1823 by conservative Hindus to preserve and strengthen Bengali language and culture during the English onslaught. Likewise, Ram Camul Sen was actively involved in various projects to introduce western education in Bengal, yet he was noted for his love of Sanskrit literature and won fame for his Bengali-English dictionary which he completed in 1830. This attachment to Bengali language and culture was widespread among the bhadralok and indeed would provide the foundation for Bengali nationalism later in the nineteenth century.[34] It is difficult to square this dual commitment to British and Bengali culture with Gramscian models of cultural hegemony. More compelling is Bayly's contention that the literate elites of the ecumene during this period began to shift their interests from Persian to English language and culture. The example of Sen and his father confirms that English was increasingly perceived as the language that opened the doors to status and influence; but command of that European language was not incompatible with intellectual activities clearly associated with cultural nationalism, as Sen's response to anglicist policies (discussed below) proves.

The founding of Hindu College in 1816 is another case in point. A wealthy group of Hindus decided that they needed an institution of higher learning that would introduce Calcutta youth to western learning through the media of English and Bengali. Most of the founders shared a common background, which was newfound riches or status through economic involvement with the European community in Bengal. All of them had pragmatic reasons for instructing their youth in English language and culture, but it is difficult to maintain that they were helping pave the way for the cultural conquest of their nation. Radhakant Deb, for instance, was a noted educational reformer who combined staunch defense of Hindu orthodoxy with a commitment to the diffusion of English education.[35] Deb played a leading role in the administration of Hindu College for over thirty years and yet remained throughout, in the words of one recent commentator, 'almost a blind champion of Hindu conservatism,'[36] leading local opposition to the British government's decision to ban sati (the ritualistic, perhaps voluntary, burning of Hindu widows on their

husbands' funeral pyres) in 1829. He was also instrumental in removing the Anglo-Indian Henry Derozio from the faculty of Hindu College in 1831 because of the extreme nature of Derozio's attempt to absorb English culture, which was offensive to many Hindu families who sent their sons to Hindu College.[37] Ram Camul Sen was also an important figure in the founding and early history of Hindu College, sharing with Deb a conservative attitude towards Hinduism and contributing to Derozio's dismissal.[38]

The complex activities of Deb and Sen indicate that those in the vanguard of English-language education in Bengal could be cultural conservatives. This alone should give pause to viewing the emergence of English education in India as ample proof that cultural subjugation followed political conquest. Even more compelling evidence that Indians had their own agendas in promoting western education can be found in the career of Rammmohun Roy. Roy is an excellent example of what Grant could merely guess at and Bayly has demonstrated, namely that the Indian public was flexible enough to adapt to the British presence, absorbing western culture and the English language and in the process enriching, rather than enervating, existing intellectual and cultural trends.

Roy was born in 1772 into a Bengali Brahman family with a long history of service at the courts of Muslim rulers. From an early age Roy was educated to follow in the family tradition, studying Persian under a village maulawi and later, at age nine, moving to Patna, a center of Islamic studies, to take up the study of Arabic, Persian (at a more advanced level) and Islamic law, poetry and philosophy. After three years his mother's side of the family, worried about his education, sent him to Benares where he studied Sanskrit and the religious texts in that language. But his exposure to Sufi ideas at Patna deeply altered Roy's worldview; for the remainder of his life he would be a most unorthodox Hindu, seeking to blend elements of Islam and, later, Christianity with Hinduism. His exposure to Islam launched Roy's transformation into a committed reformer. After returning from a lengthy visit to Tibet to study Buddhism, Roy found himself unable to tolerate any more what he saw as his family's idolatry, and departed in 1797 for Calcutta. In that city he quickly made a sizable fortune through various business activities. He became involved with the British in several capacities, including as money-lender to members of the East India Company, as consultant to the maulawis at the College of Fort William (established in 1800), and as envoy of the company to Bhutan and Cooch-Behar. He began studying English at the age of 24, first making only slow progress, but then mastering the language.

Over the next several decades, Roy became a prominent (to his opponents, notorious) reformer. In religious matters, he fought against idolatry in Hinduism, promoted the idea of monotheism, worked on translating the Christian gospels into Bengali, debated the merits of

Christianity with various missionaries (Roy even converted the Baptist missionary William Adam to unitarianism with his forceful arguments against the divinity of Jesus Christ), and founded the Brahmo Samaj, a theistic reform movement. On the social front, he sought to end sati and reduce, but not eliminate, the role of caste in Indian society. Roy was also an activist in political and economic matters, opposing official efforts to curtail freedom of the press in India, to exclude Indians from British-style juries, and to restrict European settlement in India. He broke caste regulations by traveling to Britain in 1830, where he gave testimony to parliament regarding the affairs of the East India Company, supported the Reform Act of 1832, acted as envoy of the Mughal emperor, and met frequently with unitarians and reformers. He died in Bristol in 1833, wearing his sacred thread to the end.[39]

The doctrine of cultural hegemony does not do justice to Roy's moral views nor to the complexity of his interaction with the British. Roy's rationalist views on religion were formed through his early and prolonged exposure to the Muslim rationalist tradition.[40] His contact with western missionaries only expanded his religious interests, leading him to appreciate parts of the Christian tradition but also to criticize elements in it he deemed irrational, especially the doctrine of the trinity (which led, of course, to heated debate with local missionaries). In this sense, Roy learned something from his contact with the missionaries, but did so without abandoning the critical perspective on religions that he had developed before his exposure to western culture. Roy's rational exploration of Christianity was the result of a personal agenda dictated not by foreign missionaries but by his own intellectual and spiritual needs. His complex response to the British presence in South Asia also reflected a critical and independent mind rather than one given over to abject surrender. While grateful for the benefits of British rule, including the diffusion of western ideas and technology, Roy actively opposed racist policies (such as the exclusion of Indians from British juries), fought vigorously against the press censorship reintroduced by the British in 1823, and opposed the salt monopoly of the East India Company. It is for these reasons that Roy is usually seen as laying the foundations for the moderate Indian nationalism that emerged in the last three decades of the nineteenth century.[41]

Roy typifies the process by which the Indian intellectual community absorbed and turned to its own ends the new opportunities and fresh perspectives brought by the British to South Asia. Bayly's contention that the first stirring of Indian nationalism can be found among those who could operate in the languages and cultures of both the old ecumene and Britain[42] is amply borne out by Roy, whose final years in Britain saw him using his knowledge of Persian to serve as the Mughal emperor's emissary and his knowledge of English to mix with politicians and radical reformers. Roy's famous letter on education, written in 1823, is further

proof that in nineteenth-century British India a new kind of public and political figure was coming into being, one capable of blending the Indian and European heritages (in Roy's case, indigenous habits of critical thought with those of the enlightenment) and willing to use new intellectual tools to contest British interpretations of India's needs.

Upset by the decision of the East India Company to found another Sanskrit college, this time at Calcutta, Roy challenged the idea with a letter (reprinted in this volume as document eight) to the governor-general, Lord Amherst. In this letter the rationalist perspective that guided Roy in all his activities is manifest. As the reference to Bacon suggests, there is a modern European element in Roy's plea that the British devote themselves not to furthering superstition and error, but to spreading reason and science. But Roy's personal religious agenda is also quite apparent in his criticism of the plan to devote more funds to the study of 'vain and empty subtilties' and learning how to expatiate such sins as the killing of a goat. The reformer steeped in the Muslim rationalist tradition who fought idolatry, decried abuses in the caste system and challenged the doctrine of the trinity could not stand by and watch the British, themselves possessors of a vast body of modern knowledge, perpetuate what he saw as antiquated, superstitious and useless learning.

But Roy's pleas fell on deaf ears. Education policy in Bengal was being set by individuals who, like Elphinstone and Malcolm in Bombay, shared the conciliatory vision of Hastings. The Bengal authorities had finally decided to begin implementing the educational provisions of the 1813 act with a resolution (reprinted below as document seven) establishing the General Committee of Public Instruction (GCPI) in 1823. The vagueness of this resolution reflected the general lack of knowledge about the existing educational system in Bengal and uncertainty about how to interpret the conflicting goals of the 1813 act. Holt Mackenzie, originally appointed to the GCPI, penned a note (reprinted here as document six) at the time the committee was established. Mackenzie is usually seen as a member of the emerging liberal or reformist element in British administrative circles,[43] and traces of this perspective can be seen in his comments regarding the introduction of European science and useful learning. But Mackenzie was also a cautious administrator who, educated at the College of Fort William, was steeped in the Hastings school of administration and its habits of interacting with elite segments of the Indian public. One indication of this is his recommendation that his post on the committee be taken by the Persian secretary, who not only had the requisite knowledge for judging educational plans but 'what is not less important, he is immediately in the way of learning what their [Indian] sentiments are on the measures, that may be suggested or adopted.' Important here as well is his endorsement of the policy of engraftment, hinted at in the 1814 dispatch as the best way to reconcile the conflicting educational aims of

the 1813 act. Mackenzie gave flesh to the bare bones of the 1814 dispatch, arguing that it was in the natural order of things to focus on advanced education for the learned elites (rather than mass elementary education), since these elites could serve as cultural mediators between the British and their South Asian subjects. He defended this idea with arguments very similar to those advanced in other parts of India by Munro, Malcolm and Elphinstone: influential elites must be won over to British plans if there is to be any hope of diffusing western learning widely; if the British fail to draw these into their educational plans, the 'influence of Europeans ... must necessarily be very confined' and western learning would become 'an act of memory, with little more of feeling or reflection than if nonsense verses were the theme.' Mackenzie concluded that it would be best to concentrate first on improving the traditional education received by these learned elites, although European science should also be gradually introduced into the curriculum, but 'without any attempt arbitrarily to supersede [oriental learning].'

Mackenzie's general plans for engrafting western knowledge onto traditional learning would be given new form and meaning by H. H. Wilson, who dominated the GCPI from its founding until he left India in 1833 to take up the first Sanskrit chair at Oxford. Wilson was a noted Sanskritic scholar who examined the students at the College of Fort William in Sanskrit and Hindu law and served as secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal from 1811 until his departure for Britain. The Asiatic Society was founded by William Jones and others in 1784 with Warren Hastings' personal support. Most of its members were British officials in Calcutta and after 1804 the society enjoyed the official support of the Bengal government, working closely with the College of Fort William on various scholarly projects. Its members were active in collecting and bringing to publication scholarly information – including manuscripts, coins, inscriptions and the like – regarding the history, laws, religion and culture of South Asia. (Wilson would be succeeded as secretary of the Asiatic Society by James Prinsep, another key member of the GCPI who became famous in the 1830s for deciphering the ancient Brahmi script of the Mauryan period.) Wilson's intellectual interests were diverse, including mastering Sanskrit and producing (under East India Company sponsorship) a Sanskrit-English dictionary, collecting historical manuscripts, coins and inscriptions in order to begin writing western-style histories of various regions of South Asia, and writing works on ancient Hindu drama and medicine. Wilson, like all the other orientalists, was assisted in his researches by various Indian scholars who helped locate manuscripts and texts, validate their authenticity, translate them or otherwise assist in the gathering of this knowledge.[44] One of Wilson's most intimate Indian collaborators was Ram Camul Sen, who worked closely with Wilson at a printshop, on the staff of the Asiatic Society, at the Calcutta mint, in the rescue of Hindu College from financial ruin, and

even in the management of Wilson's private financial affairs. Although Wilson thought Sen a greater scholar of Bengali than Sanskrit, he praised the latter's deep interest in the ancient language and literature of Hindus.[45] As already noted, Sen is representative of the new kind of munshis coming into existence during the early nineteenth century, munshis whose command of English rather than Persian allowed them to keep up traditional roles as cultural mediators for, and trusted assistants of, government officials.

It is thus not hard to imagine why the GCPI declined to respond to Rammohun Roy's 1823 letter objecting to the establishment of the new Sanskrit College in Calcutta. This college was in many ways Wilson's pet project, since he drafted its first curriculum which included the modern sciences alongside a more traditional course of Sanskritic studies.[46] Roy's letter was passed on to the GCPI, many of whose members shared Wilson's interests (H. T. Prinsep and J. C. C. Sutherland, for instance, had won prizes for their orientalist studies at the College of Fort William),[47] with negative comments by the governor-general, Lord Amherst. The committee's minutes indicate that they agreed with Amherst that there were errors of fact in Roy's letter, especially regarding the proposed curriculum of Sanskrit College and the aims of the 1813 act (which, after all, also specified that indigenous learning be encouraged). The committee also thought that Roy's views were not representative of Hindu opinion, but instead were the thoughts 'of one individual alone, whose opinions are well known to be hostile to those entertained by almost all his countrymen.'[48]

These last comments are revealing. Wilson worked closely with Ram Camul Sen and other Bengalis such as Radhakant Deb, who, as already noted, combined western learning with a deep attachment to Sanskritic and Bengali culture. Sen's and Deb's circle were hostile to Roy's rationalist approach to religion, which began after all with attacks on idolatry and the caste system in Hinduism; moreover, many leading members of the Calcutta Hindu community resented the all-too apparent Islamic influences in Roy's life and thought. It was these groups who prevented Roy from having a role in the founding of Hindu College, despite the fact that this institution had a western curriculum of the sort in which Roy was interested. Later, when Roy joined the campaign against sati, it was defenders of Hindu orthodoxy such as Sen and Deb who formed in 1831 the Dharma Sabha, a committee to defend sati. Wilson was apparently quite familiar with nearly all of the charter members of the Dharma Sabha, and he defended their petition protesting the abolition of sati on grounds that it had been rash to abolish this Hindu practice.[49]

The GCPI's statement that Roy was an isolated individual whose opinions on education were 'discountenanced and disavowed by all the most Respectable and intelligent Hindu Residents'[50] of Bengal is an important reminder of how imperial policy was influenced by both Indian

and British interests and needs. The decision to ignore Roy's demand for more western education was made by British officials such as Wilson who were deeply involved with Sen, Deb and other members of the new Indian public who shared with Wilson a passionate commitment to the preservation of traditional learning alongside an interest in English. It was only natural for Wilson to ignore the pleas of an individual whose radical views not only collided with his own, but who was despised for personal and ideological reasons by the Indians whom Wilson trusted and depended upon in his official and private activities. The argument, then, that these collaborators and colleagues (the latter was Wilson's term of choice for Sen)[51] increasingly became mere 'sources or "native informants"' providing the valuable information that the British needed to run their empire is in need of some correction.[52] British educational policies were not simply imposed, but arose in a series of negotiations between segments of both the ruling and the ruled classes. As we shall see, the balance would soon shift, when a new generation of British officials would turn to radicals such as Roy for support in creating a different policy.

In the meantime, Wilson and the orientalists continued to dominate the workings of the GCPI. At first they generally left existing institutions alone, allowing each to follow its own original course of studies. In time, and for reasons that will be discussed shortly, they began slowly to introduce western learning, including the study of English, into these institutions. The pace of change was slow, however: English was introduced into the Calcutta Madrasa and Sanskrit College (Benares) only in 1829. They also founded three new colleges in 1824–1825 (the Sanskrit College in Calcutta and Muslim institutions at Agra and Delhi) which were to have a curriculum blending traditional studies and the modern sciences. English studies were slow in getting off the ground at each, though Delhi College was successful in offering both traditional and scientific courses.[53] The GCPI was guided in its efforts by a strong sense that public opinion in India was an impediment to the rapid introduction of western knowledge and by a conviction that the classical languages and literature of South Asia were worthy of encouragement.[54] They were not so much against introducing a modern, European system as concerned that the ground for this had to be prepared first, as Mackenzie had suggested and their own experiences indicated. Important here were their Indian advisors, who apparently were recommending caution in dealing with public opinion: in 1835, for instance, Ram Camul Sen was appointed to a committee established by the British government to investigate the possibility of introducing a western hospital to treat fevers in Calcutta; Sen's comments that the British should devote careful attention to the fact that Indians were unfamiliar with such novel institutions – and hence generally avoided them – and needed to be persuaded of their advantages sound remarkably similar to the general argument of the GCPI that

Indian opinion was not yet in favor of western learning, but could be won over if proper methods were used.[55]

This cautious approach was challenged not only in Bengal by Rammohun Roy (and in Bombay by Francis Warden), but also by James Mill from the London offices of the East India Company. Mill entered the company's service in 1819 and was soon an important figure in the examiner's office, which oversaw correspondence to and from India. When the first reports of educational activity drifted in from officials in India, it was Mill who largely drafted the responses of the London authorities. Mill was a political radical, closely associated with Jeremy Bentham and others in various reform schemes. He gained fame, and ironically enough his post with the company, with the 1817 publication of *The History of British India* which reflected his enlightenment views on reducing the power of landed elites and the clergy, applying the ideas of the emerging science of political economy, and other topics. His *History* also contained a sustained attack on the views of William Jones, the famed orientalist who had helped launch the Asiatic Society. Using the criteria established by modern science and especially utilitarianism, Mill found little of value in either ancient or modern Hindu civilization and concluded that it was folly to seek to attempt to rejuvenate a civilization that he deemed barbaric and primitive. It would be far better use of British power, he argued, to introduce the advanced ideas and institutions of western Europe. Later, as he worked his way up the ranks of the examiner's office (he would hold the high post of examiner of correspondence from 1830 until his death in 1836), Mill also challenged the policies of the empire-of-opinion group for more or less the same reasons. Among other things, he was convinced that the idea of propping up South Asian rulers in an attempt to conciliate wounded feelings was a bad one, because it meant that the superior might of a civilized nation was harnessed to that of a barbarous one. Rather than adding to the evils of Indian despotism, the British should use their power for good by directly introducing their superior system and ideas wherever possible.[56]

This argument – that the British should use their power to introduce modern (i.e., European) ideas and practices rather than to compound error by attempting to revive South Asian ones – would become a common one of British reformers in India, especially those interested in education. It is quite apparent in a February 1824 dispatch drafted by Mill[57] (portions of which are reprinted below as document nine) in response to the first reports from India on efforts to implement the educational provisions of the 1813 act. Mill argued that the GCPI's attempt to engraft modern science onto the traditional curricula at Sanskrit College and the Calcutta Madrasa had been a failure and that it would be a waste of time to pursue that plan any further. He also chastized the GCPI for its scheme (drawn up by Wilson) to combine the modern sciences and a traditional course of studies at the new Sanskrit College in Calcutta. Conceding the necessity