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Introduction
Entangled Translations[1]
The History of the Delhi College

Margrit Pernau

More than many other institutions, the Delhi College still evokes a strong emotive reaction. It has come to symbolize an encounter between British and Indo-Muslim culture through the medium of Urdu. Its heroes were men like Master Ram Chandra, the science teacher and Maulawi Zaka Ullah, the historian and textbook writer, who fearlessly set out to discover new knowledge and thus reinvigorated their own culture, guided and helped by a colonial power which was not yet intent on replacing Oriental languages with English. This belief in the profound compatibility of all cultures and hence in a cultural encounter free from the exercise of power, and the experience of humiliation, which Charles Freer Andrews, the British missionary who turned into a close collaborator and friend of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, expressed so movingly,[2] may be indispensable as a value

1 This article forms part of my larger research project on 'Multiple Identities: The Muslim Community at Shahjahanabad in the Nineteenth Century', which is supported by the Volkswagen Foundation and the University of Erfurt.

2 C.F. Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, reprint with introductions by Mushirul Hasan and Margrit Pernau, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003.

with which to shape the future. The historic Delhi College, however, was a much more contested site than the collective memory will have it.

Thus, if the one danger to avoid is an overemphasis on the harmony of the dialogue between cultures, the almost exclusive interest historiography has taken in recent time in the colonial construction of knowledge also fails to capture the complex interactions which took place in and around the Delhi College. The attention to the interrelation between knowledge and the exercise of power, to which Edward Said's seminal work[3] has directed historians, remains important to this day. Cultural encounter in nineteenth-century north India was inscribed into the colonial situation. Knowledge and power are intimately related and have to be investigated together. However, much as Said bemoans the way Western scholarship has been unilaterally defining the Orient, in the final result his work does not seem to free research from this domination, but on the contrary tends to strangely reinforce it. As long as research limits itself to the analysis of colonial discourse, it tends to reproduce it at another level: once again, historical agency is limited to the British, as if they were the only ones to generate the impulses for change worth exploring.[4] The fact that these same impulses, which colonial historiography investigated for their modernizing and salvaging potential, are now looked at for their nefarious consequences, perhaps does not make too much of a difference. Once again the active colonial universe is matched with an Orient, to which still inhere many of the familiar qualities, above all, passivity and homogeneity. Rulers and ruled, Occident and Orient, and their respective cultures and discourses remain as separate and impermeable as ever—in spite of his original intention, the categories Edward Said offers do not seem to permit the dissolution of that duality.

Instead of either denying or overemphasizing boundaries between cultures, it seems more promising to concentrate on the phenomenon of the boundaries themselves, their disputed discursive formation, as also the multiple ways in which they are crossed and transgressed from both sides. It shall be suggested here that

3 Edward S. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London, Penguin, 1995.

4 Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 11.

the concept of translation can provide the conceptual tool with which to explore this in-between of cultures.[5]

Recent studies emphasize that translation should no longer be seen as the attempt to carry the same meaning from one language or one culture to another, its success being contingent to the exact reproduction of the original meaning. Instead, every translation involves a creative process. This encompasses, on the one hand, the unavoidable transformation of the meaning—even apparently similar words carry the impact of a different linguistic field and hence evoke different notions. On the other hand, the language into which a text or notion is translated, is itself transformed by the act of translation, through either the formation of new or the alteration of existing discourses, which are needed to encompass the new meanings. Understanding the working of translations thus needs as much attention to the translators and the contexts in which they are acting as to the texts themselves—translation is not an activity taking place in the void; it is embedded in social action. Therefore the process of translation, to an even lesser extent than dialogue, can be considered apart from the investigation of power relations.

Translation stood at the centre of the endeavours of the Delhi College. This is true not only of the establishment of the Vernacular Translation Society and the translation of textbooks which involved everyone from the principal to the students—the very establishment of the college can be read as an attempt to translate British culture and scholarship for an Indian audience. Nevertheless, the Delhi College translators were not just tools in the hands of the colonial power. Their translations show their cultural assumptions, their selections and choices, and their reinterpretation of the British texts they imported into the Urdu language—they, too, did have an agenda of change, which they wanted to induce through translation. However, this does not mean their activities were not deeply marked by the colonial situation, which permeated every stage of

5 For the German discussion, on which these reflections draw, see Doris Bachmann-Medick (ed.), *Übersetzung als Repräsentation fremder Kulturen* [Translation as representation of other cultures], Berlin, Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1997; Beate Hammerschmid and Hermann Krapoth (eds), *Übersetzung als Kultureller Prozeß. Rezeption, Perzeption und Konstruktion des Fremden* [Translation as Cultural Process: Reception, Perception, and Construction of the Other], Berlin, Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1998; Joachim Renn, Jürgen Straub, and Shingo Shimada (eds), *Übersetzung als Medium des Kulturverstehens und Sozialer Integration*, [Translation as a Medium for Understanding Culture and for Social Integration], Frankfurt, Campus, 2002.

the translation, from the selection of the texts and concepts to be translated to the Urdu speakers' reading of the British texts to the transformation they induced in the Urdu language.

If every translation in itself already constitutes a crossing and blurring of boundaries, and an entanglement of cultures, the situation in the early nineteenth century was even more complex. The Delhi College did not start its work in a sphere free of translation, but built on a multitude of translations, as the British were trying to make sense of the country they had conquered and to render its culture 'readable'. On the inverse we see the attempt of the conquered to decipher the meaning of their conqueror's behaviour and to reinterpret it within their own language and cultural framework.

Though the present book focuses on translation, it does not do so in the linguistic sense of the term. Instead it brings into view the translators themselves, those who hoped for a transformation of India and of their relation with the colonial power through a profound immersion in Western culture, but also those who resisted these translations and attempted to use the setting provided by the British for objectives of their own. The institutional history of what was first the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din and later, the Delhi College is designed to provide the framework for this interpretation.

The Madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din

In the literal as well as the figurative sense, the Delhi College built upon the earlier foundations of the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din. The early history of this institution remains vague and full of contradictory information. The British sources, quoted by the standard histories of the Delhi College, hold that it was founded in 1792 as a traditional madrasa by Nawab Ghaziu'd-Din II, the son of Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah I, founder of the Haidarabad State in the Deccan.[6] As, however, the nawab died in 1751/52, this date seems open to questioning.

The crucial information is to be found in the *malfuzat* (collections of sayings of a Sufi and anecdotes of his life) of Maulana Fakhru'd-

6 'Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College* (reprint), Delhi, Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu (Hind), 1989, p. 12, citing the Bengal and Agra Annual Guide and Gazetteer of 1841; the same date is given by Malik Ram, *Qadim Dihli College*, Delhi, Maktaba Jamia, 1970, p. 18, who, however, holds, that at least the grave and the mosque date from the time of Nawab Ghaziu'd-Din I, the grandfather of Nawab Ghaziu'd-Din II.

Din, the famous Sufi saint of the eighteenth century. Describing his spiritual guide's visit to Delhi, the biographer writes:

> Briefly, the Maulana bestowed grace on the City of Delhi by his steps. And in [the residential quarter of] Katrah Phulel, where he settled for a short while, he chose to reside in the *madrasa*, which was the *madrasa* that the father of this unworthy slave [the author] had built. It was located outside of Ajmeri Darwaza and it was there that he occupied himself with teaching. After the uncle of this unworthy slave, his father, who was appointed by the royal threshold to be the Governor of the Deccan, also came to make the pilgrimage of the shrine of Mahbub Illahi [Nizamu'd-Din Auliya], and this slave also came with him.[7]

The author of this text is given as Ghaziu'd-Din 'Nizam', whom the poetical *tazkira*s (biographical dictionary) identify as Nawab Imadu'l-Mulk Ghaziu'd-Din Bahadur, the son of Shahabu'd-Din Firuz Jang, Ghaziu'd-Din II, and the grandson of Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah I, the founder of Haidarabad.[8] Going by this nearly contemporary source, we may identify Ghaziu'd-Din II as the founder of the madrasa. Most probably, he built on foundations laid by his grandfather, Ghaziu'd-Din I, who in his lifetime chose the site for his grave due to its proximity to the burial place of his spiritual guide Shah Wajihu'd-Din[9] and built the mosque which still forms the centre of what is today the Anglo-Arabic School.[10] As he died in 1710, this gives us a fairly precise idea of the time period in which the madrasa was planned and finished. Its architecture, Ebba Koch points out in her piece, places it at once at the confluence

7 *Malfuzat o Halat-e Shah Fakhr Dihlavi*, Urdu translation and edition of the Persian *Fakhr al talibin o manaqab Fakhria* by Mir Nazr 'Ali Dard Kakori, Karachi, Sultan Academy, 1961, p. 221, my translation (M.P.).

8 Karimu'd-Din, *Tabaqat-e Sho'ara-e Hind* (reprint), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Urdu Academy, 1983, pp. 121–4, 292–3; Mustafa Khan Shefta, *Gulshan-e Bekhar*, (edited and translated to Urdu by Hamida Khatun), Delhi, National Council for the Promotion of Urdu, 1998, pp. 292–3; Abu'l Qasim Mir Qudrat Ullah, *Majmu'a-e naghz, ya'ni tazkira-e sho'ara-e Urdu*, Delhi, National Academy, 1973, pp. 277–80. Garcin de Tassy, *Histoire de la littérature Hindouie et Hindoustanie*, Paris, Adolphe Labitte, 1870, vol. 2, pp. 476–7, amalgamates the biographies of Ghaziu'd-Din II and Ghaziu'd-Din III.

9 Probably identical with the grandfather of Shah Wali Ullah, see Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1983, p. 250. This would point to links not only to the Chishti, but also to the Naqshbandi tradition—if a disentanglement of traditions is at all probable at a time when multiple initiations were the rule rather than the exception.

10 Muhammad Mahbub Junaidi, *Hayat-e Asif*, Hyderabad, 1943, Ghalib Institute, p. 72.

of the tradition of the South Asian madrasas and Central Asian influences and makes it an outstanding example of later Mughal building art. Though situated at the margins of the city, the plans show that from the time of its foundation the madrasa was intended as an important centre of learning, providing the space (if we go by the number of *hujras* i.e. room) for at least two dozen teachers and a corresponding number of students.

On the strength of the evidence from the malfuzat of Maulana Fakhru'd-Din quoted above, we may also conclude that the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din and the madrasa of Fakhru'd-Din were one and the same.[11] This in turn permits us to guess the kind of teaching which went on in this period. Fakhru'd-Din was related to the Chishti tradition of Kalim Ullah Shahjahanabadi (1650–1729) through his father, Nizamu'd-Din (1650–1730), who was Kalim Ullah's first successor. Fakhru'd-Din was born in 1714/15. He is considered as the renewer (*mujaddid*) of the Chishti order and linked to the revival of its influence in Punjab and Sindh. Although the musical sessions (*sama'*) that were regular features at his *khanqah* (religious establishment for holy men) drew the opposition of the Afghans of Delhi—who denied that ecstasy induced by music was legitimate within the Islamic tradition[12]—he had many pupils and disciples among the nobles and even counted the emperor and several members of the royal family among his disciples. His Chishti affiliations make it probable that the teachings at the madrasa, if they were formalized in any way, were influenced by the curriculum of the *dars-e Nizami*.[13]

After Maulana Fakhru'd-Din's death, his son Qutbu'd-Din went to the Deccan, but was urged to return to Delhi by Shah Akbar II in 1807.[14] His son, popularly known as Kale Mian, was one of the

11 See also Mirza Sangin Beg, *Sairu'l-Manazil*, edited and translated to Urdu by Sharif Husain Qasimi, Delhi, Ghalib Institute, 1982, p. 208, who mentions that the madrasa of Fakhru'd-Din was situated next to the wholesale coal market, which formerly was located near the New Delhi Railway Station, right next to the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan (information, Yunus Jaffery).

12 Rizvi, p. 306.

13 The curriculum, rationalizing the teachings of the classical books, developed in Lakhnau in 18th century, with an emphasis on the rational sciences (*ma'qulat*). For details see Jamal Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur in Nordindien: Entwicklungsgeschcihte und Tendenzen am Beispiel von Lucknow*, Leiden, Brill, 1997. An English translation of this work is forthcoming.

14 Foreign Consultations, 1.9.1807/83–4, National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi.

most influential Sufis of his time, although little information survives on his teachings.[15] Neither of these two seems to have taught at the madrasa, which rapidly declined and in 1824 accommodated only nine students, a pale reflection of its heyday.[16]

Delhi Renaissance: With or Without the British?

Like C.F. Andrews, scholars, too, for a long time have taken it for granted that any renaissance which might have taken place in Delhi—or in north India for that matter—would have been the result of the challenge of English education and literature and the response these triggered off in 'Oriental' scholarship. However, it might be worthwhile to enlarge the scope of enquiry and look at the indigenous roots of this renaissance in the eighteenth century.[17]

Two institutions at this time challenged the domination of the tradition of the Firangi Mahal school in Lucknow and the rationalist sciences of which it had become the centre. Without denying the importance of philosophy and logic, Shah Wali Ullah (1703–62), the founder of the madrasa of Rahimiyya in Delhi, held that human reason (*aql*) in itself was an insufficient tool for reaching the divine truth and consequently laid greater importance on the study of revelation, on the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet in his teachings. Once these were accepted as the foundation, Shah Wali Ullah proceeded to rationalize both the exegesis and the everyday life of his followers. With Max Weber one might argue that the question what is being rationalized, and with which results for the organization of the behaviour of the actors, is at least as important as the question whether a rationalization takes place at all. A rationalization of the theological fundaments of a religion can at times be compatible with the less rational day-to-day behaviour of the believers and vice versa.[18]

15 Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, '1857 se Pahle ki Dihli: "Ulama o Mashaikh ka Ijtima"', in Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Tarikhi Maqalat*, Delhi, 1966, pp. 210–57.

16 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, p. 13.

17 Jamal Malik, 'Encounter and Appropriation in the Context of Modern South Asian History', in Jamal Malik (ed.), *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History, 1760–1860*, Leiden, Brill, 2000.

18 See for instance the space which scholasticism provided for popular religiosity in Europe as compared to the rationalization of the life-world induced by the Calvinist belief in God's arbitrary decision on salvation or damnation.

In Shah Wali Ullah's case, this included the necessity of direct and individual access to the scriptures, if not for everyone, then for as many of the educated as possible. The emphasis on the promotion of the vernacular languages as a means of learning, first of Persian, in the next generation already of Urdu, found its expression in the translations of the sacred texts by Shah Wali Ullah and his sons. Thus, decades before the foundation of the Delhi College, translation was already being used as a way to induce changes—it transformed the language and the way canonic texts were regarded.[19]

This emphasis on the divine revelation and the law in turn spun off an effort to rationalize the everyday life of each believer, to make him less dependent on the spiritual powers and the intercession of the saints, and to stress his individual responsibility for his own salvation as well as for the fate of the community. Hereby the education of the individual gained an importance it never had before—both for his own moral perfection as also for the survival of the Islamic character of the community. This transformation, which has alternatively been called the 'protestantization' of Islam or the development of Islamic pietism, was thus well on its way before the advent of the British, though it afterwards certainly received a further impetus from there.

Shah Wali Ullah in many ways still acted within the parameters of a Sufi order. His sons, foremost among them Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz and Shah 'Abdu'l-Qadir, extended their teaching network over the whole of north India and drew increasingly large numbers of students to their school.[20] In order to disperse their message through fatwas and pamphlets, they soon started making use of the print media.[21]

19 Marc Gaborieau, 'Late Persian, Early Urdu: The Case of Wahhabi Literature, 1818–1857', in Françoise 'Nalini' Delvoye, *Confluence of Cultures: French Contribution to Indo-Persian Studies*, Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 1994.

20 For a wealth of information on the madrasa of Rahimiyya and its networks see Saiyid Muhammad Mian, *'Ulama-e Hind ka shandar mazi*, vol. II, Delhi, 1985 (reprint of the Lahore edition) and 'Atau'r-Rahman Oasimi, *Alwa 'us-Sanadid*, Delhi, Maulana Azad Academy, 1991, though both tend to interpret the earlier phase of the madrasa in the light of the militant stand of Saiyid Ahmad Shahid, which was the product of a later generation.

21 Francis Robinson, 'Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia', in Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 66–104.

In this first phase their relation to the British does not seem to have been marked by antagonism. The British error in placing the responsibility for a riot in 1807 on Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz's brother Shah Rafi'u'd-Din and exiling him from the city, was quickly rectified, once they realized the outstanding position the family occupied in Delhi, and they did their utmost to placate them.[22] Apparently, this appeasement was successful, for though Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz ruled at different instances that India had become a *daru'l-harb*—an abode of war—due to the government having passed into the hands of non-believers, he was careful to qualify this daru'l-harb as one which necessitated neither emigration nor the taking up of arms. Equally, he gave very cautious answers on the permissibility for Muslims of learning the English language and taking up service with the colonial masters, deeming these issues as religiously neutral, as long as they did not lead to a loss of the faith or to actions harmful to fellow Muslims.[23]

Much more distant from the British rulers was the second institution which promoted the Islamic renewal and fed into the Renaissance from the eighteenth century onwards, the khanqah of Mirza Jan-e Janan, a Naqshbandi from the *silsila* (line of succession) of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, the great reformer of Akbar's time. Even more than Shah Wali Ullah, it was from the re-interpretation of the Sufi traditions that Mirza Jan-e Janan and his followers drew inspiration for their piety. While their ultimate aim most emphatically remained reaching God, the means was no longer to distance oneself from a world perceived as sinful. On the contrary, salvation was only deemed possible through action in the world, while keeping an inner distance from its corrupting power. The nearer the seeker was drawing to God, the more he was called to assume the leadership of the community and to guide his fellow-believers to righteous behaviour. This induced a willingness to participate in the realm of politics and worldly affairs, but

22 Foreign Political Consultations (=FPC), 21.5.1807/9–18; FPC 28.5.1807/32; FPC 4.6.1807/17–22. FPC 28.9.1807/18–19. FPC 23.7.1807/27.

23 Muhammad Khalid Masud, 'The World of Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz (1746–1824)', in Malik, *Mutual Encounters*, pp. 298–315, taking up older arguments of Mushiru'l Haqq; for the texts of the fatwas see Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz, *Fatawa-e 'Azizi* (translated and edited by Muhammad Shafi), 2 vols; on Daru'l-Harb, vol. 1, pp. 27–30, pp. 52–3, pp. 66–8, pp. 226–9; on taking up service with the British and learning English, vol. 1, pp. 182–5.

at the same time made it mandatory to keep a distance from the powers of the world—even if they were already Muslims, more so if they were British.[24] When Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz delivered his fatwa on the permissibility of seeking employment under the East India Company, Shah Ghulam 'Ali, the successor of Mirza Jan-e Janan, in a letter implored him to reconsider his decision, as knowledge was the glory of mankind, but jobs under the British were inauspicious. Rather than take up a high position among the rich, the true scholar should remain content with a loaf of bread and engage in the remembrance of God, always considering that his next breath might be the last.[25] While this Naqshbandi tradition saw itself most expressly as a renewal of the Muslim tradition, it attempted to do so by the fortification of the community's boundaries against external influences and therefore ruled out participation in any form of translation activity.

It is difficult at the present stage of research to conclude whether Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz or Shah Ghulam 'Ali was a more representative speaker for the Muslim community, as too little is known about the inner life of the many large and countless smaller madrasas of Delhi in the first half of the nineteenth century.[26] What is certain, however, is that the re-interpretation of classical knowledge and endeavours to translate it into an idiom meaningful for the new circumstances had begun well before the British established their political and cultural supremacy over north India in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

British Patronage of Oriental Knowledge: *Contre Coeur et par Raison*?

William Dalrymple, the famous biographer of the *White Mughals*,[27] reminds us in his article not to project back the attitude of later

24 Warren Edward Fusfeld, 'The Shaping of Sufi Leadership in Delhi: The Naqshbaniyya Mujaddidiyya, 1750–1920', PhD dissertation, Pennsylvania, 1981.

25 For the documentation of this debate see Muhammad Ayub Qadri, 'Maulana Fazl-e Haqq Khairabadi: Daur-e mulazamat', in Afzal Haqq Qarshi (ed.), *Fazl-e Haqq Khairabadi*, Lahore, Al Faizal, 1992, pp. 11–83.

26 Jamal Malik, 'Islamic Institutions and Infrastructure in Shahjahanabad', in Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft (eds), *Shahjahanabad/Old Delhi: Tradition and Colonial Change*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993, pp. 43–65.

27 William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India*, London, Harper Collins, 2002.

British colonialists to their early nineteenth-century counterparts. The British officers in Delhi were much less intent on introducing their own culture into an Indian context, than they were themselves the outcome of an encounter with the East. In the dresses they wore, the women they loved, the children they begot, and the knowledge they imbibed and patronized, the deep affection of this generation for India is shown, before they were slowly replaced by self-righteous utilitarian and evangelical newcomers. This development took off in the 1830s and was sealed with the brutal repression of the revolt of 1857, never to be revived.

However, if the colonial officers' hearts were involved in this encounter with Indo-Persian culture, reason certainly told them not to endanger their fragile hold on the north Indian political situation by an attempt at a civilizing mission.[28] Next to allies, reliable and timely information was crucial to this form of indirect rule. It was precisely this lack of information and the resulting misreading of the situation, which very nearly turned the minor fracas of 1807, mentioned above, into a major legitimation crisis for British rule. The lesson the resident drew was to immediately visit the most respected religious teachers of the city and try to gain admission to their circles. Without at all denying that ghazals and courtesans also held an emotional attraction for individual British, they also provided access to the informational networks of Delhi[29] and cast the foreign rulers in the mould of culturally legitimized rule at a local level. This was the framework in which patronage of Oriental learning, too, has to be read. The question of the respective value and usefulness of Oriental or British education did not enter the picture at this stage.

In 1823, the General Committee for Public Instruction in Calcutta asked the Local Committees in Delhi, Agra, and other north Indian towns to report on the condition of education within their province and to propose measures to enhance the standards. The picture that G.H. Taylor, the secretary of the Delhi Local Committee, drew of conditions in Delhi was quite dismal. Although there were a number of madrasas, the foundation and endowment of educational institutions being perceived as a good deed by pious Muslims, the

28 Harald Fischer-Tiné and Michael Mann (eds), *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India*, London, Anthem Press, 2004.

29 C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

number of students was very small, when viewed in relation to the inhabitants of the city. Their attendance was irregular and the quality of the teaching low.[30] One might perhaps ask whether Taylor's familiarity with the madrasas and their curriculum was as great as he claimed, all the more so as he did not know any of the classical languages (that is, Arabic and Persian). Nevertheless, as a consequence of his report, the government sanctioned the grant of Rs 600 per month from the General Education Fund for the instruction of Muhammadan youth in Delhi,[31] and the Delhi College could take up teaching in the Ghaziu'd-Din madrasa barely two years later, the grant having been raised by another Rs 400 from the General Fund and Rs 250 from the Local Fund.[32]

However, within a very short time, the venture, which had begun as patronage in the traditional frame of reference, began to be translated into quite a different idiom, owing probably less to the educational debates at Calcutta, which were to take off in earnest only later, and more to the consolidation of British power and the transformation of British rule in north India from diplomacy to administration. At the proposal of Charles Metcalfe, the young, Anglophile resident, and Charles Trevelyan, an English class was added to the college in 1828.[33] Although this was meant as an addition to, not as a substitution of existing ventures, it provoked unrest among the educated classes of the city, both Hindus and Muslims, who were worried that it might be the intention of the government to depart from its policy of patronizing Oriental learning and upholding religious neutrality. This mistrust died down only slowly.

Partly as a countermove to this tendency, partly for personal and religious reasons, the nawab of Awadh, Nawab Fazl 'Ali Khan E'timadu'd-Daula, proposed to establish an Oriental College in Delhi, his native town, and to endow it with the income of a grant of Rs 170,000, invested in the funds of the East India Company. The Company was quick to seize this chance and argued that while Rs 500 a month would not go far for the upkeep of a separate college, this same sum, added to the government funds already

30 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, p. 14.

31 Note on the history of the Delhi College by Colvin, Home Proceeding (=HP), 15.7.1840/7–14, NAI.

32 HP, 15.7.1840/6. HP, 15.7.1840/7–14.

33 See Chap. 8 of this volume by Michael H. Fisher.

available 'would prove of incalculable advantage and widely extend the sphere of usefulness of the Institution already existing.' In return it was proposed to 'perpetuate the memory of so munificent a donation by founding Lectures and Scholarships in his name'.[34]

The nawab agreed to this proposal and in September paid the sum to the government. No sooner had they received the money, than they decided to withdraw a corresponding sum of public money from the Oriental College in order to invest it 'for the formation of a separate Institution on an enlarged scale, devoted to affording tuition in the English language, sciences and literature.'[35] At the same time Taylor's salary as joint principal for both institutions was raised from Rs 175 to Rs 300 and charged entirely to the Oriental section. Thus, the funds available for the study of Persian and Arabic in the end proved less than before the donation. It is not entirely clear when this withdrawal of funds became effective. However, the intention of the Company must have been evident enough to the nawab to request his son-in-law Hamid 'Ali Khan in his testament to supervise the proper application of the grant:

> I have hitherto... done nothing which would after death ensure salvation from crimes committed against the God of Life and Death or performed any undertaking which would by its continuance be productive of reward and divine mercy, with exception to this one act of leaving the sum of Rs 170,000 to the College founded by the late Nawab Ghaziooddeen Khan situated in Delhi my native place of residence, solely for the instruction and study of the sciences in Arabic and Persian the sciences of my own Religion and the source of the increase of morality... the profits arising from the above amount will be always appropriated to the expense of the children of respectable persons and of the Professors of the College, in conformity to my above expressed wish, yet in order to guard against any unforeseen causes which may tend to impede the advancement of the College arising from other more important avocations of Government, it will be necessary and proper for my Son/Seyyud Hamid Ulee Khan/in order to secure the motive and intent of this bequest to suggest to Government such means as shall appear to him just and proper, and in failure thereof to apply to Government to establish a separate College and appropriate the profits accruing from the amount deposit to its efficient management in such way as will ensure its stability and the realization of the benefits contemplated.[36]

34 Letter from Stirling (Persian Secretary) to Fraser (Acting Resident), 17.7.1829, quoted in Colvin, Note, HP 15.7.1840/7–14.

35 Stirling, Note, 18.9.1829, quoted in 15.7.1840/7–14.

36 Testament of Nawab E'timadu'd-Daula, 8.1.1830, quoted HP 15.7.1840/7–14, together with the original Persian version.

Shortly afterwards, on 6 April 1830, the nawab died. Hamid 'Ali Khan took up the fight and desperately tried for the next decade to convince the British either to use the money according to the intention of the legatee or to relinquish the sum, so that he could establish a madrasa according to the conditions of the *waqf* (charitable endowment under Islamic law).[37] But what still would have been remotely possible in 1825 was completely unthinkable 10 years later.[38] In the Delhi territory, rule by alliances had been replaced by rule by records—the supporters the British now needed were no longer the commanders of detachments of horses, but those able to wield the pen in their service, no longer nobles, but members of middling groups who hoped to gain social status by serving the British. The arrival of a new generation of British administrators, evangelical and utilitarian, has often been held to have constituted the main reason for the demise of the 'White Mughals' and a new policy of cultural domination. It is certainly true that sensibilities had profoundly changed, but it were the transformed power relations which permitted the colonial power to give way to these new sensibilities and allow them to influence their policy.

The English branch of the Delhi College, now called Delhi Institute, was carried to prominence by this new development. The abolition of Persian as the official language of British rule in India in 1837, matched by the decision of the Delhi Residency to henceforth accept letters and petitions from their Indian allies only in English, made it clear that secure professional opportunities for future generations would depend on a knowledge of English.

> The Head Master concludes from this that the advantages of English Education are now generally appreciated by the Native Community, and he adds that the circumstance of forty Students having obtained situations in Government and Private Establishments, chiefly owing to their knowledge of English must have had some effect in keeping up the number of Pupils.[39]

At the same time, the stipends, which traditionally had been granted to every student of the classical languages at the Delhi College, were greatly reduced, bringing the number of students

37 Letter from Hamid 'Ali Khan to governor general, 18.2.1835, FPC 5.3.1835/220; Letter from Hamid 'Ali Khan to governor general, HP 11.11.1835/11.

38 For the all-India background to this development see the brilliant introduction to Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Muir (eds), *The Great Indian Education Debate*, London, Curzon Press, 1999.

39 Report on the Delhi English College, 1834, HP 24.8.1836/14 A.

down from 279 in 1833 to only 123 in 1838.[40] In combination with the fact that Taylor, the principal of both the branches, does not seem to have been a very capable and energetic supervisor of teachers and students, this led to a situation in which the college fulfilled neither the expectations of traditional scholarship nor imparted knowledge which would be useful in the colonial administration. As Hamid 'Ali Khan explained to the governor general in 1838, 'the Departments of that Institutions are in a very disordered and disorganized state', the teachers 'for the most part composed of men devoid of genius, ability + other acquirements essential to the purpose of Tuition + the proper discharge of the delicate duties of Education', with the result that 10 years after the establishment of the college 'not a single student has attained or finished...even a tolerable education'.[41] Reforms had become inevitable.

Translating British Culture

As referred to above, the first decades of British rule in the Delhi region had seen the partial integration of the colonial officers into the Indo-Persian public sphere. Although power did play a part in this process—unlike the British themselves loved to imagine, they were probably admitted to the *mushaira*s (poetical gathering) and *mahfil*s (festive assembly) neither for the quality of their poetry nor for the refinement of their manners—what is important in this respect is that the sphere in which public opinion was formed included both British and Indians and it was based on indigenous cultural forms. The last remnants of this situation can still be grasped in the 1837 issue of the first English language newspaper of Delhi, the *Delhi Gazette*. Faced with information on the probable failure of Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar's attempt to claim an enhancement of his pension upto the level promised in the correspondence between his grandfather and the governor general after the conquest of Delhi, the editor wrote, 'we can, as public Journalists, only express our deep regret at the disappointment, which must now be universally felt',[42] and

40 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, pp. 106–7.

41 Letter from Hamid 'Ali Khan to governor general, 17.2.1838, HP 15.7. 1840/4.

42 *Delhi Gazette*, 8 February 1837.

explained shortly afterwards that 'our duty, as well as an inclination, induce us to comment on every improper act of authority'.[43] At this time the *Delhi Gazette* still, as a matter of course, drew at least a part of its information from handwritten Persian newsletters[44] and neither side thought it strange if members of the royal family addressed the public by means of letters to the editor.[45]

As discussed above, this need not be read as a power-free multicultural dialogue, conducted in mutual esteem. However, no matter how the British felt about the relative worth of cultures and religions, imperial necessity made them keep their opinions to their private letters and discussions.[46] However, this changed in the 1840s. As the British population in Delhi, notably the army, increased, they were no longer willing, or able, to integrate with the local population. Once again the *Delhi Gazette* reflects on the change, commenting on an attempt by the king to start a printed newsletter of his own: 'we shall find some very interesting or, at least, if not instructive, amusing details in it',[47] but also voicing in anger that 'it is almost time that some of the tom fooleries of the would be royalty of the Timour dynasty were attempted to be clipped.'[48] It is small wonder that this new *Delhi Gazette* drew the attention of only a few Indian subscribers and that Delhi came to be perceived as one of the most boring north Indian towns by a small British community resolved on communicating only with each other. The less they thought they had to learn from the Orient, the more, however, the colonial officers found to teach.[49] The dwindling patronage for poetic and religious functions was matched by the foundation of associations in the British style, to which carefully chosen 'native gentlemen' were co-opted to organize famine relief, debate on horticultural progress, or inquire into the antiquities of Delhi at the Archaeological Society.

43 Ibid., 12 April 1837.

44 Ibid., 19 April 1837.

45 Ibid., 8 February 1837.

46 Where even a hard-core White Mughal like William Fraser could speak about India as the 'unenlightened part of the Globe', and bemoan the 'ignorance and infatuation of the Millions' who were 'devoid of sensibility, gratitude and moral enjoyment'. Letter to his father, 2 October 1813, Private Papers of W. Fraser, vol. 29.

47 *Delhi Gazette*, 25 August 1841.

48 Ibid., 27 July 1842.

49 Zastoupil and Muir, *The Great Indian Education Debate*, p. 5.

Unlike in Bengal, here the debate on 'Native Education' did not oppose the defenders of Oriental and Western knowledge so much as those who wanted to transmit the values of the West through English and those who claimed that the 'paramount object [should be] to make the improvement and cultivation of the vernacular tongue go hand in hand with the promulgation of the thoughts and ideas, the solidity of reasoning and freedom of enquiry of the European world.'[50] Teaching through Urdu, the argument ran, offered the possibility of impacting the Indian mind to an extent (and at a price!) which English could not even begin to. It was not an appreciation for the beauty of the Urdu language and patronage for Oriental learning that stood at the centre of the reform of the Delhi College, but the belief that by inducing scholars to prepare translations, printing them, and introducing them into the schools, they would 'gradually set the native mind in motion and open an era of intellectual activity such as India has never witnessed.'[51] To make Urdu a fit vehicle to transport these new ideas, profound changes in the language were debated, even the introduction of the Roman alphabet, as the Urdu script was not deemed capable of reproducing the exact sound of English names and loan-words.[52]

The arrival of Lord Auckland to India in 1840 set the north Indian educational reform process in motion. An inquiry both into the history of the Delhi College and the grant by Nawab E'timadu'd-Daula was ordered, and John Thomason, a competent and sympathetic inspector was appointed for the North-Western Provinces with the instruction 'to visit Delhi, with full power, after holding a final examination, to dismiss all incompetent Teachers and to nominate and at once place in employment competent substitutes.'[53] Thomason's inquiry resulted in the restoration of the stipends to the scholars, although now on the basis of merit, and a very notable increase of the salaries of the teachers, which permitted the appointment to the Oriental section of scholars, whose merit was recognized within the walled city as well. Simultaneously, Felix Boutros, deputy collector in Bihar and a fine scholar of the classical languages, was appointed as the new principal of

50 *Delhi Gazette*, 25 April 1838.
51 Ibid., 10 December 1842.
52 Ibid., 14 June 1845.
53 Note Colvin, HP, 15.7.1840/7–14.

the Delhi College, as he 'possesses the character and acquirement necessary for our purpose, by his knowledge of European Literature and Science, together with a competent knowledge of the Oriental Languages.'[54]

The reform with the greatest impact for the future was the joining of the two branches of the college, the English and the Oriental, under one roof, no longer of the Ghaziu'd-Din madrasa, but of what had first been the library of Prince Dara Shukoh and later the Residence of Sir David Ochterlony—a symbolic shift, which placed the college right in the middle of the British offices and residences near Kashmiri Gate. At the same time, the curricula of the two branches were to be integrated, the emphasis being on 'useful' knowledge: natural sciences, mathematics, natural philosophy, economics, morals, and history. The medium of instruction would be English at the Delhi Institute and Urdu at the Delhi College, which at the same time would also continue the teaching of the classical Arabic and Persian books.

Aloys Sprenger, whom Ikram Chaghatai discusses in Chapter 3, further pushed the reforms initiated by the colonial bureaucracy and Felix Boutros. A scholar of a high standard, he was intimately linked to the circles of Orientalists in Vienna and Paris, and later in Heidelberg and Bern, and had early in life set himself the goal to travel to the Orient in order to 'contribute to the introduction of European culture and in turn bring back to Europe a better knowledge of the Orient and its literature.'[55] The enthusiasm for Indian literature momentarily obscures the profound asymmetry of the endeavour: while the East only contributes knowledge to the West, which remains otherwise unchanged, it is itself to be transformed by Western knowledge translated into indigenous languages.

Translation stood at the centre of the reformed Delhi College's activities—most obviously in the Vernacular Translation Society, which had been initiated by the new principal, but also forming the prevailing theme running through the lives of the teachers and pupils of this first generation. 'Translation as representation of another culture'[56] evokes the question of the control of representations, which has been extensively discussed in recent years in the field of anthropology. If we compare the translation activities at

54 HP, 16.12.1840/24.

55 See quotation, Chap. 3 of this volume, M. Ikram Chaghatai, fn. 21.

56 Thus the translation of the title of Bachmann-Medick, 1997.

Fort William College[57] with the Delhi College, it becomes clear that the colonial power aimed at controlling both ways: the representation of the Indian tradition for a British public (and by implication for the Indians themselves), but also the images Indians received about the West, notably its knowledge and scholarship, in accordance to which they were supposed to further develop their own representations. This is the side of the picture Gauri Viswanathan has so convincingly drawn.[58] However, the British hold over India was fragmented and far less complete than the focus on the construction of colonial knowledge in itself would imply. Even a translation which aimed at introducing a new discourse into the colonized people's language could not do so without making use of the existing language and concepts and hence reinterpreting and transforming the colonial message in the light of the indigenous system of knowledge. Instead of two neatly divided cultures placed in an unequivocally hierarchic structure, we thus find boundaries blurred by multiple and entangled translations—Zaka Ullah's multivolume history of India[59] being a good instance: a translation and readaptation from an English original, which in turn is a translation and interpretation from Persian sources, from which Zaka Ullah, too, draws.

Most papers in the present volume, thus, concentrate on the leading personages of the Delhi College in order to explore how far the original British intentions were carried out, reinterpreted, adapted, resisted, or simply ignored in the day-to-day life of the educational institution and how the contact with 'new ideas' impacted the lives of those to whom it held out the promise of an exciting cultural encounter, social rise, and respect from the colonial masters.

Patrons and Teachers

As we have seen above, issues of reform and reinvigoration of knowledge and the education which would lead to these results were already assiduously debated among the north Indian scholars

57 Bernard Cohen, 'The Command of Language and the Language of Command', in Bernard Cohen (ed.), *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 16–57.

58 Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*, 1989.

59 Zaka Ullah, *Tarikh-e Hindustan*, 9 vols, Delhi, Lit Verlag, 1879 ff.

before the British conquest of Delhi; the permissibility and advisability of an exposure to Western knowledge had been discussed in fatwas and letters years before the foundation of the Delhi College. How did the different schools of thought and the leaders of opinion react to the British attempt to 'set the native mind in motion' by confronting it with British scholarship?

With the exception of the *mujaddidi* Naqshbandi tradition, which refused any form of contact with the colonial sphere, be it in education or administration, the reaction of most of the schools remained ambivalent. The group most drawn to interaction with the colonial power were the family of Fazl-e Imam Khairabadi and his students, the leader of the *ma'qulat* (teaching of the rational sciences) tradition associated with the Firangi Mahal of Lucknow. It would be a matter of further research whether the theological position of this school, leaning on the Greek tradition of Islamic philosophy, which had already provided the ideological framework for the common training of Sunnis, Shias, and Hindus in Awadh,[60] also provided openings for the discussion with the British. Fazl-e Imam had migrated to Delhi at the beginning of the nineteenth century and quickly ascended to the post of *sadru's-sudur*, the supreme Indian judge at the Delhi court. His brother worked as a news writer in the service of the British at different courts in Rajasthan, and in the next generation his three sons held judicial posts in the service of the East India Company and some of their princely allies, while two nephews worked as personal secretaries to General Ochterlony.[61] His son and student, Fazl-e Haqq, too, had embarked upon a promising career in the judiciary of Delhi. Together with the scholarly prestige of his family, this made him one of the most obvious cultural mediators, to whom both sides turned for support. In a study on the autobiographical notes of Fazl-e Haqq, Jamal Malik showed that already at a very early stage Fazl-e Haqq had found it difficult to reconcile working under the British with his self-respect and critical appraisal of colonial rule.[62]

60 Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997.

61 Muhammad Ayub Qadir, 'Maulana Fazl-e Haqq Khairabadi: Daur-e Mulazamat', in Afzal-e Haqq Qarshi (ed.), *Maulana Fazl-e Haqq Khairabadi: Ek tahaqiqi muta'la*, Lahore, Al Fasil, 1992, pp. 17–19.

62 Jamal Malik, 'Briefe, autobiographische Aufzeichnungen und Gefängnisliteratur', in Andreas Eckert, Gesine Krüger (eds), *Lesarten eines globalen Prozesses: Quellen und Interpretationen zur Geschichte der europäischen Expansion*, Hamburg, Lit-Verlag, 1998, pp. 52–66.

He continued participate in the annual examinations of the Delhi College until his retirement (or dismissal, the sources remain vague) from service in 1831, lending prestige to the institution and thus contributing to its success among middle-class Muslims, but for him at least, imbibing foreign knowledge implied no capitulation to the 'language of modern ideas'.[63] This independence and ambiguity in the end told against him, as the British were all too willing to believe the contradictory evidence accusing him of complicity in the revolt of 1857 and exiled him to the Andaman Islands, where he died in 1861.

At least in appearance more successful as a mediator was his fellow student Muhammad Sadru'd-Din Khan, pen-named Azurda, who, however, unlike Fazl-e Haqq, refused to be drawn into the disputes and debates between the Khairabadis and the scholars of the madrasa of Rahimiyya. As Swapna Liddle shows in her article (Chapter 4), Azurda straddled the different spheres of Delhi where change was taking place. As sadru's-sudur he occupied one of the highest positions available to Indians in the colonial system; this singled him out for membership in almost all the associations and committees which the British founded in order to create a public sphere according to the Western model. For very many years he was a member of the Local Committee, on which the administration of the Delhi College devolved and exercised a great influence in choosing teachers, who were not only acceptable to the British, but also respected for their learning in the walled city. If the Delhi College was accepted to a degree in the intellectual community of Delhi, it was to a large extent due to his patronage. Nevertheless, his attempt to found a school of his own shows that, even for him, the translation of Western knowledge did not go uncontested, or at least was not meant to supersede all other forms of learning.

Too little is known about the Shia community of Delhi, which thrived under the patronage of Nawab Hamid 'Ali Khan, whom we encountered earlier as the son-in-law of Nawab E'timadu'd-Daula. Besides taking care of the nawab of Lucknow's property in Delhi, he controlled considerable family wealth. At least twice in the early 1840s, he was Prime Minister to Bahadur Shah; he

63 Sudhir Chandra, 'The Language of Modern Ideas: Reflections on an Ethnological Parable', in Sudhir Chandra, *Continuing Dilemmas: Understanding Social Consciousness*, Delhi, Tulika, 2002, pp. 1–18.

is remembered to this day as the founder of the Shia Masjid near Kashmiri Gate. All this, together with his membership in the Local Committee of the Delhi College, provided him with extensive possibilities for patronage, which he used to underline and develop a separate identity for the Shias—at least for him and those supported by him, the faultlines between Sunnis and Shias and within the Shia community still required more attention than the debate with the new forms of knowledge introduced by the British. Interestingly, these same people who seemed to ignore the intellectual challenge posed by the colonial situation, were among the first to make extensive use of the new printing technologies for the public discussion of their respective positions.[64]

If we look at the first generation of teachers at the Delhi College, who had received their education at other institutions or privately, what is striking is how little they seem touched by the interaction with Western knowledge and culture. Mamluk 'Ali, the *mir maulawi* (head instructor) for Arabic was recognized as an outstanding scholar of Delhi.[65] Born in 1787 in Nanauta, he came to Delhi at an early age to study with Maulawi Rashidu'd-Din, himself a student of Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz and his brothers Shah Rafi'u'd-Din and Shah 'Abdu'l-Qadir. Though he soon became a master in the field of the rationalist sciences, his main allegiance was to the teachings of the madrasa of Rahimiyya, and it is as a scholar in the tradition of this school that he gained prestige and drew numerous students to him, among others both Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan, the founder of Aligarh, and Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi, the founder of Deoband, where his own son, Maulana Yaqub Nanautawi, too, was later to be appointed principal. Thus, Mamluk 'Ali constituted an important bridge between the traditions. He himself was still the product of a transmission of knowledge through the *ustad-shagird* (master-disciple) link. Though he held an office in a college, where the institutional identity was supposed to outweigh the personal relationship, he drew pupils by his personal prestige rather than by his position. He taught them the traditional scholarship, but in a way, which enabled them

64 Margrit Pernau, 'The Delhi Urdu Akhbar: Between Persian Akhbarat and English Newspapers', in *Annual of Urdu Studies*, 2003, pp. 1–27, here pp. 16–17 with further references.

65 For biographical information see Faruqi, pp. 252–2; Qasimi, vol. II, pp. 207–16; Karimu'd-Din, p. 463; Saiyid Ahmad Khan, *Asaru's-Sanadid*, p. 578.

to go new ways, when their turn came. While he is reported to have read all the English books as soon as they were translated, his outstanding memory permitting him to receive new knowledge with ease, this does not seem to have drawn him any closer to the British, if one is to believe Mirza Farhat Ullah Beg:

> A short while ago he was put to terrible embarrassment on account of his piety and fidelity to the Shara'. This is what had happened. The Resident Bahadur once went on an inspection of the Madrassah and shook hands with Maulawi Sahib by way of courtesy, owing to the great teacher's position and learning. For the duration of the Resident Bahadur's visit, Maulawi Sahib kept what he considered his defiled hand separated from the rest of his person as though the hand had been an unclean object. On the departure of the British guest, Maulawi Sahib washed his hands thoroughly several times. Someone reported the incident to the Resident Bahadur. The Resident was furious, for he thought he had conferred honour upon the Maulawi Sahib by shaking hands with him, in return for which the Maulawi Sahib had insulted and belittled him. It was with some difficulty that the matter was straightened out.[66]

This critical stand, together with the influence he had on his pupils, both inside and outside the Delhi College, makes it highly probable that he engaged actively with the new knowledge. However, hardly any evidence of this encounter survived, as the only publications from his pen are the translations of some chapters of Euclid and of the *Sunan-e Tirmizi*. He died in 1850.

The meticulous article by C.M. Naim on Imam Bakhsh (Chapter 5), pen-named Sahba'i, for the first time examines the way Persian scholarship was transmitted at the Delhi College—which surprisingly seems to have been no different from the approach followed in the more traditional educational institutions (of which, unfortunately, we still know far too little), or for that matter, by someone like Mirza Ghalib. His fondness for word-puzzles displayed his extraordinary mastery of the language, which took pride of place over any engagement with the contents. Nevertheless, even those students who later proved the luminaries of the Delhi renaissance, preserved a high respect and a strong emotional attachment for Sahba'i, whose teaching did not lose its meaning for them, even while they grappled with the new learning.

While the study of the aims colonial administrators pursued by the foundation and reform of the Delhi College inscribes this venture securely within the imperial agenda, this brief glance at

66 Mirza Farhat Ullah Beg, 'Last Mushairah', Pennsylvania University, pp. 64–5.

the indigenous patrons and teachers has shown that the British were by no means the only ones to follow an agenda. What the students actually learnt was the outcome of complex interactions between these aims. To these curricula we now turn.

The Curriculum: Educating an *'Alim* or Schooling Macaulay's Interpreter?

Before 1843 the Arabic and Persian classes followed a very abridged version of the *dars-e nizami*, the curriculum evolved at the Lucknow Firangi Mahal in the eighteenth century. The emphasis was on the mastery of the languages,[67] on law and the principles of jurisprudence[68], and a little of philosophy and logic.[69] Added to this were several books on mathematics, notably the works of Euclid, and some treatises on geography.

67 On the works included in the curriculum, see 'Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, p. 86. *Sarf-e Mir* is a Persian introduction to the Arabic language by Sharifu'l-Jurjani, see Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 522. *Nahv-e Mir*: a Persian work on Arabic syntax by Sharifu'l-Jurjani, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 523; *Hidayatu'l-nahv*: authorship disputed, on Arabic syntax, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 523; *Dasturu'l-mubtadi*: Arabic grammar by Safi Radawli (d. 1461), Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 530; *Kafia* (= al Kafia fi'l nahv) commentary by Ibn al Hajib, 1174–1249, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 72; *Mi'at amil*, by Abdul Qahir al Jurjani, Malik, 1997, p. 530; *Sharh mi'at amil*, commentary of Husain al Nawqani (d. 1520) on the preceding book, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 523.

68 *Hidaya* by al-Marghinani, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 533; *Sharh Wiqaya*, commentary by Ubaid Ullah b. Masud (d. 1346) on the *Wiqaya al Riwaya* of his grandfather Taju'l-Shariat Mahmud (d. 1274), Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 524; *Usulu'l-shashi*, by Abu Bakr al Shashi al Samarqandi (d. 976), Malik, 1997, p. 539, *Qaduri*, by Abu'l-Hasan b. Ahmad al Qaduri (972–1037), concise legal manual, dealing with rituals, contracts, personal status, criminal law, and law of succession, which has been translated into several languages (Jamal Malik, personal communication).

69 *Shams Bazigha*, commentary by Muhammad Faruq al Jaunpuri (d. 1652) to his own book *al Hikmatu'l-Baligha*, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 527; *Mir Qutbi*, commentary on *Sharh al Risala al Shamsiya* by Sharif al Jurjani, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 526; *Hidayatu'l-Hikmat*: by Asiru'd-Din al Abhari, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 527; *Qala Aqulu*, commentary on *al Isaghuji*, a work on logic, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 530; *Sharh-e mullah*, a commentary on the commentary that Sadru'd-Din Shirazi, called Mulla Sadra (died 1640), wrote on the *Hidayatu' l-Hikmat* of Asiru'd-Din al Abhari, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 527.

What is astonishing is the almost complete exclusion of religious books (possibly with the exception of the tradition of the Prophet),[70] to the correct understanding of which grammar, syntax, and philosophy were traditionally deemed to constitute only a first, but indispensable step. Here, on the contrary, it seems to have been the mastery of the language, which was the primary concern and which also provided the rationale for the choice of books. The classical books continued to be taught for lack of a better alternative, but in the long run were to be replaced by works of literature,[71] as for instance the *Arabian Nights* and the *Kalila Dimna*, which were introduced by Sprenger, principal since 1845. More than it seems to have been realized at the time, and as far as we know hardly resisted, this development struck at the root of the traditional concept of knowledge. *'Ilm* used to encompass the entire universe of knowledge which was not yet to be divided into 'religious' and 'worldly'. An *'alim* (pl. *'ulama*) was, therefore, a scholar who had acquired *'ilm*, independent of his personal piety and of the field in which he exercised his profession. While much of the older curriculum was retained at the Delhi College, the orientation towards religion and the intimate link which held the different fields of knowledge together was broken[72]—under these circumstances it was indeed interchangeable whether a student learned Arabic from a collection of *Hadis* (traditions of the Prophet) or from *Thousand and One Nights*. If an alumnus of the Delhi College was still recognized as 'alim, he would certainly be 'alim of a different sort. But were they recognized as scholars in spite of the curricular changes in the Oriental department? The sources are conflicting. On the one hand, as shown above, the credentials of teachers like Mamluk 'Ali and Imam Bakhsh were above doubt and they were acknowledged scholars, leaving aside the factional squabbles which formed part of the life of the intellectual elite of north India. Similarly no one would doubt the academic achievements of those of their pupils who later became famous, like Nazir Ahmad and Zaka Ullah. However, it is possible that they formed an exception,

70 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, p. 40.

71 Ibid., p. 60.

72 For a more detailed discussion of this concept see Margrit Pernau, 'Middle Class and Secularization: The Muslims of Delhi in the Nineteenth Century', in Imtiaz Ahmad, Helmut Reifeld (eds), *Middle Class Values in India and Western Europe*, Delhi, Social Science Press, 2003, pp. 21–42.

while the rank and file of the students failed to live up to the standards of the traditional learned circles of Delhi. Even in relation to the other north Indian government colleges, the Delhi College did not compare favourably, and Thomason, a visitor to the college, fought a hard battle with the General Committee for Public Instruction in Calcutta in order to have the standards of the tests for the grant of scholarships lowered for Delhi and Agra, as otherwise no student would have a chance to secure a scholarship.[73]

However, after 1840 the primary interest of the colonial power was no longer to impart traditional wisdom to future scholars, but to provide the entry point from where Western knowledge would change the indigenous culture and 'set the natives in motion'. Side by side with reading the ancient commentaries the students of the Oriental department of the college were therefore taught mathematics, natural sciences, and also political economy, history, and natural philosophy. The medium of instruction was Urdu, but the books were translations and adaptations from English, brought out by the college itself as the curriculum developed. The list of books, which were translated by the staff and the senior students of the Delhi College, is indeed impressive, ranging from algebra and geometry to revenue laws and McNaughten's principles of Islamic criminal law, from English history to Smith's *Moral Sentiments* and from books on hydraulics to treatises on the polarization of light—in all almost 130 books in the short span of 15 years between the reform of the college and the outbreak of the revolt of 1857.[74]

The alumni of the Delhi College were not supposed to be passive recipients and transmitters of British culture. Rather, their training aimed at creating translators, who were deeply familiar with both cultures so that they would use their knowledge of Western scholarship to rethink and transform the canonic knowledge of the East and thus bring together both worlds. This programme, which so fascinated C.F. Andrews and the later admirers of the Delhi renaissance,[75] nevertheless contained a profound asymmetry. If the Delhi College was held to build a bridge between cultures, the bridge was designed as a one-way street only. But, to further extend the image, the power of the British was not so complete that they could prevent

73 HP 30.6.1841, 18–20.

74 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, pp. 149–55.

75 Margrit Pernau, 'Preparing a Meeting Ground: C.F. Andrews, St. Stephen's and the Delhi College', in Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, 2003, pp. xlvii–lxxv.

the cross-cultural merchants from smuggling. Even less could they control the use the goods were put to, once they reached the other side. How then did the students negotiate the different aims of the Delhi College? What use did they make of the curricular offers? Did their lives and careers fulfill the hopes and redeemed the promises of the founders? It is to these questions that we now turn.

Cultural Mediation, a Road to Social Ascend and Honour?

Although the papers brought together in this volume show that it is possible to reconstruct the lives of a number of illustrious former students of the Delhi College in considerable detail, the sources only rarely permit statements on the rank and file of the pupils. One fascinating exception is the report on the examinations for 1831, which gives a detailed breakup of the origin of the students. Accordingly in the English section, among the Muslims, the Shaikhs, classically the community through which access to respectability is achieved, dominated with 23 pupils, closely followed by the Saiyids, renowned for their learning, with 19 pupils. The Mughals and Pathans, the traditional social elite, only counted a meagre nine and six pupils, respectively. Among the Hindus, the pride of place was held by the Kayasthas with 23 pupils, but also, more astonishingly, by an equal number of Mahajans. Brahmins and Kashmiri Pandits followed with 12 and nine pupils. In the Arabic and Persian classes, still much more in demand than English education in 1831, the largest number of Muslim students hailed from the Saiyid (60) and Shaikh (58) communities. Mughals and Pathans followed with 28 and 13 students respectively. Among the Hindus, there was a dominance by the Kashmiris with 20 students, followed by the Brahmins with 15 and the Kayasthas astonishingly with only 14 pupils. The Sanskrit department, on the other hand, was an exclusively Brahmin preserve.[76] Unfortunately there seems to exist no corresponding breakup for the time after the reform of the college. As, however, the Hindus always consti-

76 J.H. Taylor to H.H. Wilson, Junior Member and Secretary to the General Committee for Public Instruction (GCPI), 31.1.1831, Report on the Examinations of the Delhi Institution for the year 1831, F/4/1386 55228A, Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC).

tuted about two-third of the student population,[77] it seems probable that the college was not so much frequented by the old elites, than by those who profited from the upheaval brought about by the colonial power and for whom a career in the British service might be a means to upward social mobility. This is supported by the fact that every enhancing or curtailment of the stipends was immediately reflected in the number of students, showing that the funds available for investment in the education of the younger generation were very limited.

As Gail Minault shows in her paper (Chapter 6), Master Ram Chandra was the one person among the former students and later teachers of Delhi College, who opened up most radically to Western ideas. An eminent mathematician, who was recognized not only in India, but also in England, his lasting impact was in the field of the propagation of knowledge, both inside the college as a teacher and outside as a journalist, making use of the new printing technology to spread his ideas. Although Ram Chandra has been attacked, by his contemporaries as well as by later scholars, for forcing the Westernization of indigenous knowledge, his aim, as shown by the programmatic title of his journal, was the *Qir'anu's sadain*, the felicitous joining of the two planets, standing for Eastern and Western culture. Notably, his mathematical and scientific research drew consciously from Indian heritage; in the humanities, too, particularly in philosophy and religion, he advocated not so much surrender to the West, but a critical sifting of indigenous traditions. What he never seems to have discussed, possibly because it was so obvious for him, were the criteria on which this sifting was to be based, and which appeared universal to him, while they carried the imprint of Western culture for his adversaries. This suspicion that he was surrendering all too much to the West and that the propagation of Western science and rationality in the end would lead to the Christianization of India, was greatly reinforced by Ram Chandra's conversion.

Just as much as Master Ram Chandra, but on a more subdued tone, Maulawi Karimu'd-Din corresponded to the ideal of translator and cultural mediator that the British had intended to bring about through the Delhi College. In her paper, Avril A. Powell focuses on the tensions, which nevertheless marked his relations

77 See the statistics given in 'Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, pp. 119–20.

with the colonial power (Chapter 7). Educated at the Delhi College, Karimu'd-Din became the mainstay of the Vernacular Translation Society, organizing not only the translations and their corrections, but also taking care of the printing and the distribution of the books. Loss of patronage, however, prevented an academic career. After 1857, he took up minor appointments in the Punjab Educational Service, where his superiors seem to have regarded and treated him rather as a munshi than as the scholarly bridge builder between two cultures, to which his education had fitted him. The Delhi College had introduced him to a profession, which permitted the reconsolidation of the family's economic position, but at the same time he was refused the respect and social leadership to which an 'alim traditionally deemed himself entitled. Unlike for those people of the elder generation like Fazl-e Haqq and Azurda, whose belittling by the colonial power was still more than made up by the respect for their scholarship within their own community, men like Karimu'd-Din had left the old world without really attaining the new.

This topic of unfulfilled promises is further developed in Michael H. Fisher's chapter on Mohan Lal (Chapter 8)—a very important reminder that although the Delhi College by now constitutes a central *lieu de memoire* of the north Indian Muslim community, at the time almost two-thirds of its students were coming from a Hindu background. Mohan Lal's life shows once more that far from being a harmonious venture equally welcomed by Indians and Europeans, cultural mediation took place in an extremely contested area. More often than not, it led to the mediator's alienation from both communities—Mohan Lal was excommunicated from the Kashmiri Pandit caste, without being admitted into British Indian society as an equal. A 'mimetic man' in the term of Homi Bhabha, Mohan Lal experienced the simultaneous claim and denial of assimilation. Western culture, as he was to realize, was inclusive only in its universalistic garb, through which it claimed that its discoveries—scientific, literary, moral—were not limited in their relevance to a certain geographical area, but showed the way to mankind in its entirety. At the same time, full access to this culture was refused to men like Mohan Lal, who were not recognized as possible equals.

Although he held a professorship at Allahabad for many years, the image transmitted to posterity might perhaps not have been

so very different for Maulawi Zaka Ullah, if it had not been for the biography C.F. Andrews dedicated him. In his article Mushirul Hasan brings out the multifaceted personality of this scholar, teacher, historian, and textbook writer (Chapter 9). Favourite pupil of Master Ram Chandra and Queen Victoria's most loyal Indian subject, Zaka Ullah was at the same time deeply embedded in Delhi's *sharif* culture. Though impregnated by the Delhi College credo that India needed to be changed through the encounter with Western sciences, the Urdu language for him was never just a means to effect their more successful acculturation, but a value in itself. The analysis of his extraordinarily extended writings, therefore, show that they were much more than mere translations, but a creative way of coming to terms with the new knowledge by showing the underlying harmony of old and new.

The best known among the pupils of the Delhi College was Nazir Ahmad, to whom Christina Oesterheld devotes her article (Chapter 10), using not only his creative writings, but also introducing the reader to the collection of his speeches, which show many new facets. Nazir Ahmad was at the same time successful in the colonial administration, rising to the position of deputy collector; an ardent supporter of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan's educational projects; but also aware of the Muslim community's need to concentrate not only on government service. He exhorted them to take to business, and indeed was a gifted businessman himself, a powerful orator, and most of all a writer of extraordinary creative power, remembered mostly for his didactic novels for Muslim women. In his essays and his novels Nazir Ahmad gave voice to the ambiguities of a whole generation,[78] drawn to the ideas of the colonial power and resisting them, advocating a scientific outlook on life and afraid it might destroy their faith, immensely proud of their Indo-Persian heritage and consigning it to the flames.

Conclusion: Was there a Delhi Renaissance?

Charles F. Andrews, the British missionary, who later was to become a close collaborator of Gandhi and Tagore, celebrated the Delhi College as the cause and symbol of the Delhi renaissance

78 Sudhir Chandra, *The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1992.

and many scholars have echoed him, taking the characterization as the compliment Andrews intended it to be. However, almost a century later, the profound ambiguity of the term and concept can no longer be overlooked.

Andrews' earlier writings are marked by the attempt to reconcile Western and Eastern cultures, pointing out that converts did not need to shun their own background, but that the best of Eastern philosophy and religion did not contradict Christian values. Instead showed a spark of divine light, which prepared the peoples for the reception of Christianity: 'We may surely believe that the Eternal Word was the Light of the Buddha and Tulsi Das in their measure, even as He was, in so much greater a degree, the Light of the Hebrew Prophets; that Hinduism in its higher religious history was a true *praeparatio evangelica*.'[79] The teaching of 'English literature, English history and economics, English philosophy, [which] carry with them of necessity Christian components of life'[80] as it had been done at the Delhi College, in his eyes contributed to the cleansing and regeneration of the indigenous systems of knowledge and set them on the road to truth. What had died of suffocation from an overgrowth of superstition received a new life and was born again by the pruning of Western knowledge. Not for nothing did Andrews consider Macaulay one of his heroes, whose Minute of Education 'represented the first full inter-penetration of the two greatest civilizations that the world has ever seen.'[81]

In its basic assumptions, thus, the term 'renaissance', both with regard to what was to be considered as dead and in need of a revival and the shape the new knowledge was to take in order to be considered able to lead to enlightenment, bears the imprint of the colonial situation at the eve of the First World War and carries only very limited use as an analytical tool.

In this introduction it has been suggested that it might instead be an avenue worth exploring to tackle the educational policy of the colonial power and the north Indian elite through the concept of translation—a translation which is not to be reduced to a neutral transposition of meaning from one language to another, but seen

79 C.F. Andrews, *The Renaissance in India: Its Missionary Aspect*, London, Cambridge Church Missionary Society, 1912, p. 42.

80 Ibid., p. 24.

81 Ibid., p. 21.

as impacted by interaction and profoundly marked by the exercise of power.[82]

Although this power was by no means equally distributed—a notion which often seems to be read into the concept of dialogue—the British empire nevertheless was not total but fragmented, needing alliances and inviting resistance. Translation, too, therefore was not a one-way-street. The texts changed their meanings as they were translated and were not always read in the way the British had intended them to be read. Moreover, the British texts to be translated were no 'originals' but already bore the mark of earlier colonial attempts to make sense of the Indian universe by translating it into familiar concepts; the new layer of translation was superimposed on these earlier layers, which like in a palimpsest showed through. In turn, they were read through the lenses of cultural pre-assumption and with reference to the entire universe of meaning encapsulated in a language. Reactions ranged from an almost unconditional takeover of the new knowledge to a complete refusal to become tainted, passing by various degrees of ambiguity, attempting to harmonize the two worlds or to leave them side by side, each in its place.

Instead of a clear dichotomy between West and East, the colonizer and the colonized, the one powerful and active, the other powerless and waiting to be 'set in motion' through the translation of a system of knowledge, we are (once again!) left with blurred boundaries, bearing the traces of multiple crossings-over. Translation, in this setting, was not a single and unilateral activity, but multiple—an appropriate symbol for the 'mutual encounters' and 'entangled histories' of the colonial period.[83]

82 Martin Fuchs, 'Übersetzen und Übersetzt-werden: Plädoyer für eine interaktionsanalytische Reflexion', in Bachmann-Medick, *Übersetzung als Repräsentation*, 1997, pp. 308–28.

83 Malik, *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters*, 2000; Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (eds), *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt, Campus, 2002.