# SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY AND ORIENTALISM:
# THE CONSTRUCTION OF WEST AND EAST
# IN BRITISH INDIA

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# Abstract

In its most basic description, the West/East binary is often understood as a convenient, but superficial means of distinguishing between different cultures, geographies, histories, knowledge systems and religious traditions. Seldom have the constructions and implications of this binary been addressed in academic disciplines, including religious studies. This thesis examines the construction of this binary within the context of British India, specifically, the West as masculine and Christian and the East as feminine and non-Christian. It also addresses how Hinduism has been perceived, studied and constructed by Western scholars. In my analysis of the West/East binary, I have drawn from select elements of Edward Said's presentation of Orientalism. However, the focus of my analysis is on the key characteristics of social construction theory. This theory clarifies how we understand various aspects of the world in terms of different and specific contexts such as historical and geographic location, what we understand and accept as 'natural,' as well as it highlights culturally specific systems of knowledge and discourses that are underlying factors in the process of constructing our world. In this thesis, social construction theory emerges as a useful tool that helps to uncover the limitations of the West/East binary that is often used in religious studies to categorise different religions traditions and invites us to consider the multiple and sometimes subtle contexts that are involved in our analysis.

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# INTRODUCTION

This thesis will examine the British colonial construction of the orient or the "East" as Hindu and feminine and the parallel construction of the occident or the "West" as Christian and masculine. Specifically, this thesis addresses these categories in the context of the geographical region of South Asia. Although this is but one of the many constructions of the West and East, it is one of the most significant. The West and East are categories that we often use to organise and distinguish between various aspects of our world. They are helpful in categorising knowledge systems, cultures, geographies, cultures, societies, histories and perhaps, the most pertinent to my investigation, the categorisation of belief systems.

The paradigm of the West as Christian and the masculine and the East as Hindu and feminine is not new. Several scholars such as Edward Said (1991), Bernard Cohn (1996) and Nicholas Dirks (2001) have identified and explained these categories, and they have even been acknowledged and critiqued in orientalist, postcolonial and religious studies. My thesis proposes a different understanding of these categories. I will examine the construction of these categories by engaging Said's understanding of orientalism, but will also employ the key characteristics of the social construction theory in my investigation.

My intention is to investigate the development of the complex and somewhat subtle constructions of the 'West' and the 'East' and analyse their impact. In doing so, I will focus on select variables that were operative in the process of this construction. My thesis includes, for example, select historical events in the colonisation of India and the establishment of the British East India Company. I will also examine these categories of

West and East at the institutional level by drawing upon examples from the British East India Company along with corollary institutions of British systems of jurisprudence and education. In this context, I will examine primary discourses revolving around the notions of religion and gender, as primary to my analysis. One or more theses could be written on each of these variables. My goal, within the limitations of this thesis, is to focus on how these discourses influenced one another and functioned together in a very specific construction of the East and West that occurred in British India. It should also be noted that, although my analysis focuses on the West as masculine and Christian and the East as feminine and Hindu, these categories are not the only learned categories through which we can understand the construction of the West and the East. We might, for example, explore the idea that the West is materialistic while the East is spiritual,[1] or the West is industrial while the East is not.

My analysis is based upon two theories: Edward Said's (1991) interpretation of orientalism and social construction theory (Luckmann and Berger 1966; Burr 1995; Gergen 2000). When introduced to Said's work, I was drawn to his idea that the construction of colonial reality was based upon the interrelationship of knowledge and power. For Said, the relationship between knowledge and power was integral to the construction of the Orient and the Occident. He suggests that the West is constructed as dominant, Christian and masculine, while the East is constructed as feeble, Muslim and feminine. The focus of Said's work is Islam. However, this particular construction was also expressed in orientalist scholarship, which constructed the West as British, Christian and masculine and the East as Hindu and feminine. Orientalism is a term that is often used to describe the study of eastern languages, histories and cultures by western scholars, whose scholarship is directed by western ideas, discourses and institutions. Said points out that these scholars tended to portray the East as an inversion or mirrored opposite of the West. For Said, the orientalist scholar not only studied the East to merely understand its various qualities, but within that process described, taught, conquered and settled it (Said 1991:3,5; Ashcroft 2002: 167).

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[1] In order to protest British rule in India, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) incited a particular understanding of Hindu nationalism in which he emphasised the spirituality of the East and the materialism of the West. While he understood the technology of the West to have value for India, Vivekananda also believed that India could offer spirituality, particularly in the form of Hinduism that was lacking in the West (Embree 1972: 299-304).

Said's concept of orientalism has, to some degree, motivated this thesis and profoundly influenced my analysis. More concretely, however, social construction theory has directed my inquiry and is the primary theory that I have applied in my analysis of the British colonial construction of the West and the East. Social construction theory holds that human reality and knowledge are constructed within a particular socio-cultural system and that these constructs are re-constructed, perpetuated and maintained through their repetition in discourses and institutions, also known as *typifications.* Social construction theory poses a clear challenge to more conventional ways of understanding the world around us, and knowledge of that world. Firstly, this theory takes into consideration the historical and geographic specificity of our knowledge and directs us to explore these factors and their impact on what we construct as true. Secondly, it challenges the 'naturalness' of notions such as race, religion and gender by arguing persuasively that race, religion and gender are not, in fact, natural, but rather social constructions. Thirdly, social construction theory shows us that knowledge is constructed through social consensual agreement. Fourth, social constructionism argues that knowledge is dynamic and takes many different forms through human interactions and that different societies differ in what they agree to be true or false. The third characteristic overlaps with the fourth characteristic and will be discussed along with the fourth characteristic. What we consensually agree to be real or true is part of the dynamic of human interaction, which is most often communicated and typified through the mediums of languages and texts. Along with Said's orientalism, these three main characteristics will be the key guides in my analysis.

My thesis begins with a description of social construction theory and Edward Said's understanding of orientalism. I explain the characteristics of social construction theory and select concepts of Said's interpretation of orientalism in further detail, and how they will be engaged in my thesis. Chapters two, three and four are focussed on different periods of British contact and rule of India from 1500 to the late 1800's. Different historical periods are engaged as some better exemplify the characteristics of social construction theory. Chapter two focuses on the geographic and historical specificity in social constructionism and examines this factor with reference to the West as Christian and masculine and the East as Hindu and feminine. I begin with the period concerning the Portuguese discovery of the sea route to India and their colonisation of Goa and end with the establishment of chartered European trading companies. This period (1500 to 1650) is only briefly sketched in this chapter. It provides a context for the emergence of the British colonial construction of West and East as binary opposites. I examine the roles played by institutions such as the British East India Company and orientalist scholarship as well as the European discourses of religion and gender, which were involved in this construction.

The third chapter examines how the idea of naturalness was constructed based on such discourses and institutions such as religion and gender, and how the categories of the East and West emerged as natural in Europe and in India, and focuses on select events from the 1500's -1800's. Cartography and the imperial masculinity are two select examples that are analysed in this light. Cartography reveals how the West and the East were constructed and understood as natural, not only in terms of geographical divisions, but how gender binaries were transposed on and incorporated in these categories. The military corps of the British East India Company is one example that highlights how the West and East were constructed as natural based on socially constructed opposing binaries such as Christian/non-Christian; conqueror/conquered and masculine/feminine that were reified in the ideology of Muscular Christianity.

The fourth chapter examines the last characteristic of the social constructionist approach, which offers how different knowledge systems are created through human interactions. My focus will be on select forms of language and textual studies that were emphasised by orientalist scholarship. These became the dominant language systems of knowledge that were operative not only in the colonial construction of the West as Christian and masculine and the East as Hindu and feminine, but also contributed to a popular construction of Hinduism which remains influential today.

My thesis has demonstrated that while categories may be convenient tools that humans use to organise and understand their world, their constructions and ramifications, however, are complex. Within the discipline of religious studies, distinctions are made between belief systems that place them into western and eastern categories. Often, these categories, though not intentionally, imply a hierarchical division, which favours the western religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam and disesteems the eastern such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Defining and understanding belief systems in terms of western or eastern categories is limiting. For example, the tradition of Islam's geographic location is placed in the East while it is ideologically situated in the West. Syncretic belief systems are also difficult to define. The Sikh tradition, for example is comprised of an eastern tradition, Hinduism a well as a western tradition, Islam. This thesis encourages a closer examination of how we categorise different belief systems

# CHAPTER 1

## THEORY AND METHODOLOGY: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY AND ORIENTALISM

Several theoretical frameworks guide my research including Edward Said's understanding of 'orientalism' (1991) and the colonial construction of gender ideology (Cohn 1996; Beynon 2002). In this thesis, however, I have drawn heavily on social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Burr 1995; King 1999; Gergen 2000). Social constructionism is a theory that maintains that human reality, i.e., knowledge and identity, are constructed by individuals within a particular social context.

The process of social construction is characterised by a continuous and reciprocal exchange that occurs among individuals, as well as between institutions and individuals within a specific society, geographical location and during a particular period of time. These exchanges are based upon repeated and mutual understandings and behaviours, which are supported by discourses that are perpetuated and maintained by institutions or *typifications*. Because social constructionism emphasises the role of human activity and the influences of discourses in the creation of knowledge, this theory helps us to analyse the construction of various categories that are often taken for granted as true, 'natural' or universal. Social constructionism will be used here to explore and analyse various discourses that were prevalent during particular periods in the history of the European engagement with India. These discourses help us to understand the categories that have in turn come to be understood as the Occident (England)[2] and the Orient (India); each with its definitive characteristics.

This chapter begins with a general introduction to social constructionism. It will focus on the select aspects of this theory that are pertinent to my analysis such as the construction of categories, typifications or institutions and discourses. Social constructionism[3] is most commonly recognised as a contemporary means of analysis that is most engaged within the context of social psychology[4] (Burr 1995: 47). Social constructionism is also a perspective that has been adopted in various disciplines such as psychology, gender studies, women's and feminist studies, history, linguistics and particularly sociology, the area in which social construction originated (Burr 1995: 1-3; Pinker 2002:202).

There seems to be no single universal definition of social constructionism (Burr 1995: 2). However, it can be understood simply as a perspective that holds that human knowledge and human reality are the products of particular socio-cultural systems, and that these particular socio-cultural systems are products of human interaction.[5] Humans continuously and repeatedly engage in the construction of their social reality, and they equally internalise these constructed realities as objective realities and these realities in turn become subjective (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 19-27; Burr 1995: 2-5).

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[2] I also use the term Euro-west to indicate the West which was defined as a group of nations that were trading with the East within a particular historical period.

[3] Also referred to as the Social Construction Theory or Social Construction Perspective

[4] Social Psychology is a "branch of psychology that studies psychological, cognitive, affective behavioural processes of individuals as influenced by group membership, group interactions and other factors that affect social life such as status, roles, and class. Examines the effects of social contacts on the development of attitudes, stereotypes etc…" (McDougall 2002: 917).

[5] According to Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger (1966: 58) "Society is a human product, society is an objective reality [Hu]man[s] [are] social product[s]." (Square parentheses are mine.)

There are multiple ways in which social construction is interpreted and operative in different academic disciplines (Burr 1995:1). In this thesis, I will explore how social construction may be engaged in the discipline of religious studies, which will also be complemented with post-colonial and gender studies. This will be achieved by examining the British colonial construction of the West as Christian and masculine and of the East as Hindu and feminine.

My main interest in social constructionist theory is in its understanding of how humans create knowledge and reality through human interactions as well as in the interplay of typifications and discourses in this creative process. Social construction theory emphasises the ways through which humans create and understand their reality; more importantly, who constructs their knowledge and through that knowledge, their identity. Social constructionism holds that humans develop their own individual realities through their interactions with others in a particular socio-cultural system.

In social constructionism, institutions, typifications and discourses (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 45-85,159-160; Burr 1995: 46-61) shape an individual's knowledge, and these individuals form their identities through various categories such as race, nationality, gender and religion. They are key concepts that are operative within the main characteristics of social construction which will be discussed following section 1.2.

While social constructionism usually examines the construction of knowledge in only one particular socio-cultural system, I will apply this theory to two systems of knowledge constructed within the context of the British colonisation of India. These two systems are the British East India Company and British orientalist scholarship. Second, I will focus on the roles that typifications and discourses play within this human dynamic and the construction of categories. I will address select colonial institutions as well as significant discourses such as religion and gender in the development of the colonial construction of the West and East.

## 1.1 Typifications and Institutions

One of the key concepts of Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory are that typifications occur in the daily interaction of the people within a particular social system or group (1966:54). In its simplest definition, typifications are mental representations of one another's actions. According to Berger and Luckmann, "typifications play an important role in the social reality of everyday life and are thus apprehended in a continuum of typifications as they are removed from the 'here and now' of the face-to-face situation" (1966: 32). A typification is one means through which an individual's behaviour and knowledge are constructed.

Typifications undergo a process whereby they eventually become habitualized or acted out by members of a social group in relation to one another. For Berger and Luckmann, "all human activity is subject to habitualization. Any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be reproduced with an economy of effort and which *ipso facto,* is apprehended by its performer as that pattern" (1966:50). When these actions have been repeated and reciprocated, they become standardized or routine and thus become institutionalised (1966:51), that is, "institutionalisation occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. Put differently any such typification is an institution" (1966: 51). Institutionalization occurs when reciprocated and habitualized actions are exposed and shared with the other members, and eventually become fixed or entrenched within a given social structure.

Both meaning and knowledge become institutionalised by individuals within social structures.

Institutions also play an important role in social construction theory. There are different aspects of institutions that I engage in this thesis. I focus on the first two, as the third, although important, would require further study but is nuanced throughout this thesis. First, institutions, typifications and members of a society share a reciprocal relationship, "typifications of habitualized actions that constitute institutions are always shared ones. They are always *available* to all members of the particular social group in question, and the institution itself typifies individual actors as well as individual actions" (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 51). In this understanding of institutions, social construction theory demonstrates that knowledge and a specific understanding of reality are shared by and within a particular social group. The idea that institutions are involved in and perpetuate shared knowledge and uphold a particular understanding of reality of a specific social group is evident, for example, in the British colonial and British orientalist institutions. These institutions defined a particular view and identity of the East and of the West's in relation to it.

Second, social construction theory illustrates the historical and controlling nature of institutions. For Berger and Luckmann,

> Institutions further imply historicity and control. Reciprocal typifications of actions are built up in the course of shared history. They cannot be created instantaneously. Institutions always have a history, of which they are products. It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without an understanding of the historical process in which it was produced. Institutions also, by the very fact of their existence, control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against many other directions that would theoretically be possible. It is important to stress that this controlling character is inherent in institutionalisation as such, prior to or apart from any mechanisms of sanctions specifically set up to support an institution. These

> mechanisms (the sum of which constitute what is generally called a system of social control) do, of course, exist in many institutions that we call societies (1966:52).

This second aspect of institutions is demonstrated through the examples of religion, the British East India Company and British orientalism. Much like discourses that will be discussed in section 1.2, institutions control human behaviour and knowledge by building predefined models that mould behaviour and knowledge in one particular shape, as opposed to many possible shapes (1966: 52). Control is a fundamental element within an institution and has several mechanisms through which an institution can ultimately function as a system of what Berger and Luckmann refer to as social control (1966: 52).

Law, for example, is one such mechanism. Law is bound by control and situated in history (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 70-71). Chapter 4 will highlight and discuss the imposition of the British legal system in India and of the interpretation of Hindu systems of law within the context of the British legal system. This change was a means of shaping or controlling the behaviour of the colonised. The focus will be placed upon the impact of translations of religious scriptures such as the *Dharmashastras* and the *Manusmrti* from Sanskrit to English, which will be examined in light of social construction theory's emphasis on institutions and language.

Third, institutions are key to the interactions of and the development of typifications, not only between members within a particular social group, but also among individuals between two different social groups: "two individuals arrive at their meeting place from society that have been historically produced in segregation from each other and that the interaction takes place in a situation that has not been institutionally defined for the participant," (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 53), however new typifications develop through reciprocity (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 54)[6]. All actions or typifications that are "repeated once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree just as all actions observed by another necessarily involve some typifications on his part" (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 54). This aspect of institutions and typifications is shown in chapter two in the context of European and Indian trade, chapter three typifications developed within in a colonial context, and chapter four, within two different systems of knowledge.

## 1.2 Discourse

Although discourse is not formally addressed in Berger and Luckmann's definition of social construction, Vivien Burr introduces discourse as the channel of communication between typifications, institutions, and members of a social group (1995: 46-61) who habitually communicate their knowledge and reality (Burr 1995: 46-61). It is discourse that establishes the contexts through which knowledge and behaviour are reciprocally sustained within a society and culture.

The meaning of the word discourse has transformed over time. Originally discourse meant spoken and conversational language (Ashcroft 2000: 70) and later referred to formal speech and lengthy writings on particular subjects such as narrations or treatises (Ashcroft 2000: 70). In modern scholarship, the term discourse has acquired different meanings and is used in various ways. The most common understanding of discourse is taken from the French philosophic traditions of structuralism and post-structuralism (Burr 1995: 47). One of the pre-eminent scholars of this school is Michel

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[6] This process is further explained in detail in Berger and Luckmann 1966:53-55.

Foucault. In the Foucauldian school or French school, discourse is typically applied to issues of identity, self-hood, personal and social change, and power relations, which are usually engaged in conjunction with psychoanalysis (Burr 1995: 47). Foucault defines discourse as a "strongly bound area of social knowledge, a system of statements with which the world can be known" (Ashcroft 2000:70).

Social psychologist Vivien Burr provides an alternate understanding of discourse that is found within social constructionism, and one that is also shared by some scholars of literature. Unlike Foulcauldian scholars, Burr engages in analysis of the performative components of discourse that focus primarily on language such as speech act theory, conversation analysis and ethnomethodology (Burr 1995: 47-48). Here engagement of discourse focuses on how "accounts have been constructed and bring about the effects for the speaker or writer upon what rhetorical devices are used and how they are employed" (Burr 1995: 47).

Scholars such as Burr understand discourse as a system of particular statements that construct an object or identity (1995: 51-54). Within social constructionism, discourse is not only understood to be involved in the process through which knowledge is constructed, but is also regarded as a social construct because it is itself created and operative by humanly constructed institutions and typifications, a vehicle through which humans and institutions create and communicate their understandings of the world.

It is through the medium of human creativity, through people's actions and interactions, such as speaking and listening, writing and reading, that they both construct and come to know the world around them (Ashcroft 2000:71). Particular discourses possess different ways of understanding the world and each discourse has a different cluster of statements, different ways of organising statements and constructing categories (Burr 1995: 48). Some examples of discourses are sciences such as biology, medicine, and psychology; nationalism, Marxism; feminism(s); orientalism; and postcolonialism. Scholars within these discourses also incorporate Foucault's understanding that within each discourse or discursive system numerous statements can be made. Each discourse, however, has implicit rules that govern how statements are ordered, which questions are asked and which ones are not; rules that shape categories, and form and organise classification systems. Ultimately, these rules order and disseminate an understanding and perspective of the world that is held by a particular discourse (Burr 1995: 48; Ashcroft 2000:71).

Although Burr (1995) identifies discourse as an abstraction, one without a single concrete definition, she accepts a working definition of discourse that is provided by I. Parker (1992). Burr understands Parker's definition as providing the most suitable definition that can be utilised in most disciplines of the social sciences (Burr 1995:5). Parker defines discourse as "a system of statements, which constructs an object" (1995:5). Burr (1995) notes that more specifically within social constructionism, discourse can further be defined as "a set of meanings, metaphors and representation … that in some way together produce a particular version of events" (1995: 48). Within social constructionism, discourse also refers to a particular portrayal of an event, people or class of people (1995: 48), and portrays or represents them in a particular way. Social construction theory, therefore, recognises and allows a number of versions of events. This means that there are a variety of discourses that surround any one object, event or people (Burr 1995: 48), and each discourse has its own particular way of representing the world

(Burr 1995: 48). The notions that several discourses exist, and that each individual discourse as well as discourses in different combinations, can effect a particular representation or definition of an object or idea is significant to my thesis.

Within the context of typifications or institutions of social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann 1966), discourse functions as a catalyst between power and knowledge (Ashcroft 200:72).[7] I will demonstrate how this is evident within additional discourses such as orientalism and colonialism which overlap with gender and religious discourses. The relationship between power and knowledge is best exemplified in the colonial construction of the British legal system in India and of its particular definition of Hinduism.

### 1.3 Characteristics of Social Construction Theory

The discussion of how typifications and discourses function separately and in combination with each other in the process of construction continues in light of the four characteristics of social constructionism. Social psychologists, Vivien Burr (1995: 3-5) and Kenneth Gergen (2000: 1-32), identify and discuss four common characteristics of the social constructionist approach.

The first characteristic of social constructionism that will be discussed is that of historical and cultural specificity; that is, a specific time and location. In social constructionism, knowledge and categories that we employ in our understanding of the world depend upon where in the world we live and when we live (Burr 1995: 4). Ideas of nation and national identity are examples that pertain to the present study in that, according to social constructionism, they are understood to be social inventions that are perpetuated and sustained by socially constructed institutions, such as governments, religious, economic, and political systems, and military and legal agencies (Ashcroft 2000: 150).

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[7] For further reading on Foucault's understanding of Power and Knowledge see (Rouse 2005: 95-122).

If we consider the historical and geographical variables in a comparison between the constructions of the British and Indian nations and national identities from the 1500's to 1700's with those during the 1800's to 1947, we can see how they differed. From the 1500's to 1700's, the geographical construction of Britain was limited to the island of Scotland, Britain and Wales, while the construction of India was contained within the sub-continent of India. At this time Britain was ruled by a monarchy and was defined by various discourses such as Christianity, trade, expansionism and colonialism. In contrast India was rule by the Mughal Empire, which was Muslim. The Mughuls conducted the administration of the political and economic systems of India through the use of one language, which was Persian. However, India did not have one cohesive national identity. Rather, identity was shaped by affiliation to various religious groups that existed in India at the time such as Buddhist, Jain, Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Muslim and Hindu. In the 1800's, India became one of the many countries that became part of Britain's Empire. The British Empire's geographical borders also included areas such as South Africa and Canada. English was the medium through which political, economic and educational institutions were operative. In the colonial context, national identities were reconstructed as the normative category of 'Us' and represented those who were British English, superior, normative, masculine and civilised, while the category 'Other' represented those who were colonised, inferior, culturally backward, weak and feminine (Said 1991: 1,4; Taussig 1993: 44-58, 129-143).[8]

According to social contructionism, there are several ways of understanding different systems of knowledge. Social constructionism holds that knowledge is both historically and culturally relative (Burr 1995:4). Knowledge, in its variety of forms is specific to distinct cultures, social systems and geographical locations. Knowledge is directly shaped by culture, economic and social systems that are dominant within a particular culture. Within the social constructionist approach, knowledge is understood as a product or artefact that is constructed within and by a particular society. Social constructionism, therefore, claims that one system of knowledge should not be assumed to be better or correct and another worse or errant; rather, it considers all systems within their specific economic, geographical, religious and historical environments.

The spice trade and the trade of luxury goods are examples of historical and geographical specificity that are used to explore the construction of the West and East in chapter two. The spice trade and trade of luxury goods can be included as one of the definitive characteristics of the West during the 1500's. European traders travelled by sea[9] from Portugal, Holland, and Britain to the region of South Asia, specifically to the Spice Islands and India. Trade in spices and luxury goods contributed to the construction of the West and the East as opposing categories. Within this particular geographical and historical context, the East was constructed in opposition to the West as an exotic, non-

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[8] Taussig explains the construction of other in the context of the Cuna people's contact with colonial Europeans.

[9] This period witnessed the transition from overland caravan trade, which was controlled by Muslim merchants to overseas trade routes that were dominated by European traders and merchants.

Christian land that waited for the West to claim its abundance of riches. The West was constructed as powerful and competitive.

The non-judgemental character of the social constructionist approach encourages a comprehensive investigation of different systems. My investigation of the political context of British India allows room to consider the various motivations and discourses that influenced the type of power and knowledge during colonial rule. My interest lies in further exploring the gendered and religious layers of the British colonisation of India and its construction of India and its construction of the East as non-Christian, particularly Hindu, as well as the colonial construction of Hinduism, without diminishing the impact of colonisation on the Hindu culture and belief system from my location as a western scholar.

The second characteristic is a critical approach to what is considered 'taken-for-granted' knowledge. Social constructionism encourages a suspicion of assumptions that we take as natural or normative, as well as to engage material of various kinds such as literature, science and any material that shape any understandings of ourselves and our world, in a critical manner. This perspective particularly challenges the scientific view, which holds that what we think or believe to exist is based on our physical perception, and that it is only through objective study and observation that humans can know the nature of the world.[10] Social constructionism, on the other hand provides us with a different approach and helps us to scrutinise categories we automatically accept as real divisions.

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[10] In his article, Barry Glassner (2000) challenges the criticism that social constructionism and social constructionists completely dismiss the validity of scientific methodology as valuable, and limiting in certain instances in that it fails to consider variables such as society, culture, gender, etc.

Gender is one such example of a 'real' category or division of humanity that is discussed in terms of the social constructionist perspective by Burr. She remarks that through our observation of the world we see that humans are divided into two categories – male and female. Most socio-cultural systems, particularly those in the West, regard this division of humans as natural as it is based in scientific discourse (1995: 3). In the West, scientific discourse is agreed to be an authoritative and powerful discourse, whose classifications are accepted as true, real and normative.[11] In the western model, gender is based on the anatomical differences that determine whether an individual is either male or female. Social constuctionism challenges the division by questioning why such a division is based solely upon reproductive organs or height, eye colour, and hair and so on (1995:3). The notion that gender is a natural category is similarly critiqued and challenged by scholars such as Sherry Ortner (1974), Judith Butler (1995 and 2004), Pierre Bourdieau (2001), Bruce Lincoln (1989), John Money (1995), Thomas Lacqueur (2001), and Christine Delphy (1993). These scholars understand gender, as well as the notion of sex as a construction of society, not as a biological or scientific fact. The idea of gender as a social construction is relevant to my thesis because I will examine the ways in which gender was constructed in the west and how gender was also used as a discourse through which the West was categorised as masculine and the East as feminine. By using the discourse of gender, it is also helpful to understand the colonial construction of the West as 'Us' and the East as 'Other.'

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[11] See Fausto-Sterling, Anne (2000) as an example of a scientist who challenges the construction of gender categories based on the male-female paradigm. Fausto-Sterling suggests the possibility of five gender categories (78-79).

In western colonial discourse, gender was a standard criterion with which to classify different cultural groups. Gender was used to name or identify the coloniser as male or masculine, and the colonised as female and feminine with regard to their opposing positions of superiority, power, intelligence and strength (Prakash 1995). As the British were the dominant and ruling force during the colonisation of India, the western construction of masculinity and femininity was the standard to which these classifications were constructed.

Chapter three examines the two specific examples of cartography and British colonial masculinity, allowing us to explore how the West and the East were constructed as natural categories. The first example is cartography, the science of mapmaking. Cartography illustrates the power of the West to construct the physical and symbolic division between the West and the East and its acceptance of this division as natural. Section 3.1 explores the process of how boundaries were constructed and imposed upon the West and the East and how these categories were understood and accepted as natural because they were based upon categories that were understood as natural such as religion and gender. In the context of the categories of religion and gender, the West was constructed as Christian, as well as active, progressive, and masculine, while the East was constructed as non-Christian, as well as inert, backward and feminine. By using the social construction theory in my analysis, I will explore how the boundaries that divided the West from the East were not natural constructs, but were social constructs.

The second example in Chapter Three is British colonial masculinity. This type of western masculinity was manifest in the socially constructed image of the warrior or military officer. The British administrators and officers were regarded as the epitome of masculinity, which was constructed upon various qualities such as the ability to rule, emotional reserve, intelligence, physical strength, industrial progress, civility, and sense of adventure. All of these qualities were situated in the Victorian ideal of "Muscular Christianity" (Hall 1994; Beynon 2002; Kennedy 2002; and Putney 2003). The Hindu Indians, on the other hand were constructed as physically and intellectually weak, backward, superstitious, despotic, emotional and irrational, and, according to the British, therefore, unable to rule themselves. The 'Babus' of Bengal as they came to be known became the prototypes of the effete Indian (Krishnaswamy 2002; Curtis 2007; and Weston 2007). The qualities associated with the British understanding of the masculine and the feminine were also extended to the classification of religion. Christianity was understood to be a tradition that was based on physical strength, reason and morality, while Hinduism was understood as a tradition that promoted physical and moral laxity, irrationality, and was sometimes prone to the institutionalisation of cultural and religious acts of barbarity. I will examine the construction of gender and its associations within the context of colonial India in light of the observations above.

The third characteristic of social constructionism is that knowledge is sustained by social processes. In the social constructionist approach, this means that people reciprocally construct knowledge between them (Burr 1995:4; Pinker 2002). Knowledge is constructed and shared between people throughout various interactions, but most commonly through their daily interactions, particularly language both in its conversational and written forms (Burr 1995: 4; Pinker 2002). Human interaction provides a space in which "shared versions of knowledge are constructed" (Burr 1995: 4). Social constructionism understands that 'truth' is constructed through the active process of daily social interactions between social actors, not through a direct and objective examination of the world (Burr 1995: 4).

Social constructionism offers an explanation of how knowledge is shared and constructed through human interaction, especially through language. However, this explanation is derived from within one particular socio-cultural group. I will offer a unique analysis and will instead apply the third characteristic of social constructionism to my data and examine how and if knowledge is shared, constructed and communicated amongst two different socio-cultural groups who exist within a colonial context. Sharing implies an equality between members within a group and becomes problematic within the colonial framework. The knowledge system of the coloniser becomes dominant and imposes its systems of knowledge upon the colonised, such as language and textual knowledge upon the colonised (Said 1991: 92-95: Cohn 1996: 3-56). The coloniser has the power to construct the social reality of the colonised.

It is also important to note that the colonised have the power to resist colonial authority. In the context of social construction theory, resistance is a typification that develops in response to colonial dominance. Resistance by a colonised group(s) can take the form of habitualised actions that are performed within a particular historical context. Resistance in the form of Indian and Hindu Nationalism at the end of the 1800's is one such example that could be discussed; however, it would exceed the parameters of this paper.

The third characteristic will be discussed in the colonial context. The British were a homogenous group whose system of knowledge was characterised by the English language, British jurisprudence and Protestant Christianity, which were held as prototypes against which the Indian systems were measured, defined and categorised. The Indian system of knowledge, on the other hand, was comprised of two dominant religious groups, Hindus and Muslims, but included less prominent groups such as Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, Jews, Christians and Parsis. Unlike British law, which for the most part separated Christian beliefs from business matters, Indian jurisprudence was intertwined with Hindu and Muslim belief systems. For example, the Hindu legal text, *Manusmrti* contained laws that covered various aspects of life such as moral codes, business laws and contracts, ritual practices, domestic duties, relations between husband and wife, and laws of warfare. Hinduism was categorised in opposition to Protestant Christianity by missionaries and British administrators. As a result Hindus were often depicted as demons or devils.[12]

The British and the Indians communicated with each other out of necessity and within the context of the ruler and the ruled. The British learned native languages such as Bengali, Hindi, Urdu and Persian in order to conduct business, collect taxes and give commands. The Indians on the other hand, learned English primarily in order to survive by way of finding employment. The translation of original legal texts from Sanskrit and Persian into English along with the reorganisation and categorisation of their material by some orientalist scholars became authoritative versions that were integrated into the British legal system of India. The shared language and legal systems facilitated British rule. For the Indians this meant that their English language requirements extended further to increase their employment opportunities and social mobility.[13]

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[12] Please see 4.2b for examples.

[13] For examples see chapter 3 and Marshall, P.J 1997. "British Society Under the East India Company," *Modern Asian Studies*, 30:1, 89-108.

Burr (1995) and Gergen (2000) incorporate the essence, definition and characteristics that were developed and originally articulated by Thomas Luckmann's and Peter L. Berger's book (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality.* Luckmann and Berger, both scholars of sociology, claimed that human knowledge was constructed though the 'everyday' interactions of both groups and individuals, in a particular society and culture (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 19-43). The aim of social cosntructionism to reveal the ways through which humans, both in groups and individuals engage in the creation of their reality and their knowledge (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 43), particularly the processes through which social phenomena, such as human experiences, reality, and knowledge are formed, institutionalised and subsequently fashioned into tradition (1996:43). Social reality is maintained and perpetuated through a dynamic process of social interactions. Language is the principle means and the principle channel through which people re-enact their understanding of knowledge (1966:43). Luckmann and Berger claimed that all knowledge, be it abstract ideas or common knowledge that people within a particular social system understand to be fact on a daily basis, is constructed and reinforced through social interactions that support a shared understanding (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 19-43).

## 1.4 Orientalism

Orientalism is one of the most common contexts in which the construction of the Orient and the Occident is explained. I will engage Edward Said's understanding of orientalism by beginning with a brief description of his ideas concerning orientalism. I will then examine the components of orientalism that are similar to and different from social constructionism.

The most common contemporary understanding of the term 'orientalism' was popularised by the late scholar Edward Said (1991), [14] in his book of the same title (Ashcroft 2002; Sered 2006). Said's book is regarded as ground-breaking and authoritative in that it initially broached the discussion of the Orient's construction by the hegemony of the Euro-west, particularly that of Britain and France (Said 1991: 4). His book has influenced various disciplines such as postcolonial studies, feminist studies, history and literature, and enabled various disciplines to each consider the dominance of Euro-western ideologies and their implications within each of their particular discourses.

As with the social constructionist view, Said emphasises the importance of actively questioning assumptions, knowledge, and paradigms that are often understood as natural and normative. He demonstrates this by challenging the Euro-west's construction of the Orient and interrogating the assumptions and (mis)representations generated within and by Orientalist discourse, particularly those pertaining to Muslims and Arabs (Said 1991; Sered 2006).[15] Said's critique focuses on orientalist scholarship of the late 18th century.[16] He first examines how the Orient was constructed by orientalist scholars. These scholars were typically Euro-western men. These scholars studied eastern languages such as Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, Sanskrit and Hindi, with the intention of accessing valuable insight into the various cultures in which these languages were dominant. Most importantly for Said, the orientalist scholars believed that through the study of languages, they could not only access the knowledge and culture of the colonised peoples, but that this knowledge would facilitate effective colonial rule (Said 1991: 78; Sered 2006). However, Said's view differs from of the social constructionists, who claim that some scholars were partially correct in their assertions that language opened the possibilities to understanding another social system. Said strongly asserts that knowledge was the primary means to power (Said 1991: 3; Sered 2006). Orientalist scholarship was an institution through which the orient came to be known as the Orient, and through which the West came to rule it (Said 1991: 3; Sered 2006).

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[14] I am using the 1991 reprint of Said's *Orientalism*, that was originally published in 1972.

[15] Said has been criticised for accusing western scholars for being inherently prejudiced against Muslims and Arabs, and thus incapable of studying Islam and Arab culture. This accusation was countered by Prakash (1995).

[16] As noted by Gyan Prakash (1995) and Richard King (2001), Said has had numerous criticisms of his generalised portrayal of orientalist scholars. Said has portrayed the scholars as stoic, unconcerned, too heavily influenced by the Euro-west agenda for colonisation. Said claimed that all scholars inaccurately portrayed 'orientals' particularly, Muslims and Arabs and their cultures in a demeaning manner. Prakash and King do not deny that misrepresentations of people and cultures did occur. They include further criticisms of Said's dismissal of orientalist studies as lacking any value.

For Said, Orientalist scholars were responsible for the construction of a discourse that perpetuated a stereotypical representation of the Orient (Said 1991: 31-109). Rather than recognising the uniqueness of each culture in its own right, the Orientalist scholars constructed one 'Orient'; one paradigm, that was comprised of stereotypes of various cultures and spanned several regions such as Asia, South Asia and the Middle East,

> Along with other people variously regarded as backward, degenerate, uncivilised and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral – political admonishment. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at: they were seen through, analysed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined, or – as the colonial powers open coveted their territory – taken over (Said 1991: 207)

This stereotype was constructed as defeated, decadent, feminine, and heathen (Mills 1968; King 1999; Said 1995; Elst 2004; Cohn 1996).

Said also interprets orientalist scholarship together with the agendas and intentions of the scholars engaged in it. The agendas of orientalist scholars and their profiles are varied. For example, some scholars such as John Z. Howell not only studied ‘eastern’ languages, texts and cultures in order to understand non-Euro-western cultures, but also attempted to share their understanding of eastern cultures as advanced and sophisticated with other Europeans. Often, the work and the intent of these scholars is diminished or disregarded within orientalist and postcolonial discourses. Although Said’s work (1991) does not concentrate on the colonial situation of India and the impact on the Hindu population, his unidimensional and generalised portrayal of orientalist scholars remains dominant in postcolonial and orientalist discourses. Scholars who fit his portrayal include William Jones and Nathaniel B. Halhed, who studied eastern languages and literature with the intent to control trade, landownership, collection of taxes, and to govern India. These scholars sometimes portrayed the cultural and particularly the religious practices of Indian Muslims and Hindus in a negative manner.

While there were many British orientalist scholars in India who did not fit Said’s stereotype of the orientalist scholar, his portrayal of orientalist scholars and their agendas is relevant to my work as it is evidence for the separation between British and Hindu Indian cultures employed the constructing the British system of governance in India. For Said (1991), one of the goals of these scholars’ agendas was to present a negative image, a negative prototype of the ‘Oriental’, who, for example, was biologically inferior [which reads as culturally backward], as well as odd, abnormal, and inert (Said 1991: 206, 231-233; Sered 2006). [17]

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[17] See also 3.3b.

For Said, the Orient also connotates a system of representations influenced by political forces that were incorporated into Western discourses such as academics and empire (Sered 2006). The Orient exists in relation to the West, as the West's inverted image of "Us" to that which is alien, inferior or "Other" (Said 1991: 1; Sered 2006). Said's definition of the Orientalism is thus derived from an understanding of power and how this power is manifest and operative in a colonial context. Orientalism is also "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience" (Said 1991: 1). It is a discourse that is operative within a variety of "set institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles" (Said 1991: 2). This system of the "Us"/ "Other" binary is rooted in Western discourses that were dominant during Europe's contact with India.

Like social construction theory, Said understands the construction of the Orient and the Occident as human constructions. He understands the Orient and Occident are not merely "inert facts of nature," but created by man (Said 1991: 4-5). Similarly in orientalist discourse, constructions emerge within a particular context and are part of the same social and cultural fabric. Orientalist discourse and its constructs are produced and communicated within, as well as reinforced by a particular society and its various institutions or typifications.

It is evident in Said's work that only a particular segment of Euro-western society is represented. Said identifies this group as upper-class Euro-western men, who played a dominant role in the creation and construction of various geographical, cultural, economic and historical entities within which the notions of the Orient and Occident were constructed (Said 1991: 5). In turn, these men came to symbolise the Euro-West. Said's inclusion of gender is limited. He focuses on the experiences of the colonising and colonised males and fails to provide an account of the experiences of either European or colonised women (Kennedy 2000). Social constructionism encourages the inclusion of gender discourse when considering the construction of reality and knowledge in its analysis.

While social constructionism considers the interactions among humans and the various influences with which they construct their reality within one socio-cultural system, Said examines the socio-cultural systems of European/Christian and Arab/Muslim regions. Said's analysis of human interaction, however, is formulated only within the contexts of power and their impact on the construction of knowledge. The social constructionist perspective holds all systems of knowledge and socio-cultural systems as valid and equal, but Said judges the West as errant and biased, particularly in its construction of the Orient as an inverted opposite to the Occident.[18] In Said's work, the Orient was defined and associated primarily with the citizens of Muslim countries and Arabs, while the construction of the Occident was represented by the peoples and nations of the Christian Euro-west (Said 1991). Said's understanding of orientalism is deficient in that his focus is directed on the West's preoccupation with power over the East and focussing narrowly, but not exclusively, on the orient in the context of Arabs and Muslims.

This thesis demonstrates how the theories of social construction and Orientalism can explain how the categories of the Orient and the Occident were constructed in the context of British India. I will also consider how Said's construction and designation of the Orient as Muslim and Arab (Middle East), and the Occident as Europe, differs from the British construction of the Orient as Hindu India and the West as primarily comprised of the European nations with whom Britain competed in trade. As institutions play an important role in both social constructionism and Edward Said's *Orientalism*, my investigation will focus on the consequences when institutions of different socio-cultural systems encounter each other. I will use the British East India Company as a specific example of a Euro-western institution whose encounter with the Indian and Hindu socio-cultural system resulted in the construction of modern Hinduism and one of the many Western definitions of the East.

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[18] See also Lincoln (1991).

Edward Said's (1991) work, *Orientalism*, remains influential and for the most part, presents a standard representation of Orientalist scholars and scholarship. Said, however, was not the first scholar to address the relationship between European colonial power and knowledge with that of the domination of colonised peoples. Gyan Prakash notes that scholars such as Anwer Abdel Malek, V.G. Kiernan and Bernard S. Cohn published their works on this issue during the mid to late 1960's (1999:200). Said's contributions were positive in that his bold criticisms of Western scholarship along with the various forms of Western hegemony forced the West to examine its authority, particularly in the areas of scholarship and colonialism and its impact on "other" societies (Prakash 1995: 199). Said's book focussed particularly on the deconstruction of the opposing categories of Orient and Occident that were constructed by the West (Prakash 1995: 199). He also challenged the authority of westernised accounts of history and acknowledged that the colonised have their own systems of knowledge and historical accounts (Prakash 1995:199).

While Said's work is valuable as it continues to stimulate an awareness of the impact of the West's dominance in knowledge and power, it contains several observations about orientalism that require further consideration. First, Said presents only a one-dimensional characterisation of the Orientalist scholar. This portrayal is based largely on Oriental scholars of the 18th century CE. He fails to acknowledge, as do some other scholars of various disciplines, that Orientalist scholars subscribe to different agendas and different streams. Admittedly, some Orientalist scholars of the past were solely and implicitly involved with establishing a hegemonic control of colonised "others," but there were others who were genuinely interested in learning more about different cultures and languages.[19]

For Said, the Orientalist scholar was an austere man, who cared little of the people whose language and culture he studied (Prakash 1999: 199). Said discounts the modern Orientalist scholars, who now include women as well as men, who study Eastern, South East Asian, and Middle Eastern languages, texts and histories. Scholars such as Bernard Lewis (1982) accused Said of crossing the line between scholarship and politics.[20] Lewis further states that Said tainted or poisoned the true history of Orientalist scholarship, and that modern scholarship is far more diverse than it had been in the past. The term 'Orientalism' is no longer used because it can no longer adequately describe the various endeavours of modern scholars in this field (Prakash 1999: 201).[21] Although an "Orientalist' scholar will most likely be situated in the West or Euro-West and will most probably engage in Western methodology in their studies, his or her intention, however, is most likely to not go beyond a genuine interest in the languages, histories, and cultures of the East. Scholars who engage their studies within or whose studies are related to the discipline and discourse of Orientalism have generally divided into two camps: either they are 'pro'- or 'anti-Said.'[22] I have navigated my position with some trepidation as I wish not to be included in either, but as an independent voice. I have located my position somewhere in the middle by drawing upon Said's focus on the West's power to define, construct, and categorise, and by considering the different factors that are integral to the relationship and interaction between both the coloniser and the colonised.

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[19] See chapter 2 of this thesis.

[20] For a complete account of these criticisms see Bernard Lewis 1982. "The Question of Orientalism," *New York Review of Books*.

[21] For further criticisms of Said's work, see (Prakash 1999: 199-212), and Grafflin (1983: 607-608).

Said's critiques of the various forms of Western hegemony are important, especially those concerning the dynamic of dominance and oppression by Western countries through their ability to control through both force and power. These are important and relevant to most colonial experiences.[23] Said derives his criticisms from a limited perspective that focus on the West's dominance and the portrayal of Arabs in the Middle East. Said identifies the East as the Middle East, but for colonising powers, for example, the British, the definition of the East was more fluid because it was continuously constructed based upon their advancements in trade expeditions. This narrow approach largely excludes other regions and countries such as the Americas and India, whose histories and cultures have been shaped by colonisation. Said does not disregard, but gives little attention to, the existence of colonialism outside of the context in which he focuses. There are some significant references to these countries, including references to India and the British Raj.[24] While there are characteristics that are common to the colonial experience, such as the expansion and acquisition of territories and resources, the proliferation of a religion, and the hegemony of the coloniser which inevitably filters through the various layers of the colonised culture and society, these characteristics vary in degree and manner. Said gives the impression that the colonial experience of the Arabs in the Middle East is similar, if not the same, for all people who suffered under Western colonisation. Other scholars such as Gayatri Spivak argue about the differences in, and of, the colonial experience.[25]

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[22] This is impression is conveyed in both the works of Prakash (1999) and Grafflin (1983).

[23] See examples in Said's *Orientalism* (1991).

This chapter has outlined and defined the main characteristics of the theories of social construction and Edward Said's orientalism that will be used in analysing the construction of the West and the East. Features such as typifications, institutions, and discourses will be discussed in the context of social construction's characteristics that include historical and geographic specificity, the idea of naturalness, and the impact of knowledge as a means to expand upon Said's understanding of the construction of the West and the East. I will now turn to the first characteristic of social construction, historical and geographic specificity in Chapter two. This chapter will discuss the role of the spice trade and the trade of luxury goods within particular historical periods and geographic locations which helped to construct the West and the East.

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[24] Said, E. 1991. *Orientalism.*

[25] See Childs, Peter and Patrick Williams. 1997. "Spivak and the Subaltern." In *An Introduction to Postcolonial Theory,* edited by Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, 157-184. London: Longman.

# CHAPTER 2

# HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC SPECIFICITY

In this chapter, I will explore the categories of the West and the East in the context of social constructionism's second characteristic, i.e., the historical and geographical construction of reality and knowledge. My focus is the manner in which West and East were created within the colonial framework and how knowledge based on these two categories was disseminated through Western discourses, particularly the discourses of Christianity. The construction of all-encompassing categories such as West and East is a complex process and involves a variety of factors, events and circumstances. Within the confines of western discourse, I focus on the European trade in spices and luxury goods as it pertains to India.

In the context of trade in luxury items and at a fundamental, if somewhat simplistic level, notions of West and East emerge as binary opposites. In this chapter, I explore how the East is constructed as an opposite or inverted representation of the West. Said (1991) describes this process of positing oppositions or inverting representations as mirroring: the East becomes what the West is not. So, for example, the East is often represented as mystical, exotic, a distant and mysterious non-Christian land overflowing with riches and luxuries; and the West is represented as stable, rational, organised and Christian.

Social constructionism challenges the content of these binaries and tells us that we might just as easily, through perhaps less popularly, construct the West as materialistic, militaristic and highly competitive in economic and territorial expansion and the East as culturally and economically benign. By analysing these binaries with this characteristic of social constructionism the content of these binaries is challenged.

I will show how Christianity was one of the influential discourses and institutions among various European nations during a particular period of time, contributing to the colonial construction of the West and East in India during the colonial period (mid 1500's to late 1700's). I will explore the manner in which these categories changed as the historical and materialistic context of the British presence in India evolved. At the beginning of the colonial or imperial period, the West's construction of reality and its knowledge of the world developed in light of several factors. Some of these include the Euro-western nations' motivations for competitive trade such as the desire for the profits that could be acquired from the trade of spices and luxury goods, as well as international rivalry in expansionist expeditions and also those that encouraged the proliferation of Christianity.

The spice trade[26] and the trade in other luxury goods are two specific examples that help illustrate the historical and geographical contexts in which the colonial construction of the West and East developed. Although my focus is on Britain and India, I will briefly preface these examples with a general description of rival European nations who competed for these commodities.

The spice trade developed in the context of intense competition between numerous nation-states that quickly emerged in 15th century Europe (Osterhammel 1999:

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[26] Although spices had a practical purpose, they can be considered a luxury item as they could not be found readily in Europe and were expensive, "spices not only helped to make palatable the decaying meats of Europe's markets, were incentives for trade...Religion was also a spur, for Portuguese Catholics resented giving "infidel" Muslims, the middlemen who bought Asian spices to Western Europe, exorbitant profits" (Wolpert 1965: 64).

1-10). These nation-states vied for political and economic advantage over one another and they struggled for territorial expansion, which was not limited to the continent of Europe, but extended beyond its borders. Expansion enabled overseas trade, which became a significant factor in the struggle between European nations. In addition to territorial expansion, the search for and trade of different items and luxury goods motivated European explorations (Cohn 1996: 16-17).

Trade can be understood as a form of war given that foreign trading posts relied on fortifications from the aggressive acts carried by and on European nations' foreign trading posts (see section 2.1). The European spice trade with India and the market for luxury goods developed in two waves.[27] The 'First Wave'[28] spanned approximately two centuries from the 1500's CE to the late 1700's CE. Different Euro-western nations including Portugal, Spain, Holland, France and Britain competed in various degrees in overseas expeditions for the primary purpose of establishing and controlling the most efficient trade routes to the East.[29] These exploratory voyages sought to acquire spices,

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[27] The socio-cultural ideals of Greece were considered the foundations upon which Euro-western ideals have been constructed and long associated with the West. It was commonly understood in the West, that Greece was the first Western nation to have contact with India. Evidence of this contact is provided in Greek historical scholarship that cites examples of trade between Greece and India along with examples of the participation of Greek scholars in Indian royal courts. For further reading see Mittal and Thrusby 2004.

[28] My division and use of the model of 'Colonial Waves' was influenced by the model created by Darlene Juschka (2001) in "A Nod in the General Direction of...: Taking Gender Seriously in the Study of Religion", *Studies of Religion/Sciences Religieuses"* 30(2): 215-222. She indicates '4 Waves' of colonialism: Conquest; Settlement; Cultural and Technological (222).

India was sought after by European nations primarily for its spices, raw materials and luxury items. Within this context, India became an object of colonisation and territorial expansion. In his book (1999) *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview.* Markus Weiner Publishers: Princeton, Jurgen Osterhammel distinguishes between notions of colonisation, colony and colonisation. For Osterhammel, colonisation "is a process of territorial expansion"; a colony is "a particular type of sociopolitical organization"; and colonialism "as a system of domination" (4). All three are based upon the notion of expansion of a society beyond its original habitat (4). He notes that expansion can be divided into six different categories, which are evident in different periods of human history and geographic areas:

1. *Total migration of entire populations and societies.* Large groups of humans who "have settled in one place and typically do not lead a mobile life as hunters and nomadic shepherds give up their original settlements without leaving parental societies behind. Expansion of this type generally entails military conquest, subjugation, and often suppression of peoples in the target regions. It can have several causes: overpopulation, ecological bottlenecks, pressures from expanding neighbors, ethnic or religious persecution, enticement by rich centers of civilization, etc...This situation does not produce colonies, since no center of expansion remains behind" (4-5).

2. *Mass individual migration.* This form is defined by emigration "individuals, families, and small groups leave their home territories, motivated primarily by economic factors. They do not intend to return. In contrast to total migration, the societies from which they depart remain structurally intact. Individual migration generally takes place as a second stage expansion process within established political and world economic structures. The emigrants do not create new colonies, but are integrated into existent multi-ethnic societies" (5).

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3. *Border colonization.* For Osterhammel, "this term means extensive opening up of land for human use, pushing a 'frontier' into the 'wilderness' for agricultural purposes or to attain natural resources. This colonization requires settlement. Economically, it combines the mobile production factors of work and capital with natural resources tied to a specific place. Only rarely is the founding of colonies as separate political entities coupled with this type of colonization, since it usually takes place at the perimeter of existing settlement areas" (5-6).

4. *Overseas settlement colonization.* A type of "border colonization which entailed the development of settlement off-shoots across the sea in areas where military force was required" (6). The classic example is that of "the initial phase of English settlement of North America. The founding groups of settlement colonies – plantations in the term of that epoch – tried to build self-maintaining bridgeheads that were not vitally dependent on supplies from the mother country or on trade with the natives. The land was considered 'rulerless,' lacking legitimate political authority. The indigenous population was not subjugated and integrated into the colony in a subservient status, as in Spanish America, but instead was forcefully repulsed in the face of often violent resistance. The spheres of settlers and natives were separated both territorially and socially" (6). According to Osterhammel, there are other variations of the overseas settlement colonization. The first occurs when "a politically dominant settler minority- usually with the help of the colonial state - expels an indigenous peasant population from the best land, but remains dependent on the labor of that same population and finds itself in competition with it for parts of the remaining land" (7). Another form of settlement colonisation attempts to solve "the problem of recruiting workers after the expulsion or destruction of the indigenous population by forced import of slaves and their employment in a plantation economy" (7).

5. *Empire building wars of conquest.* Osterhammel regards this form to be the classic form of "establishing the rule of one people over another. An imperial center continues as the ultimate source of power and legitimacy...As a rule, military empire building has come about not by annexation of territory in 'empty' areas, but by subjugating the existing state and societal institutions...Military conquerors behaved parasitically toward the dominated economy; besides securing order and facilitating foreign trade, the major function of the administration was to skim off tribute. Reorganization of tax levies regularly belonged to the first activities of colonial power" (8).

6. *Construction of naval networks.* This final form was maritime expansion that involved "the systematic construction of militarily protected trading factories. Expansion of this type did not normally lead to either inland colonization or to significant large-scale military annexation of territory. The extension of British power in India from Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras was atypical, at least before 1820. The chief purpose was to secure trade hegemony... When the age of world politics began in the eighteenth century, the installation of naval bases gained a global significance for Great Britain, the leading maritime power of the time, beyond the protection of trade interests" (9). For further examples please consult pages 3-12.

[29] In his book, Lawson (1993) describes the East within the context of Euro-western, British colonialism and trade (1). The East was a general term that was used to refer to various different geographic locations (1). The East was also used as a term that was interchangeable in discussions during the 1600's CE, that were associated with Britain's access to eastern markets (1). The East referred to several geographic locations that were sources of various exotic oriental products such as the East Indies, Asia, India, China, Japan, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea (1). The generic use of the term "East" was used indiscriminately to refer to all places that were valuable sources of raw materials and luxury goods (2). The British and other Europeans determined the value of the East based upon the understanding that it was a place overflowing with wealth and luxury goods, while the people who lived in these eastern lands, their belief

luxury items, manufactured goods and raw materials that were both highly prized and scarce in Europe (Wolpert 1965: 66-68; Stein 2002: 201-206).[30] The competitiveness of these nations was further heightened through the subsequent conquest and colonisation of 'new' territories,[31] and to a lesser extent, the proliferation of Christianity.

From the 1800's onward, the 'second wave' of contact focused on the exploration of new markets for manufactured products, along with much needed raw materials to supply factories in their respective home nations (Read and Fisher1999: 14). In this section, my analysis draws only upon the period of the 'first wave' of trade. I draw primarily from this historical period as it is the beginning of European contact with India and the point from which the colonisation of India commences. The data supporting the examples of the spice trade and luxury goods are taken from this period and are connected to these specific historical and geographical locations.

### 2.1 Christians and Spices

> *Da Gama's discovery of the sea route to the Indian Ocean via the Cape of Good Hope embodied the direct challenge to that system by outflanking traditional trading through the Near East. Perhaps recognising this implicit threat, the "first greeting that he [Nunes] received was in these words: "May the Devil take thee! What brought you hither?" According to Roteiro, Moncaide and his friend then asked what the Portuguese sought so far from home. Nunes replied that they had come "in search of Christians and spices"* (Ames 2004: 50).

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systems and cultures were of little consequence to the Europeans at this stage of their trade expeditions. (Lawson 1993).

[30] Unlike the nations of Europe, India was self-sufficient and possessed sophisticated economies, markets, credit and a variety of manufacturing techniques (Spear 1990). Prior to the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the 1700's, Asians did not require much of Europe in terms of trade goods. However, South Asia developed an interest in Europe's strong military forces (Spear 1990), particularly in European artillery; firearms; military tactics and discipline (Spear 1990:1-10).

[31] 'New' in the context of European knowledge of the world during that period of time.

The spice trade[32] provides both an historical and geographic context in which the construction of the West and the East can be examined. It is within this context that the West and East emerge as more than the obvious and general colonial binaries of Us/Other or Coloniser/Colonised. More specific binaries that characterise the West and the East emerge less directly such as Christian/non-Christian; active/passive; progressive/static and subject/object, all which have been shaped by the West's competition for spices.

I will begin by looking at how the historical and geographic construction of West and East was initiated by the Portuguese and will then examine the British as the defining influence in this process. The inclusion of the Portuguese experience in this chapter serves a two-fold purpose. First, the Portuguese experience in India sets the tone for that of the British experience. Second, it reveals a difference in agendas: the Portuguese not only emphasised trade, but were also interested in the religions of the region, while the British originally focused on trade and explored the religious dimensions of Indian society only when they impacted on successful trade relations. I will explore how these agendas contributed to the binaries that were applied to the construction of the West and the East.

The most significant point of contact between the Europeans and India was the spice trade that was initiated by the Portuguese. The Portuguese established trading ties with local Mughul leaders and developed a trading stronghold in India's southern ports during the mid 1500's to the early 1600's (Wolpert 1965: 64; Spear 1990: 28, 30). The

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[32] "Spices, arguably were the most lucrative of the global luxury trade in the period between 100 and 1450, moved for the most part by sea. A world without refrigeration had powerful reasons to pay high prices for pepper, cloves, cumin, cinnamon, and nutmeg, all sources of strong flavours that masked the taste of overage meat and other perishables. Nearly all of these items originated in India and the islands of Southeast Asia"(Goucher, Leguin and Walton : 1998).

Portuguese explorer and sea captain, Vasco da Gama, led the first voyage to India (Bhattacharya 1967: 689). He arrived with four ships near Calicut on 20 May 1498 (Bhattacharya 1967: 689). Da Gama was commissioned by King Dom Manuel I in order to establish seafaring trade routes to the East, and to locate the legendary Christian Kingdom of Prester John (Silverberg 1972: 193-314).[33] At first, Da Gama was well received by the local leader Zamorin with whom he negotiated trade agreements between the two countries. On his second trip in 1502 CE, De Gama was received less congenially. Zamorin refused Da Gama's demands for a Portuguese monopoly on trade in Zamorin's region (Wolpert 1965: 64; Bhattacharya 1967: 689). Later, however, Dom Francisco De Almeida, a Portuguese viceroy was able to gain greater access to trade with his defeat of an Egyptian and Gujarati fleet in the Arabian Sea, and secured the most used and strategic trade route along the western coast of India (Bhattacharya 1967: 689). In 1510 CE, under the leadership of Alfonso Albuquerque, Portugal became more aggressive and attacked Goa, which was known for the best port from which to export spices (Bhattacharya 1967: 689). By 1543 CE, the Portuguese had secured Goa from Moghul control (Wolpert 1965: 64).

In this context, the Europeans and the Indians (Mughals, Hindus) met in combat and they also encountered each other institutionally. These circumstances were highly influential in the development of their perceptions of each other. Some examples of combative means through which the Europeans and Indians experienced their encounters included naval power, firearms and the *sipahi,*[34] Indian soldiers who were trained and equipped by the Portuguese. The *sipahi* ensured that local leaders would adhere to payments for official protection by the Portuguese against piracy, which was a rampant problem on the seas. The Portuguese trained policemen were able to secure Portugal's presence and control of trade in Goa.

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[33] There are several variations of the legend of Prester John or Presbyter Johannes. He was believed to be a priest-king, who ruled in distant and exotic land. Prester John's kingdom was believed to be filled with an abundance of gems and treasures. The exact location of his kingdom is unknown and is thought to have been located in India, Ethiopia or Asia. Another characteristic of Prester John's kingdom was that surrounded by non-Christians, particularly Muslims. Aside from pursuing material luxuries, land and wealth, it can be suggested that the possible existence of Prester John's kingdom in the midst of Muslim territory justified European incursions into Asia, Africa and India. This example also illustrates how prevalent a role Christian discourse played in constructing the world. Most explorers of Christian Europe not only sought to convert others to Christianity, but to seek out other Christians (Buchan 1938; Sanceau 1944; Silverberg 1972).

The superiority of the Portuguese naval power was demonstrated through sea voyages such as those of Da Gama and Alberquebque. However, Portugal's navy also patrolled the waters surrounding conquered trading posts (Wolpert 1965: 64-65). Local Indian traders were forced to buy safe passes and pay additional taxes to the Portuguese (Bhattacharya 1967: 689). The Portuguese were able to subdue the Indians in Goa by impressing them with their "superior fire power." Once such example was the two-day attack on the city of Calicut, which was considered the most important port and spice market on the Indian Ocean. Prolonged and progressive attacks were carried out on other major ports until 1510, when Adil Shah finally succumbed to Portuguese rule of Goa (Spear 1989: 16).

The *sipahi* also helped the Portuguese to further secure their presence and dominance over the Indians of Goa and ultimately the acquisition of more lucrative trading permits. The Portuguese established trading ties with Mughul leaders, from whom they received *firmans*,[35] which allowed the Portuguese to develop a trading stronghold on India's southern ports form most of the mid 1500's to the early 1600's CE (Spear 1989: 16).

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[34] *Sipahi* is derived from the Urdu/Persian word for police. This term was later modified to 'sepoy' by the British (Wolpert 1965: 65).

Religion played a significant role in establishing Portuguese authority. The Portuguese imposed Roman Catholic Christianity upon Goan Indians through forced conversions that were influenced by the Inquisition, and they encouraged inter-marriage. They were known for their ruthlessness, particularly their intolerance of different belief systems (Bhattacharya 1967: 690; Stein 2002: 203-206), as their intolerance was shaped by their Roman Catholic beliefs. The Portuguese in Goa were influenced by the church's ideology and brutal methods of the Inquisition that were used in the conversions of non-Christian Indians. They were indifferent to the persecution and torture of Goan citizens, especially those of the Muslim faith (Bhattacharya 1967: 690).[36] In 1540, the inquisitory practices were more fully enforced (Bhattacharya 1967: 690; Stein 2002: 204). Some examples of inquisitorial practices include the imposition of strict censorship of non-Christian literature, new laws that prohibited non-Christian from certain professions, and the destruction of religious literature and temples. The latter resulted in an exodus of non-Christians and holy persons from Goa (Bhattacharya 1967: 690). The binaries, which emerge most dominantly within these contexts, are those that differentiate between Christian West and heathen East.

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[35] Permission granted by Moghùl rulers to foreigners to live and trade within certain areas of the Moghul empire. Also *farman*, a royal order (Cohn 1996: 19).

[36] Jews and Muslims were perceived as heretical and were especially targeted during the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal. The prejudices of Catholic Spain and Portugal were in turn extended into Goa.

The Portuguese also imposed their authority by way of institutions such as Christianity and marriage. The Portuguese government also encouraged marriage of Portuguese sailors and merchants to Indian women (Stein 2002: 204), particularly widows and the abducted daughters of their opponents (Bhattacharya 1967: 690). In this particular historical context, the practice of enforced marriage was yet another way that Portugal was able to strengthen its commitment to the papacy and to Christianise the 'heathens' (Stein 2002: 204), while also using fear and intimidation as tools to cultivate and instil loyalty among the Indian population.

The Portuguese maintained a monopoly on South Asian trade routes to India's western and southern ports. Lisbon, the capital of Portugal became the centre of Europe's spice trade (Wolpert 1965: 64; Stein 2002: 204-206). However, the defeat of the Spanish *armada* by the British in 1588 shook confidence in Spanish and Portuguese naval superiority (Stein 2002: 204-206). This event encouraged the Dutch and the British to challenge Portugal's papally sanctioned and supported monopoly on Asian and South Asian trade, and to pursue their own overseas trade and exploration (Stein 2002: 204-205). The Dutch and British followed in the path of the Portuguese and ventured to the East. By the late 1500's, Portugal's might began to steadily decline. The Portuguese government found it increasingly difficult to continue financial support of the *sipahi* (Wolpert 1965:65). Along with Portugal's lack of capital, its small population and limited resources, which were thinly spread in Africa and the Spice Islands,[37] there were additional factors that contributed to Portugal's decline. The power and influence of the Portuguese was severely compromised and they remained powerful only in the Indian province of Goa (Wolpert 1965: 65). Eventually they turned their attention to Brazil (Blackwell 2004: 430). Thus, the gateway to the East was opened to other countries (Lawson 1993: 10). The Dutch were the first among the other European nations who took advantage of these circumstances.

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[37] The Javanese islands of the Maluccas and Banda (Wolpert 1965: 64).

European nations employed various tactics in their expeditions for spices in the East. However, the use of military force was a feature common to the Dutch, French and particularly the British. In their search for spices, the European nations used military force to establish and secure their trading posts from attacks from other European nations. In 1598 CE, the Dutch launched their first expedition and helped to further pave the way for the British and the French in India. The Dutch had an advanced school of cartography and modern techniques in business and banking, which enabled the Dutch to take a leading role in European trade and exploration (Wolpert 1965: 67). With these strengths, the Dutch began to attack the Portuguese in Goa. The local population, especially those who were considered half-caste (half Portuguese and Indian) had grown tired of Portuguese brutality, welcomed the Dutch (Wolpert 1965: 67). As Protestant Holland was newly liberated from Spanish control, the attack on Goa was symbolically significant. The attack represented a Protestant attack on Iberian Catholicism (Spear 1990: 30-31). Portuguese power in Goa was quickly reduced and contained to a few settlements (Bhattacharya 1967: 690). The Dutch launched several more attacks on the Portuguese by land and by sea. They challenged Portugal's monopoly on South Asian trade by establishing factories and posts in the areas of Madras and Bengal (Bhattacharya 1967: 690). Later, the Dutch together with the British secured the seaway from mainland India to the Spice Islands.

From the 1500's to the late 1600's, the Dutch and British engaged in fierce and bloody battles (Stein 2002: 205), over territories and trading rights. The battles over the Spice Islands were particularly contentious as Britain attempted to assert its presence and control of trade in the islands. In 1600 CE, the British East India Company was established on the Spice Islands and subsidiary trading posts and factories were soon created on mainland India (Wolpert 1965: 67). The Dutch responded by establishing the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (United East India Company) in 1602 (Wolpert 1965: 67). Various battles over the islands ensued over many years and finally culminated in 1623 during the Massacre of Amboyna[38] (Bhattacharya 1967: 244), thus driving the remaining British settlers off the other islands. The Dutch and the British reached an agreement that ensured each country a particular sphere of commercial dominance: the Dutch would control the trade of spices from the Spice Islands, while the British, whose trading posts in Madras and Calcutta were far more successful than those of the Dutch in Pulicut and Masulipatam (Bhattacharya 1967: 244), secured a stronghold on trade in continental India. The British directed their trade toward Indian calicoes and textiles (Bhattacharya 1967: 244).

Following the example of Dutch, the British craved a dominant role in international exploration and trade. The Elizabethan government encouraged merchants and traders by granting charters to individual merchants, aristocrats and adventurers who desired to trade in the Mediterranean and Africa, and establish settlements in America (Lawson 1993: 5-13). Although profits were the primary motive for Britain's eastward expansion, there were other motives that prompted many British merchants. The first was nationalism: upon the defeat of the Spanish armada, the British sought to build and assert their naval power over the territories that were jointly controlled by the Spanish and the Portuguese (Lawson 1993: 8-12). Aside from nationalism, some British had less noble motivations for pursuing wealth and adventure in the East. They regarded the newly liberated seaway as an opportunity for plunder and piracy (Lawson 1993: 2). Another reason was simply the adventure of discovering what was unknown to the Euro-west and a thirst for knowledge (Lawson 1993: 2-3). Some expeditions were supported by the British crown, such as the circumnavigation of the world by Sir Francis Drake (1577-80), and that of Sir Thomas Cavendish (1560-92) (Lawson 1993: 2-3, 68).

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[38] Also Amboina (Wolpert 1965: 67).

By the late 1600's the British encountered yet another European competitor, the French. King Louis XIV and the French government designed the French East India Company, *Compagnie des Indes Orientales.* The French company was created in order to stop the Dutch and British merchants from keeping their monopoly on Indians goods, which were in turn sold to the French (Bhattacharya 1967: 349). The king chartered the company, which was established in 1664 by Jean Baptiste Colbert in Madagascar (Bhattacharya 1967: 349-350). Colbert's attempts to colonise Madagascar were futile (Hebbar 2005). However, French trading and colony settlements in other areas were successful because they were strategically situated near prominent British posts: Masulipatan (1669) was near the Bay of Bengal and Calcutta; Pondicherry (1674) was eighty-five miles south of Madras; and Chandarnagar (1690) was on the banks of the Hughli (Hebbar 2005). The French also secured the islands of Bourbon and Mauritius in 1721, which became important for the protection of the French posts on the mainland (Hebbar 2005).

It was not until the French company experienced a financial crisis that any of the Euro-western nations contemplated the colonisation of India. From the latter half of the seventeenth century to the eighteenth century, the French company was poorly managed (Bhattacharya 1967: 247-248). The success of its posts fluctuated because of the strong competition posed by the Dutch and the English. The French were heavily bombarded by Dutch attacks, which consequently resulted in the near bankruptcy of the French trading company (Hebbar 2005). In 1741, Joseph Francois Dupliex arrived in India to revive the collapsed company. He believed his mission was not only to recreate the French company into an aggressive trading power in order to accumulate enormous profits for France, but also to create a French empire within India (Huttenback 1966: 4; Hebbar 2005). Dupliex instigated aggressive attacks on the British posts in the region of Bengal. He captured various British trading settlements with an army that was comprised largely of French soldiers and some Indians (Hebbar 2005). Dupliex was relentless and pulled the French company back from financial crisis and strengthened his army by gaining favour and political influence with Mughul rulers, particularly Siraj-ud-Daula, the Nawab[39] of Bengal (Brumwell and Speck 2001: 298).

The battles between the French and the British were especially bitter and seemingly incessant. French and British armies finally came to a head in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 (Huttenback 1966: 5,7; Stein 2002:207-209; Carter and Harlow 2003: 63-65). This was a significant battle for both the French and the British. The French whose troops were combined with those of the Nawab of Bengal's army, had greatly outnumbered the British by 50,000 to 2,000 (Brumwell and Speck 2001: 298). However, the meagre British forces commanded by Robert Clive devastated the French and Indian armies. A severe rain ruined the gunpowder of the Nawab's canons and thus weakened their ability to retaliate (Brumwell and Speck 2001: 298). For the French, this defeat was a severe blow. The *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* was severely diminished (Hebbar 2005). As a result, Dupliex was shunned by the French government and the monarchy (Hebbar 2005). With Britain's principle adversary in trade now defeated, Robert Clive was able to establish the British East India Company as the pre-eminent Euro-western trading institution within the subcontinent of India. The victory led by Clive also marked the beginning of British power in India that began with Clive's governance of Bengal, which would lead to the expansion of British power over nearly the whole of India (Brumwell and Speck 2001; Carter and Harlow 2003: 1).

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[39] "Nawab" is defined as a deputy. In the bureaucratic system of the Mughul empire in India, a nawab was also a governor who was appointed by the Court in Delhi. Later the meaning of the title changed and included both British and Muslim gentleman. When written as "Nabob" or "Nabab", it means a European merchant living a rich Oriental lifestyle in India or living at home in England off profits from the trade associated with the East India Company (Waghorne 1994: xxxi).

This section has used historically and geographically specific examples to demonstrate the initial construction of the West and the East. The example of the persecution of Muslims and Hindus by the Portuguese marks the distinction between European Christian and Indian Non-Christians. The quest for spices, competition for control of trade routes and European trading posts in India and its surrounding islands, characterised the West or Europe as the pursuer of wealth and riches. European perceptions of the East as a distant land steeped in wealth characterised India as a place that would fulfil the material needs of Europeans.

## 2.2 Luxury Goods

Like the spice trade, the trade of luxury goods was largely supported by monarchies and merchants. Although there are subtle differences in the way in which western religious institutions perceived luxury goods, these perceptions helped shape the construction of the West and East in terms of binaries as Christian and non-Christian, but also in terms of morals (i.e., good/evil) and virtues (i.e, diligence/laziness) (see section 4.2 for further explanation). I will begin briefly with an explanation of the Roman Catholic attitude toward luxury goods, which was evident in the geographical and historical contexts of the Portuguese and Spanish trade and exploration as discussed in section 2.1. This will be followed by the Protestant English understanding of luxury goods. Although both sects of Christianity utilised the binaries such as modesty/excess, each sect constructed them differently. This section highlights not only the importance of historical and geographical contexts, but also the fluidity and differences in the constructions.

Portugal and Spain were the first among European nations to claim sea faring trade of spices and luxury goods. For Portugal and Spain, the motivations for trade and exploration were not only financial, but also were influenced by Roman Catholic Christianity. At the beginning of the spice trade and the trade of luxury goods, the success of the Portuguese and the Spanish exceeded that of other European nations who also attempted exploring new territory, expanding their territory and establishing [40] trade routes. In the instance of Spain and Portugal, the Catholic Church supported trade and expansionism, which were instituted in the *Treaty of Zaragossa* in 1529 (Lawson 1993: 7). This treaty is an example of a religious institution's power to separate, demarcate and impose an arbitrary line, which was used in this particular construction of the West and East. The Church granted the Portuguese a *fiat* which divided the world into two realms of influence (Lawson 1993: 13). The Pope assigned Portugal and Spain different regions for exploration, trade and the proliferation of Christianity (Turner 2005: 38). The pope designated Spain's portion as Central and South America, the Caribbean, and spanning the Pacific to the Philippines (Lawson 1993: 7). Portugal's portion included the coasts of Africa, the West coast of India, and the "Spice Islands" (Wolpert 1965:64; Lawson 1993:7; Blackwell 1994: 31).[41] The application of social constructionism's characteristic of geographical and historical specificity to this example highlights how an arbitrary, but significant, division is constructed within a particular social, historical and social context.

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[40] Some scholars such as Lawson (1993) and Stein (2002) suggest that the success of Spanish and Portuguese expansionist and trade activities could be attributed to the financial support they received from their shared, but short lived monarchy, which supported and maintained the papacy.

During this period of trade, emphasis was placed upon the acquisition of luxury goods such as perfumes, gems, animal skins, and spices (Turner 2005: 351). The activity of trade along with the types of luxury goods was largely constructed by religious discourse in European society. The Christian antipathy towards Islam was one such factor. Prior to the first wave of colonialism, the Roman Catholic Church regarded trade as a disreputable occupation because it involved contact with non-Christians, especially Muslims (Turner 2005: 118). Christian virtues and morals become inserted into this binary of the West as Christian and righteous and the East as non-Christian and corrupt. It was believed that Christians of good standing who had contact with Muslims would become indifferent or covetous (Turner 2005: 118). Trade was not completely accepted, but was merely tolerated as a means of employment well into the 12th century (Turner 2005: 118). This antipathy was further exemplified in the Portuguese *conquistadores* and merchants whose "hostility and depredations against Muslim traders and shipping derived from the perpetual war between Christendom and Islam" (Chaudhuri 1985: 64). This contention between Christianity and Islam was used by some Christian leaders in the West to construct a particular world-view, which helped to justify not only their expeditions, but also their negative perception toward non-Christians. K.N. Chaudhuri suggests that military exploits and violence at sea, especially those in the Indian Ocean were understood and constructed in the context in which the "military valour of Christian warriors were sanctified by divine blessings" (1985: 71). This example demonstrates an important discourse that was used to justify military exploits as sea. It further shows the construction of the West as Christian, strong and entitled, while the East was constructed as non-Christian, weak and conquered.

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[41] According to Spear, this division was based on "the Bull of Pope Alexander the VI in 1493, as interpreted by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, and ratified in further Bulls of Julius II and Leo X in 1506 and 1514. An imaginary line was drawn 370 leagues west and south of the Cape Verde Islands. All undiscovered countries east of that line were assigned to Portugal, and all lands West, to Spain. The pronouncement of the Pope was universally regarded throughout Catholic Europe as the highest possible

While Catholic Christianity conditionally approved of trade, Protestant Christianity in England exemplified the traditional understanding of trade, particularly that of luxury goods. Since the beginning of Christianity, the idea of luxury goods was understood as sinful and was equated with lust (Turner 2005: 325-326). The notions of luxury and luxury goods were considered as threats to virtue, as were understood to be "decadent, effeminate, sinful and subversive" (Peck 2005: 6). Peck (2005) notes that several biblical sources constructed English Protestant understandings of luxury in the

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expression of international law, while the Protestant nations for nearly a hundred years did not feel context of luxury's association with dishonourable influences of the "other" that were understood as un-Christian influences such as women, upstarts and foreigners (6). [42] While religious institutions in England tolerated the trade of luxury goods, reservations against such trade extended far into the seventeenth century when the financial benefits of trade finally became obvious.

As the prospect of trade and its benefits became apparent in England during the 1600's, the detriment associated with ownership of and profits from luxury goods extended beyond Christian morality and virtue. It swept into the military and government institutions (Peck 2005: 6). The writings of Thomas Mun illustrated how religious discourse melded with economic discourse in British society, which helped to maintain this construction of luxury and luxury items. Before his appointment to the British East India Company, Mun wrote in one of his treatises in 1603, that luxuries such as "silks, sugars, and spices" were unnecessary items that were against God's law (Turner 2005: 7). In Mun's opinion, the products of other nations had brought various maladies upon England. He wrote, for example, that the British male had become effeminate and physically weak, lacking strength and knowledge, and this had led to the decline of British valour and prosperity in British enterprises (Peck 2005: 7).

At this juncture it is important not only to briefly mention the attitudes of Christianity toward luxury goods, but the role of luxury items within the church itself. The early teachings of the church strongly opposed luxury items and possession of them (Peck 2005: 4). When trade and exploration began to develop in Europe in the early

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themselves strong enough to defy it" (1989: 15-16).

[42] In early Christian writings, luxury was associated with corruption and sin, and defined in opposition to sobriety and chastity (Berry 1994: 88).

1600's, this seemingly coincided with the Church's emphasis on the idea of the "beauty of holiness" (2005: 5). The divine form of beauty was expressed in various forms of church architecture and the laity began the practice of donating various luxury items to the Church such as silver plates for the Eucharist celebrations, stained glass windows, mosaics, frescoes and icons (Peck 2005: 278). The Church also encouraged the laity to donate elaborate clothing for the clergy and to build ornate pews and tombs for the churches (Peck 2005: 5, 282). These expensive and highly decorative tombs were outward public displays that were brazen expressions of the true social and ethical values of that time (Peck 2005: 282).

It may be argued that the example of Thomas Mun is a weak example with which to illustrate the dominant role of Christian discourse at this time as Mun was a Christian, who profited greatly from the trade of luxury goods. However, it can be suggested that while trade and profits were also dominant in economic discourse, religion did not play a less significant role. Religion fronted a powerful discourse that was often used to support and legitimise these economic activities.

Spices and the spice trade were significant features in the historical and geographic contexts during from the 1500's to the 1700's. The desire for spices evoked competition amongst European nations to discover and control trade routes to India: "it is a reasonable possibility to suggest that it was because of spices that they first met" (Turner 2005: 354). A sense of the exotic and mystery became attributed to spices. This was due largely to the distant geographic locations in which spices originated, as well as the great financial efforts that were required to transport spices. These factors captured the imagination of some Europeans, who invented fanciful images of distant lands that were full of riches and extravagance (see footnote 33 – Prester John). The illusion of mystery along with the high cost of spices made them a highly sought luxury item during this period: "it was of course, precisely this mix of mystery and cost that helps to explain why they were so special. Luxury may have been considered a deadly sin, but it was also a marker of status" (Turner 2005: 97).

Chapter two examined social construction theory's characteristic of historical and geographic specificity by focusing on European trade in spices and luxury goods with India during the 1500's and the 1600's. This chapter highlights some of the reasons overseas spice trade was significant in terms of historical and geographic locations. First, the spice trade was not only one of the dominant forces that fostered a highly competitive climate for financial success and the acquisition of new territories, and the charting of and controlling new sea routes, but also the spice trade enabled direct contact and trade between a greater number of Europeans and Indians. Second, the overseas trade routes contributed to the way European explorers, traders and merchants demarcated the geography between Europe and India into the categories of West and East. Third, spice provided those Europeans who were involved in trade with opportunities to construct further distinctions between the categories of West and East that were based on dominant western discourses such as religion and gender. For example, the West was understood as Christian, moral, strong, conquering and masculine, while the East was constructed as non-Christian, decadent, weak, conquered and feminine.

# CHAPTER 3

# NATURALNESS

This chapter will examine the characteristic of social constructionism that stresses the necessity to challenge the assumed naturalness of categories and concepts. My focus is the manner in which the categories of the West and the East first emerged as natural categories; and how they were maintained or typified as natural through the practice and discourse of cartography. I begin by examining how maps were constructed as natural representations of the world based upon the discourses of religion and gender. My examination of cartography begins with the medieval western European representations of the world, which laid the foundation upon which later colonial survey maps developed. The examples of medieval maps of the world illustrate how maps were understood to represent natural distinctions among not only territories, but also different cultures. These distinctions were contingent upon the dominant social and cultural group during a particular period. This discussion will be followed with some general comments about the role of cartography in the colonial expansion of the British Empire and the contemporaneous construction of the West and the East as colonial taxonomies. I will illustrate this role with specific examples of British cartography, specifically from the survey of India. As part of my analysis I will examine how the West and the East were typified as natural distinctions within the practice of cartography and how the discourses of religion and gender contributed to and maintained these categories.

Imperial masculinity will be addressed as an additional example that illustrates the importance social constructionism places on the consideration of naturalness in the construction of reality. Imperial masculinity is a construction, fused with the discourses of both gender and religion. I will explore how imperial masculinity contributed to the construction of the West, or British India as Christian and masculine and the East or indigenous India as non-Christian and feminine.

The roles, qualities, and values that are associated with each gender are also reflected in the colonial construction of taxonomies such as the West as male and the East as female. Taxonomies can also be expressed as binary pairs (Ashcroft 2002: 23). Like taxonomies, binary pairs are constructed in a social, cultural context. Binaries usually represent a polarised opposition of two things, ideas, qualities or values (Ashcroft 2002: 23). Some examples are black/white, top/bottom, East/West, old/young, fire/water, and male/female (Ashcroft 2002: 23). This polarisation of opposites implies a hierarchy which demonstrates and maintains the dominance or superiority of one half of the binary pair (Ashcroft 2002: 23).

## 3.1 Western Construction of Gender and Religion as Natural Categories

The male/female binary pair has been a significant taxonomic tool that has been used to classify humans, qualities, and characteristics. I will turn first to a brief description which examines how gender has been understood in the West as a natural construction and taxonomy. Following this description, I will explore how the western understanding of the male/female pair as a natural binary was applied by western powers to the examples of cartography and imperial masculinity.

The construction of gender is a complex topic, which can be discussed at length, but the focus of my thesis does not permit a detailed nor extensive account of this topic. My intentions in referring to the construction of gender are two-fold. Firstly, I will examine the West's long established and habitual understanding and construction of gender as a natural category. Secondly, I will demonstrate how the construction of gender functioned as one of the main discourses and taxonomic structures used in the construction of the West and East as natural, but also as opposite taxonomic categories in accordance with their association with male and female gender roles. By examining select examples of how gender was constructed and understood as a natural category, I will demonstrate how the naturalness of gender appears as a taxonomy of opposites that divided West and East.

Taxonomies or taxonomic categories have been used to help humans understand the world in various cultures and throughout the span of history in the West and East. According to Bruce Lincoln, gender has been one of the most prevalent taxonomies that have divided humans (1989: 133).[43] Taxonomies function in a system that discriminates between all members of a certain class such as humans, who are then categorised into a subclass or subclasses (Lincoln 1989: 133). In the instance of gender, the first class is male, which is often designated/constructed as the superior or normative class. Males are held as taxonomic references against which the second class or subclass is measured. The dominant class, in this case males possess a particular characteristic, which is absent from the second or less significant class, in this case female (Lincoln 1989: 133). For Lincoln, taxonomies such as gender express the values and concerns of a particular culture and society that use them in this manner (1989: 133). I will now examine how gender can be understood as a socially constructed (natural) taxonomy which western colonisers incorporated into their construction of the West and the East.

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[43] Lincoln (1989: 133) also offers age as another example of common and dominant taxonomy.

In the West gender has been generally divided into two categories: male and female (Delphy 2001: 412). These two categories have been typically understood as "true universals and as pan-cultural fact" (Ortner 2001: 61). The natural construction of gender has been deployed in the understanding, maintenance and various expressions of the divisions between males and females. Scholars such as Sherry Ortner (2001), Christine Delphy (2001) and Thomas Lacqueur (2001) address and deconstruct various aspects of the 'naturalness of gender. Examples are evident in the division of labour based upon the 'natural' taxonomies of gender (Delphy 2001); differences in psychology, intelligence and anatomy (Lacqueur 2002); and how biological functions have determined social roles (Ortner 2001). The construction of these perceived differences are rooted in the idea that gender is a natural taxonomy or category. This stems from the idea that gender is associated with " 'sex' which denotes and connotes something natural" (Delphy 2001: 418). It is important to understand the various ways through which gender is constructed and understood as a natural taxonomy. However, I will turn to and focus on the consequent cultural and social values, which have been ascribed to males and females. These values will further be examined in light of their importance in Western social and cultural discourses. Further, this examination will look at how these values will also were transposed onto the colonial taxonomies of the East and West.

The most apparent socially and culturally constructed value, which has been ascribed, is the devaluation of females. This is most often presented as a 'natural' construction in pan-cultural and historical contexts (Ortner 2001; Delphy 2001). As a result, males have been commonly assigned values and qualities such as superiority, dominance, strength, intelligence and civilisation, while females have been commonly associated with those of subversion, weakness, nurturing and nature (Ortner 2001; Delphy 2001; Lacqueur 2002).[44] Ortner (2001) in particular uses the example of the scholar, Claude Levi-Strauss (1969) with which to illustrated the historical and cultural devaluation of females as if this is a natural fact that is found in nature.[45] Levi-Straus understands that humans are divided according to their sex/gender roles (1969: 479). These roles are constructed based on biological differences and reproductive capabilities (Levi-Strauss 1969: 479; Ortner 2001: 71). Women, on the one hand, because of their ability to bear children, are associated with nature and nurturing, family and domestic life, and are therefore designated to a " 'low' form of culture. Men, on the other hand, are considered the 'natural' proprietors of religion, ritual, politics and other realms of culture, thought and actions in which universalistic statements of spiritual and social synthesis are made" (Ortner 2001: 71). Men are regarded as 'natural' leaders and thinkers; those who create and maintain all worthy and creative aspects of culture and society (Levi-Struass 1969:479; Ortner 2001:71). This division assumes a hierarchic ranking rooted in nature and one that establishes the male along with male roles and qualities as valuable and the female as less desirable and less valuable.

The polarisation of binaries is particularly relevant to this section. According to Ashcroft (2002), binaries supported the West's tendency to view the world in the context of socially constructed binaries. The dominant binary of coloniser/colonised was further expressed through other binary pairs such as strong/weak, civilisation/primitive, good/evil, and male/female (24). Gender is one such example that is obvious in the colonial construction of the West and East. I will use select examples of cartography and imperial masculinity to explore the colonial construction of the West and East as respectively masculine and feminine. I will now turn to the first example of cartography.

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[44] Please not that these scholars do not promote gender as a natural construction. Instead, they recognise the natural construction of gender as the dominant understanding within western discourse. They challenge this idea through the process of deconstruction.

[46] Ortner (2001) discusses the flaws, in the 'natural' evidence for the devaluation of women.

It can be argued that religion was assumed to be a natural taxonomy to distinguish the Christian West from the non-Christian East during European colonisation from the 1500's to the 1800's. Religion was entrenched in and understood to be an essential category within European society. For example, if one was not religious, then one would be perceived as a heretic. Another example of how religions were perceived and recorded: "on the frontiers of the colonial encounter, European explorers, travellers, missionaries, settlers and colonial administrators recorded their findings on indigenous religions all over the world" (Chidester 2000: 427). Some of these Europeans often remarked that the peoples of India, the Americas and Africa possessed no religion or, at best, a distorted form,

> the discovery of an absence of religion implied the European commentators in colonial situations were operating with an implicit definition of religion, a definition that was certainly informed by Christian assumptions about what counted as religion. More significantly, however, these denials indicated that the term "religion" was used as an oppositional term on colonial frontiers...*religio* was always a term that derived its meaning in relation to its opposite, *superstitio* (Chidester 2000: 428).

For some Europeans the presence and existence of non-Christian traditions were understood to be indicative of the absence of religion. This taxonomy is discussed further in sections 3.3b and 4.2c.

## 3.2 Cartography

> *[Nature] is a cultural [and social] construct that takes on shape and meaning only within a particular social web of signification. Nature (as all other social reality) acquires definition and import within a matrix of competing and often contradictory social interests. At sake in the struggle to make claims over Nature are what it means, how it should be used, and who has the power to decide. Rather than embodying an absolute essence, therefore, Nature is the effect of particular discursive processes of power/knowledge that have historically fashioned the domains where distinction, meaning, and truth are made. Throughout the history of natural (and social) sciences, classification – the delineation of identities and differences – has been an essential element in the establishment of colonial authority and power to assert truths and rights. It is the seductive power of classification – authorial force derived from the violence of "drawing lines" (Sawyer and Agrawal 2000:74)*

This section focuses on the importance of cartography and maps in the construction of the West and the East. I will begin by examining how maps were constructed as natural representations of the world based upon the discourses of religion and gender. My examination of cartography begins with the medieval western European representations of the world, which laid the foundation upon which later colonial survey maps developed. The examples of the medieval maps of the world illustrate how maps were understood to represent natural distinctions among not only territories, but also different or non-European and non-Christian cultures. These distinctions were contingent upon the social and cultural group during a particular period. This discussion will be followed with some general comments about the role of cartography in the colonial expansion of the British Empire and the contemporaneous construction of the West and the East as colonial taxonomies. I will illustrate this role with specific examples of British cartography, specifically from, the survey of India.

Cartography is commonly understood in its literal meaning: the science or practice of drawing maps (Boyd 2006). Maps were "the scientific representation of land"

(Barrow 1994), but my focus in this section is on exploring the metaphorical meaning of cartographic discourse and the construction of colonial boundaries as human constructions. Science, particularly mathematics, was the primary means through which Europeans justified their constructions of boundaries and maps that suited their desires and needs. I will use this focus to explore the construction of the West and East as 'natural' categories. I will first provide a brief description of cartography's influence on the construction and representation of the West and East as natural yet opposing taxonomies. In this context, two important themes emerge: the construction of the West as Christian and male and the construction of the East as non-Christian and female.

Cartography has a long history in the West. Prior to the scientific survey of colonial territories, and during the medieval and renaissance periods, maps of the world were drawn in accordance with Christian discourse as well as the observations and commentaries of European travellers and explorers (Barrow 1994; Boyd 2006). The maps of the medieval and renaissance periods demonstrate how Christianity dominated the depiction of the West and the East.

As noted in the previous chapter, "Spices and Luxury Goods," Christian ideology was an influential discourse that helped shape a particular construction of the world. For example, maps that were specifically produced in the West during this particular period were infused with Christian meaning and often presented a "moralised geography" (Schmidt 1997). For example, Jerusalem was depicted as the physical centre of the universe (Schmidt 1997), and the continents of Europe along with Asia and Africa were presented in a religious context, as the three sons of Noah (Schmidt 1997). Maps represented a western or European Christian construction of the world. This particular genre of construction suggests that non-European countries such as Asia and Africa were heathen and barbaric (Schmidt 1997).[46] In the context of social constructionism these divisions or taxonomies can be considered natural in the sense that they stemmed from a particular point of view that was consistent with particular_discourses of that time.

Maps were tools of those who sought to attain political and financial power. As noted in the previous section, one of the dominant characteristics of this period was the increased activity and aggressive competition in overseas trade between European nations with the 'East'. Maps were essential visual aids that provided information about trade routes (Boyd 2006). Scholars such as Bill Ashcroft (2002) and Amber Boyd (2006) connect the emphasis on cartographic practices connected with trade expeditions and colonisation to this particular period in history. Boyd (2006) not only suggests that trade expeditions often resulted in colonisation, but also claims that 'scientific' cartography of this period greatly influenced the ideology and practice of expansionist colonialism. Maps contributed to the construction of western European notions of empire, which ultimately divided lands and people into western and eastern categories (Boyd 2006). Maps illustrated boundaries and the foreign territories possessed by European countries. During the colonial period, maps became essential tools that were used to enforce the agendas of the wealthy and powerful western European monarchs and merchants in their struggles and manipulation of power (Boyd 2006).

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[46] One such example is the *Mappa Mundi.* This map is described in the article by the same name (Mappa Mundi, www.hereford.web) and is based on the book by Meryl Jancey. 1994. *Mappa Mundi, A Brief Guide.* Although it is a 13th century illustration of the world, its title is translated as the 'History of the World." This document is part of the 7th Book of Ormesta and is contained with other information that relied on earlier works, including those by the Roman historian Pliny and the Judeo-Christian Bible. The Mappa Mundi is also based on the works of Orosius, who was a student of Augustine. The map was largely founded upon Orosius's works that were directed against non-Christians or pagans.

The Mappa Mundi is a prototype of the medieval period. The document was created during the 13th century in England. This map, like others maps of their day, were copied by monks. It reflected the medieval scholars' views of the world, which fused the above works with those of geographical observations of European merchants and travellers, and with Christianity. Similarly, this map was circular with Jerusalem at its centre. In this way, it was also similar to Roman maps that presented other places and people in relation to Rome (or Jerusalem) at its centre.

The map represented not only what was known about the world's geography at that time, but described the stages of human history, as well as unusual natural phenomena. India was included. India was shown as a fantastic land with five thousand cities and a diverse group of people. It possessed an abundance of wealth, and was a land of fanciful beasts and creatures. Christian religious figures of Mary, Jesus and angels appear at the top of the map. Their presence was to emphasise the stability of religion amongst the diversity and complexity of the world. See Appendix i.

In some accounts, people of the Indian subcontinent were described as living in caves or under trees, as people without religion and laws, and without a formal language (see Barrow 1994, for specific examples). This particular account continues to describe how the tame Indians were visible and had a basic form of commerce, while the wild and more savage Indians kept away in the forests (Barrow 1994). Barrow cites William Baffin's account, a recollection that described India as a land of darkness, lacking any civilisation beyond its coasts, and having a unique geography.[47] Medieval depictions of the West or Europe and the East, particularly that of India, are highlighted in various examples found in the cartographic accounts of medieval merchants and explorers.[48] The descriptions of India were based upon the opinions and perceptions of the explorers. Often these descriptions of the subcontinent of India were expressed in the context of mythic and fantastic images (Barrow 1994).

It is also important to note that descriptions of places and their people are also relationally constructed and included on the maps (Barrow 1994). Peoples and areas that seemed most similar and familiar to European travellers and merchants would appear closer to the West or Europe, while the most unfamiliar would appear to be the farthest away (Barrow 1994). To some British, the Indians appeared as deformed, unclothed, and a people whose customs were regarded as barbaric. They are described as living farthest away from the coast or in un-travelled and 'undiscovered' territory (Barrow 1994). These observations were constructed within a taxonomic relationship in which unknown people and places become the diametrical opposite of known people and places. This opposition emphasizes differences, as well as, in culture and knowledge (Barrow 1994). These descriptions remained influential tropes which later British colonial surveyors of the 1700 and 1800's attempted to overcome.

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[47] See Barrow 1994 for further examples.

[48] Oriental writers and scholars, especially those who had not visited India, often used these accounts in their works about India and the orient (Barrow 1994).

An additional example of the medieval cartography of India, which incorporates mythical images of the orient with that of religious discourses, is that of the story of Prester John.[49] The kingdom of Prester John was said to be an eastern paradise that was believed by some Europeans to be located in India amongst other non-Christian kingdoms. According to the legend, Prester John's kingdom was the only Christian kingdom in South Asia and was filled with abundance, rivers that flowed with gold and gems; the mythical animal, the unicorn, was believed to be found only in Prester John's kingdom (Barrow 1994).

By the mid 1700's CE, this type of cartography that included personal impressions and fanciful images became outdated. Maps became more sophisticated and authoritative as they contained more information that was based on scientific and mathematical methods, particularly that of trigonometry (Barrow 1994). It was believed that mathematical principles allowed maps to be constructed objectively, rather than relying only on personal experiences and observations. The incorporation of mathematical principles established maps as scientific or accurate representations of the world. In the West scientific discourse was understood to present facts and to accurately represent nature. Thus the inclusion of scientific methods with cartography deemed cartography as a scientific method and it demarcations as natural. Older maps were authoritative even if they were erroneous. The authority of the maps underwent a parallel change as the means of authorizing maps changed. The changes of the content of the maps paralleled the socio-cultural context in which the map was constructed.[50] The authority of the British maps was shaped within the new scientific paradigm and replaced maps that were previously authoritative.

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[49] See Chapter 2.

The implementation of mathematics and science into the practice of charting land became known as survey. Through the process of survey, land became objectified through mathematical calculations that determined locations and divisions through their positions in the context of longitude and latitude (Barrow 1994; Ashcroft 2002:33). This became a standard means by which areas and locations could be plotted (Barrow 1994). Land could also be calculated and reduced to an area upon which boundaries could be imposed. Boundaries were important because they defined and helped to enforce what was understood to be a 'natural' geographic entity. Areas of land that were constructed by boundaries could "then be considered 'natural' since, an area must have parameters if it is to constitute space" (Barrow 1994). Through this scientific practice, geography could then be charted. Mathematic principles provided useful tools that helped in the physical as well as the cultural construction of the West and the East as natural categories.

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[50] Hindu Indian maps focussed on pilgrimage sites and routes. Hindu maps often charted mythical geography along with the depictions of the physical landscape. For example, the mythical Mount Meru and the river goddesses were portrayed in maps (source). See various examples in appendix ii.

The natural and physical definitions of the East and West were particularly evident in Britain's construction of India. This was strikingly evident in the practice of survey during the 1700's (Barrow 1994).[51] Survey engineers of the British East India Company, along with the support of the Company's administration, regarded survey as the most efficient means to plan the construction of first roads and later railways in the 1900's. The roads and railways had a significant impact on the colonisation of India. First, they provided clear passages for the efficient movement of the Company's troops into areas that were previously inaccessible. Second, roads and railways created an efficient means of commercial communication, as well as a means for collecting taxes, and most importantly for expanding company territory (Barrow 1994; Stein 2001:220). Survey was regarded also as an effective means through which the British could carry out their colonial mission, which focussed on the material as well as the moral cultivation of India. The concern for and generation of commercial enterprise and territorial expansion in India was justified through the belief that the consequent moral advancements would benefit the Indian people. Roads and railways were a way of disseminating advancements in education, agriculture and commerce (Barrow 1994). Survey was also held as a marker of technology, which divided Britain or the West from India or the East. Technology was used to justify this separation between the British and the Indians (Barrow 1994) as western technology was based upon and required the expertise of a western education, which was not readily available to the Indian people.

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[51] For examples of colonial see Schwartzberg 2006, maps and photographic plates.

Survey encouraged the British discovery of the unknown areas of India. The binary of the 'discoverer' and those people or that land which is 'discovered' emerged as a colonial taxonomy (Barrow 1994). This taxonomy further served to define the separation between the West and the East. Cartography and survey created specific kinds of knowledge that allowed the British to chart and 'discover' foreign peoples and lands. The process of discovering 'new' and foreign territories during the periods of trade and colonisation produced a European or western construction of the world that was ultimately reflected in maps (Barrow 1994; Ashcroft 2002: 31-32). The map reflected and expressed how the West textualised "the spatial reality of the Other (those lands/races that are not Europe/European)" (Ashcroft 2002: 32-33; Boyd 2006). The process of discovering implies the bringing of the 'undiscovered' or the 'unknown' into existence. Newly discovered land, and newly created and imposed boundaries were inscribed on maps, which represented and expressed the symbolic and literal acts of mastery and control of others (Ashcroft 2002: 32; Boyd 2006).

Once foreign land had been 'discovered', chartered or surveyed, it was reinscribed. The most common example of reinscription was the renaming or naming of foreign territories. Reinscription can be described as 'superimpositions on a terrain already explored and charted' (Boyd 2006). In most colonised territories indigenous names were reinscribed with European ones that either referred to the colonising nation or the individual explorer (Schmidt 1997; Ashcroft 2002: 175). The act of naming or renaming was one of the significant ways through which the colonisers constructed their categories, particularly what they constructed as the West and the East. In the context of colonial India the British used survey as the primary means of reinscribing India. The

British colonisers employed survey to create new boundaries for new areas, which were reinscribed with new or anglicised names. Some examples are Madras and Calcutta, which were changed to Fort George and Fort William and Allahabad, which became the 'isle of bats' (Blackwell 2004).

Aside from re-naming territories, reinscriptions that were imposed upon India, included the demarcation of new territories with boundaries, roads and railways, and the re-naming of cities. Gender was also a subtle but no less significant part of the reinscription process. During colonisation, survey and discovery were infused with expressions of power that were also operative with the gender ideology of that period. One such example is that of the notion of *terra nullius,* which figured significantly in cartographic representations of newly discovered lands and territories (Ashcroft 2002: 32; Boyd 2007). *Terra nullius* indicated blank spaces on maps. Similar to blank pages in a history text on which an historian would write new information, a cartographer would similarly add changes to a map (Boyd 2007). McClintock (1995), Ashcroft (1995) and Boyd (2007) argue that land was metaphorically represented in gendered terms. For example, *terra nullius,* indicated blank or open (virginal/female) spaces that awaited the penetration or exploration by the male European explorers[52] (McClintock 1995; Ashcroft 2002; Boyd 2007).

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[52] McClintock (1995). begins her introduction with a description of a fictional map of the Portuguese explorer found in Henry Rider Haggard's book, *King Solomon's Mines.* McClintock uses this fictional map to illustrate how the notions of mastery and dominance over women were transposed onto territorial ownership and how masculine colonial ideology is textualised on a map.

Although the term *terra nullius* may not have appeared on the maps themselves, this term is used by these authors to introduce the possibility of understanding maps as gendered. Suzanna Sawyer and Arun Agrawal (2002) similarly offer,

> The female body, both literally and metaphorically, was a primary terrain on which European colonisation asserted its power. Within a nascent colonial discourse striving to legitmise and appropriate its fantastic "discoveries," the Western gender hierarchy served as a template through which to assert domination. Land gendered feminine and sexed as an inviolate female body was ripe for exploration and conquest... Vital to European exploits was the symbolic slippage between land and a woman's body, between colonisation and sexual mastery. America, as with all foreign terrain, was the object of desire to know, conquer and possess a feminised space (79).

According to the idea of *terra nullius,* territory was objectified by cartographers and explorers. Maps never provided true reflections of the environments they illustrated; rather, maps were human productions, which represented particular "social relations and cultural attitudes" (Boyd 2006). The West constructed India as a land of riches and luxury items, which passively waited to be discovered and exploited. Once India was constructed as a passive land of riches, it became feminised and controlled.

It is important to note that there is no one 'true' or 'original' map of the world. Maps are relevant and accurate within their historical and socio-cultural contexts. The British maps of India were accurate within the context of how they perceived India.[53] Prior to the British, the Mughul and Hindu Indians possessed different kinds of maps. The Mughals practiced cartography that was based on mathematical principles. Little is known about indigenous or Hindu cartography (Gole 1999: 99). For Hindu Indians, there was no specific word in Sanskrit for a 'map' (Schwartzberg 1978: 329). Hindu maps, which were recent endeavours, charted pilgrimage sites, pithosthans and routes (see Schwartzberg 1978: 330). Those who held the dominant position within a particular socio-cultural context and time determined which maps were authoritative.

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[53] Initially, the British maps of India focussed on trade routes: "European printed maps of Asia during the 16th and 17th centuries had accurately calculated outlines of the coasts visited by European shipping" (Bayly and Williams 1989: 9). Also "maps [during this period] of areas frequently visited in northern India contained striking errors... The course of the Ganges was shown to be due south on most maps...Beyond the frontiers of India or China there was almost total obscurity" (Bayly and Williams 1989: 9). As the British expanded their power and presence in India, their maps focussed on survey which helped to chart roads and railways for efficient transport of soldiers and supplies. See Barrow (1994) and further information in this chapter.

In this regard, maps were like palimpsets or parchments and texts from which writing was partially or completely erased to make room for another text (Ashcroft 2002: 174). The process of creating maps included "erasures, elisions and incorporations of certain kinds of information that would be of practical use for specific purposes" (Barrow 1994). Erasures of previously determined territories and boundaries and changes of city names are the most common examples. Changes such as these were guided by the political and religious agendas of particular societies, which possessed the power to rewrite or determine new boundaries. Although entire maps might not have always been erased, they were replaced with those of the dominant group.

I will continue with the theme of gender as both a natural construction and discourse as I explore masculinity as demonstrated in the military of the British East India Company and colonial Anglo-Indian society. My discussion will also engage Christianity, which the British used as a natural taxonomic marker to differentiate between the West as male and Christian and the East as female and non-Christian.

### 3.3 British East India Company and the Military

In this section I will further examine how nature and naturalness are operative as a taxonomy and as a discourse of gender within the colonial construction of the West and the East. I will focus on the roles played by the British military in the construction of the West as male and Christian and the East as female and non-Christian within the context of colonial India. The influence of the British military, especially that of the Company's corps, extended beyond the usual protective and expansive duties. The corps defined colonial Anglo-India society as dominant, civilising, male and Christian (Smith and Green, s.v. "Hinduism", 1995: 425). The corps also set the standard of British colonial masculinity, which evolved through various periods of India's colonisation, and remained the main criterion by which Indians and Indian society and culture were measured and separated from the British. This section will begin with some general historical information that will highlight some features of the male-oriented historical environment in which the British East India Company was established. A discussion about the British military and the construction of colonial masculinity as a natural taxonomy will then follow.

### 3.3 a. Historical Climate

In this section, I will focus on the climate in which the British East India Company and its military corps became dominant and definitive forces in the construction of the West and the East. I will begin by exploring the climate of trade preceding and including the establishment of the British East India Company. The climate in which the British East India Company developed was centred on trade and the intense competition in trade among select European nations such as Portugal, Spain, Holland, Britain and France. Britain's early contact with India was pervaded by activities and qualities associated with masculinity/maleness such as adventure, carrying out military conquests, and hostile competition (Carter and Harlow 2003). The danger and instability of the political and physical climate of India encouraged the Company to extend its original role in trade, to also include protection of Company merchants and trading posts with its military corps. The masculine character of this climate was emphasised through the intense competition in trade, India's harsh physical environment and the presence of the Company's and Britain's military, which became a predominant feature of British India.

In order to provide historical content to this section, I begin with a brief overview of the climate prior to the establishment of the East India Company. Prior to Britain's trade with India in the mid 1550's through the British East India Company, there were two British trade companies that pursued overland trade with the East. The Muscovy Company[54] was the first of the chartered trade companies. In 1555, it received a charter from Queen Mary. The charter gave the merchants who were members of the company, exclusive rights to trade with Persia, Armenia, and the Caspian region (Lawson 1993: 12). Later, in 1581, the Levant Company was chartered by Queen Elizabeth I (Lawson 1993: 12). The company's aim was to demonstrate Britain's presence and to increase Britain's activity in international trade with the East (Lawson 1993: 14). However, soon after it was established, the Levant Company had financial difficulties and therefore could not provide adequate security for its trading caravans. This was a difficult time for Britain because it was faced with two challenges that temporarily disabled its participation in international trade. First, the Levant Company was unable to create or assert any notable position within the trading community in the East. Second, and most significant was the extraordinary success of the Dutch (Lawson 1993: 14; Read and Fisher 1999: 10).

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[54] Chartered companies were institutions that developed in Europe as foreign trade, exploration and the colonisation of territories of the East had increased (Lawson 1993: 20).
The charter was granted by the monarchy or the government. Companies such as the Dutch, British and French East India companies were composed of independent merchants who subscribed to conditions of trade set out by the companies.

In the crown's desperation to not be excluded from international trade, it revised the Levant Company's charter in 1593. In order to establish a monopoly in areas already under the influence of other European countries, the new charter allowed the company to aggressively pursue trade by either land or sea (Lawson 1993: 14). With the new charter, the Levant Company attempted two voyages but failed. The voyages of 1591 and 1596 resulted in the loss of fleet ships and crew. Only the captains returned to England (Lawson 1993: 14).

British merchants were eager to pursue trade by sea with the East; however, they were deterred by dangers posed by both piracy as well as the hostility of the Dutch and Portuguese merchants. In the mid 1590's a group of traders known as the Merchants of London Trading in the East Indies decided to petition the government to help them establish a single trade organisation. The crown was initially wary about investing its own resources in order to start this institution. The monarchy slowly began to realise that chartered companies could not only help provide desperately needed capital for a monarchy on the edge of bankruptcy, but also that chartered companies were inexpensive ventures that shared and created economic activity (Lawson 1993; 19-21). In the mid 1590's, the Merchants of London approached the Queen's Council and proposed their idea for a joint trading company with the crown. They believed it would vastly improve the fleets' security during the dangerous sea voyages. In order to convince the crown of the enormous amount of wealth that could be generated by a joint-stock institution, the merchants presented information from interviews with captured Portuguese seamen and other evidence such as maps and financial statements that were confiscated from captured Portuguese trading vessels (Lawson 1993: 7).[55] It was not until 1599 that British merchants and the crown became alarmed by the incredible success of the Dutch merchants, who returned to Holland with shiploads of spices, gems, and luxury items from the East (Wolpert 1965: 68; Lawson 1993: 7). Their success prompted both the merchants and the crown to take action. On the 31st of December 1600, the "Governor and the Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies" was chartered by Queen Elizabeth I (Read and Fisher 1999: 10) and became the British East India Company. The merchants of the new company received a monopoly to pursue trade between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan (Wolpert 1965: 66-68), while the Levant Company's monopoly was limited to the traditional overland routes (Lawson 1993: 6-7).

From its inception, the Company employed a militia to secure the physical safety of its trading posts and fleets from the increased incidents of piracy. [56] A military presence helped deter interlopers and independent British merchants from intruding upon the Company's monopoly (Spear 1989:38-40). Like other European merchant companies in South Asia, the British East India Company used military forces to secure more lucrative trade arrangements (Weston 2005). The Company was able to successfully import numerous items such as cotton, silk, saltpetre, sugar and pepper into England, as well as different mechanical inventions to India (Read and Fisher 1999: 11). When the crown assumed control of the Company in 1858, the Crown's or royal regiments became an established body of the Company's militia and were supported by the Company (Marshall 1997: 92-93).[57]

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[55] Ironically, most of Britain's knowledge of the East and Indian trade was obtained through piracy (Harlow and Carter 2003). Sir Francis Drake and his crew captured five Portuguese merchant-sailors. Drake received valuable information about trade routes through their maps and extracted valuable statistical information through interviews (Carter and Harlow 2003).

[56] Private competition was either eliminated or incorporated into the Company. Captain Kidd was accused and sentenced to execution by Thomas Pitt for piracy in 1701 (Carter and Harlow 2003). Ironically, Thomas Pitt was accused as an interloper as he acquired trading rights independently of the British East India Company. He was tried and fined in England. Pitt was then hired as a senior administrator in the Company and then became the governor of Fort Saint George (Lawson 1993: 48; Carter and Harlow 2003).

### 3.3 b. Imperial Masculinity

This section will discuss different forms of European masculinity within the context of the militarised society of British India. These forms include Muscular Christianity. I will begin with the role of the military. Although the Company's military corps was initially established for its protection, the military became a significant defining feature of British India. P.J. Marshall (1997) notes the various characteristics that distinguished British society under the East India Company, which helped to define British society through its military. First British society was militarised: military forces ensured the maintenance of British rule. Second, the British society in India was constructed as masculine. According to one census, statistics revealed that British society in India was predominantly male: British males between the ages of twenty and thirty,

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The Company fiercely protected their monopoly, successfully negotiated against free trade, and eventually had it outlawed (Carter and Harlow 2003).

[57] The Crown assumed control of the Company in 1858, after nearly two centuries of internal corruption and the significant wealth of some of the Company's senior servants. The Company had full control over disciplining its servants as well as other British citizens, waging war and negotiating treaties without the permission of the Crown (Carter and Harlow 2003). However, a financial crisis sparked the creation of the Regulating Act passed by parliament in 1773 (Spear 1990: 2). This act limited the Company's abilities and offences were to be tried in Britain (Carter and Harlow 2003). The British public and politicians resented the affluence and ostentation of the Company's servants in Bengal (Spear 1991). They believed that such extensive profits should be directed toward the entire nation (Carter and Harlow 2003). The men of the Company acquired their tremendous wealth in three ways: they received gifts (bribes) for public and private favours; some held independent contracts such as providing clothing for the Company's regiment or cornering a small, although, lucrative monopoly on salt; and some had created private contracts with local merchants (Spear 2001). This group of successful Company merchants became known as the Nabobs (For further reading, please see (Spear 1990).

and a gap between this group and those over the age of fifty (91). British men were not only representative of the British population in India, but were representative of a particular kind of masculinity.[58] This type of militarised masculinity will be discussed further in this chapter. Imperial masculinity was a significant factor in the construction of the West and the East, and also separated the British from the Indian population. Third, a rigid stratification of social and ethnic classes existed within the Company's administration and military corps. A distinction was made between the elite English administrators and officers and the soldiers who were primarily composed of working-class Irish and Scots (Marshall 1997: 91). Similarly social and ethnic divisions were also imposed on Indians who were under British authority.

Marshall remarks further that this division was also reflected in the division between two Anglo-Indias: the Anglo India of the soldiers in the barracks and the Anglo India of senior administrators and officials in the military and the company (Marshall 1997: 92). This division was reflected in the pattern of employment that divided various positions within the civil service and in the military (Marshall 1997: 91). Both areas of employment were sustained by a system of taxation of the Indian population that was adopted from the Mughuls (Marshall 1997: 91). This system allowed the Company to maintain an extensive contingent of administrative and military employees (Marshall 1997: 91).

The division between the West and the East was subtly constructed through the structures of the Company's civil service and the levels of command and its military corps. I will intermittently refer to both areas; however, my focus is on the Company's military as the military's impact was greater in the construction of the West as Christian and masculine and the East as non-Christian and feminine. Although gender is the main idea through which I examine naturalness in the West/East taxonomy, race also played an important part in this construction. However, race will be addressed only briefly within the context of its intersection with gender as it is engaged in this thesis.

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[58] See Marshall (1997: 90) for statistics on the populations of British citizens in India. There were 100,000

In the context of colonialism, race became a significant factor in the perpetuation and maintenance of colonial domination over and exploitation of a subject group of people (Ashcroft 2002: 198). The notion of race classified humans into distinct physical, biological and genetic groups (Ashcroft 2002: 198). Racial categories are categories that were understood as natural because these categories were believed to also be determined by particular physical characteristics that were spread through biological connected groups of people (Ashcroft 2002: 198). These physical characteristics were indicative of moral, mental and intellectual capacities of particular peoples. Race allowed colonisers to apply this hierarchic distinction between colonised peoples as being either civilised or primitive (Ashcroft 2002: 199). This binary helped colonisers justify their rule over colonised peoples.

An example of this binary in colonial India was the realisation of the British of the various opportunities through which they could exploit labour if the native population. For example, British institutions employed Indians in various jobs for much lower wages (Marshall 1997: 92). Whether Europeans were employed in junior positions depended upon "whether other calculations outweighed their cost" (92). Indians were intelligent and adept at learning various European professions, such as medicine, law,

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British males to 35,000 British females.

banking and engineering. However, Indians who served in either the military corps or as civil servants seldom attained senior positions and remained under British authority. Only the critical positions in administration were reserved for Europeans, because there were certain expectations that these positions would be available to only British citizens. The British were also aware of their status as a foreign power in India and that they were dependent upon their military forces and the Company's administration to maintain their position of privilege and authority (Marshall 1997: 103). The British did not want to risk rebellion; therefore their policy dictated that Indians who were in the army or the civil service were to remain under British authority.

The British military became more closely associated with British masculinity through the civil professions and civil projects. The Company's military provided a means through which particular kinds of knowledge and personal characteristics became associated with masculinity, and were used to make natural distinctions between the British West and the Indian East. The military became closely linked to the civil professions and civil projects (Marshall 1997) and worked in collaboration with the Special Works Departments and the Department of Public Works (Wolpert 1965: 92; Marshall 1997: 100). The military was able to function in this capacity because it provided an inexpensive pool of soldiers, some of whom had the education to quickly attain professional advancements (Marshall 1997: 100). These soldiers came to dominate different professions, especially that of engineering (Marshall 1997: 100). Lord Dalhousie initiated and promoted this project. He searched for men who would survey roads, canals, build railways and projects that were influenced by the advancements made in Britain in the areas of "engineering, the sciences, exploration, and Imperial expansion, building advances and medicine" (Beynon 2002: 30).[59] Scientific knowledge was valued in the West and became associated with authority, progress and masculinity. These western ideals were also emphasised in the notion of Imperial masculinity.

Imperial masculinity is one example which illustrates a colonial ideal of masculinity within the context of the military. This notion is used by Beynon (2002) and Bayly (1990) to further illustrate the emphasis on this construction of masculinity in terms of military leadership and power, along with the hierarchic distinctions between peoples and religions. It was an ideal that divided peoples and cultures and placed them into categories of West and East. Imperial masculinity incorporated notions such as gender and race, which were understood to be 'natural' categories. This construction of masculinity was believed to be part of a natural association between the British military and a style of patriotism that focused on Crown, Church and Empire (Bayly 1990: 251-252). According to Bayly (1990), imperial masculinity was in part "an extension of domestic social change" that was taken overseas, i.e., it was no longer only operative within one particular socio-cultural system, but was transposed onto another (251-252). The British used imperial masculinity as a natural construction with which to distinguish between the British and the Indians. This kind of British colonial masculinity was developed and expressed in different images such as preparatory and boarding schools, the 'new gentleman', and most of all the image of the soldier-hero or warrior masculinity. It was believed and expected that during this period, the ideal British man was to be "competent in demonstrating strength, authority, certainty, discipline and responsibility" (Beynon 2002: 30). For the British, these characteristics were essential to those in the service of the empire to carry out their colonial mission. Therefore, they strove to cultivate 'progress' and civility in a people whom they defined as backward and uncivilised.

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[59] Also see chapter 2, cartography section.

Imperial masculinity was the embodiment of colonial British man. The qualities of imperial masculinity mentioned above were rooted in young English men and were cultivated and woven into additional images of this construct of British masculinity. John Beynon (2002) summarises the ideal of Imperial Masculinity: an educated British man during the 1800's who was a patriot, and a servant of the Crown, country and empire (162). The typical characteristics were courage, "adventurousness, stoicism, emotional reticence and coolness under pressure, strong sense of fair play and justice, physical fitness and the capacity to lead as the occasion demanded" (Beynon 2002: 162).

The construction of "Imperial Masculinity" began in England in the prep and boarding school education of young men during the 1800's. The prep schools during this time were the main agency in which imperial masculinity was developed (Beynon 2002: 32). This kind of boarding and preparatory school education placed emphasis upon "athleticism, stoicism, sexual purity, and moral courage" (Beynon 2002: 27). Education focussed not only on academics, but incorporated organised sport and was further supplemented with Christian teachings. The combination of sport and Christianity became an important feature at this time. Christianity was also portrayed as very muscular and masculine, and was believed to be the best system with which to develop morals. With this emphasis on physical fitness through organised sport along with Christian teachings, a new understanding of masculinity together with Christianity developed and became known as muscular Christianity.

The characteristics of muscular Christianity were further perpetuated in English universities and colleges. In order to illustrate the importance of this kind of English education, I will briefly address two examples of how this style of education was operative in colonial India. British administrators and officials encouraged Indian princes to attend British institutions within India and abroad (Curtis 2007: 54). It was believed that British education would enable the princes "to develop manly habits and pure tastes" (Curtis 2007:54) along with physical competition in sports and development of moral character. Although Christianity may not have imposed directly upon the princes, they would have been influenced by Christianity through exposure to it. British education of this kind was an essential stepping-stone to gain entry into the British civil service and the Company's civil service (Curtis 2007: 56). Eurasian[60] males whose fathers could afford an English education abroad were also sent away to English universities and colleges (Weston 2007).

This style of education was believed to be an important system through which characteristics related to manliness such as moral character, leadership skills, and physical competition and well-being could be cultivated and instilled in future servants of the empire (Marshall 1997; Beynon 2002; Curtis 2007). A student's education along with these characteristics, were essential to career in the British East India Company (Weston 2007). Education was also one of the qualifications that distinguished covenanted and special civil services with those of the uncovenented civil service.[61] Religion, gender and education were significant markers of distinction within British society and in the Company's administration of India. I will turn to further discussion on the impact of muscular Christianity in support of the West as masculine and the East and feminine.

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[60] In this context, Eurasian refers to children born to British fathers and Indian mothers.

[61] Advancement within the civil service depended upon the successful completion of two sets of exams. Covenented civil servants were senior level administrators and had passed both sets of exams. The uncovenented civil servants were largely comprised of Indian born Europeans and Euroasians who had passed only one set of exams (Elroy 2007).

Muscular Christianity was a new understanding of Christianity that developed in England during the Victorian period (early 1800's to 1900). It was first articulated by Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes in the 1800's (Putney 2003). The idea of muscular Christianity is based on two passages from the Christian Bible: Mark 11:15 which supports 'manly exertion' and in 1 Corinthians. 6:19-20, which emphasises 'physical health' (Putney 2003). Kingsley and Hughes asserted that the effeminacy and asceticism that were prevalent in the Roman Catholic Church had weakened the Anglican Church. Putney (2003) writes that Kingsley and Hughes constructed the idea of muscular Christianity within Anglicanism and that it became a supporting discourse of British colonial ideology. In doing so, they incorporated 'rugged and manly' qualities that would help provide religious justification for the various servants of the crown to execute the civilising ideal of the colonial mission. Muscular Christianity is a concept that highlighted the relationship between Protestant Christianity and colonialism.[62] One example is a statement made by Earl Grey, which indirectly links religion, Britain and masculinity together as a natural combination: "where Britain ruled over non-European peoples, Grey believed that "the authority of the British crown is at this moment the most powerful instrument under Providence, of maintaining peace and order in many extensive regions of the earth, and thereby assists in diffusing amongst millions of the human race, the blessings of Christianity and civilisation" (Marshall 1997: 30). Grey stated that the British Crown was a divine medium through which the European understanding of moral order, justice, civilisation and Christian blessings could be extended and imposed on various regions of the world (Marshall 1997: 30).

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[62] For additional reading, please see (Alderson 1998) for another perspective on Muscular Christianity in his book. He discusses the importance placed upon masculinity and its focus on the male body.

It was believed that preparatory and boarding schools would help young men develop the virtues of true manliness such as "grit, self-reliance, determination, leadership and initiative" (Beynon 2002: 28). Young men were to be taught only in the company of other men in a male-oriented environment, away from domestic and feminine influences (Beynon 2002: 28). The preparatory and boarding schools took young men away from domesticity; i.e., away from their homes and families. One reason for this belief was that home and family were closely associated with the feminine and prolonged exposure to this domestic sphere could result in moral weakness, indecisiveness, timidity, and emotions, all of which were contrary to the masculine ideal.

Another form of British Imperial masculinity was the 'new gentleman.' A new British gentility developed in India that was cultivated within both the civil service and the military. For those in the civil service, the status of gentleman no longer required the traditional possession of land; a gentleman was judged instead on his character, polite accomplishment, and education (Marshall 1997: 29). The high salaries the servants and military received in India enabled the new gentleman to easily support a lifestyle traditionally held by the gentry, and he had access to various British educational institutions in India (Marshall 1997:99). The definition of the 'new gentleman' no longer relied only on one's class, but was broadened to include one's education and behaviour

(Beynon 2002: 29). The 'new gentleman's' purpose was to be of service to the empire and to contribute to Britain's business and industrial growth in India (Beynon 2002:29).

An additional image of Imperial Masculinity was constructed in the context of the military. This image was constructed as the Soldier-Hero.[63] The soldier-hero was commonly depicted as a loyal servant of the empire, who continuously engaged in physical and moral conflicts on behalf of the empire (Beynon 2002: 31). The soldier-hero not only possessed the characteristics and virtues of Imperial Masculinity as described previously, but also possessed racist and militaristic characteristics (Beynon 2002:31). The soldier-hero provided an image for Warrior Masculinity, which would motivate those who endured the harsh physical service involved in the protection of Britain's power in colonised lands (Beynon 2002:31). One such example is that of Robert Clive. Clive exemplified intelligence as a clerk and later administrator in the British East India Company, leadership abilities that contributed to the military success against the French at Pondicherry and Arcot and then against Moghuls at the Battle of Plassey, and moral character by ending the corruption within the administration of the Company (Brumwell and Speck 2001: 88-89).

The British empire was a gendered sphere, which was constructed in the context of the above masculine characteristics along with male experiences (Kennedy 2002: 25). Like the boarding schools of England, the empire was a place that was distant, far from the domesticity, home and the distractions of most things feminine (Beynon 2002:31). Similarly, the distance between Britain with India was an attractive feature to most British men because they were free to enjoy male companionship and camaraderie, as well as engage in physical adventures of colonial exploration and discovery (Beynon 2002:3; Kennedy 2002:25). Colonised lands, particularly India, were arenas in which the British could demonstrate and live out their perceived natural self-image as being morally, physically and intellectually superior (Krishnaswamy 2002: 294). British men in India believed that they were natural rulers and leaders (Krishnaswamy 2002: 294). The colonised land and the native peoples were places and objects that were believed to be privileged to have received Britain's culture and laws. The colonised people were a conquered people who were constructed as female because they were weak and ineffectual, and like women were incapable of holding and exercising authority (Krishnaswamy 2002).

Imperial masculinity also mirrored the British self-image of being the natural enforcers of civilisation because they were racially superior (Cohn 1996; Beynon 2002). On the other hand, native masculinity was feminised because it was not only inferior but also idle, immoral and sexually decadent (Beynon 2002: 29). This mirror image can be explained further by using Michael Taussig's theory of mimesis and dialectical images (Taussig 1993: 44-58). These notions become important tools in the construction of identity in terms of Us versus Other, which can be applied to multiple variants within the colonial context such as coloniser/colonised; male/female and West/East. According to Taussig, mimesis is the ability of humans to mirror or imitate what is different or opposite to oneself, and it is this ability that underlies the coloniser's power to construct

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[63] The soldier-hero is a prominent character in Imperial literature. For examples see (Beynon 2002:31), and Dawson (1994).

and control 'otherness' (Taussig 1993: 44-58; Urban 2003:71).[64] Taussig claims that mimesis is an [universal] ability that is present in all [western] cultures, especially during the period between preindustrialisation and modern capitalisation (Taussig 1993: 44-58; Urban 2003: 71). The process of memisis, however, is intensified during contact between different cultures, especially those, which were in contact during the process of colonisation.

The colonial construction of the 'mirrored other' or 'dialectal other' often occurred during colonisation. In the colonial environment, the dialectical image of the colonised subject is constructed and deployed by the coloniser, not only in negative terms, but also in terms through which the colonised subject can be controlled. In the instance of the British colonisation of India, the image of the colonised native was constructed as irrational, primitive and feminine (Urban 2003: 71).

Taussig presents one theory that illustrates how gender was deployed in the construction of the East as the colonial 'Other' or in direct opposition to the West. Gender was a significant criterion through which the British designated Indians into masculine or feminine categories (Rudolph 1963:93). The British determined the 'martial' races such as the Sikhs, Muslims, Rajputs and Pathans to be masculine because their ideal of manliness was similar to that of the British (Rudolph 1963: 93).[65] Their martial character was considered natural and became the normative ideal against which other peoples in India were classified (Rudolph 1963: 100). The British despised effeminacy, but admired what they perceived as the strong, brave, manly and militant characteristics of the Sikhs (Cohn 1996: 109); and the Gurkhas, and tribesmen from the North West region of India (Beynon 2002:34). The British especially regarded the Sikhs as valiant fighters, and admired their love of sports (Cohn 1996:109). The males of the Sikh community particularly appealed to the British as military recruits as the British perceived the Sikhs' characteristics matched their ideals of Imperial masculinity (Beynon 2002: 34). The Sikhs were also not perceived as economic threats. Sikhs were readily recruited for the Company's military corps. The British based their perception on racist stereotypes. They chose the Sikhs and other 'warrior' communities based on their appearance such as their uncut hair and beards, which the British understood as a sign of wildness and danger (Cohn 1996:108-109).[66]

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[64] In his chapter, " India 's Darkest Heart," Hugh H. Urban draws upon Michael Taussig's theory in his explanation of the colonial construction of the Hindu goddess Kali (2003: 169-195).

[65] Rudolph points out that "the distinction between the martial and non-martial was no invention of the English. It had accumulated ethical and historical meaning in Hindu caste structure, which inculcated a non-violent perspective in some castes and an aggressive one in others. But in English minds at the end of

The construct of the Babu is an example of the dialectical other of British masculinity and to that of the 'martial' races. Male Indians, particularly those in Bengal who were typically middle-class, English educated, and appropriated English customs and manners, were usually employed in the Company's civil service (Rudolph 1963; Bhatia 1994; Krishnaswamy 2002;). British officials in colonial India would commonly use the term Babu to humiliate Indians who would often be the source of denigrating jokes (Bhatia 1994). Babu also referred to negative characteristics that were understood as unnatural[67] and described Indian males as dandies, womanisers, unathletic,

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the century [19th], the distinction was stressed as much for its instrumental utility in the imperialist theory for its academic interest as a description of caste or regional character" (1963: 102).

[66] See MacMunn (1930) for further examples of the British colonial attitudes and the construction of non-European peoples.

[67] "Naturalness" and "Unnaturalness" were defined in terms of martial abilities. Rudolph (1963) observes that the British saw "natural" leadership linked with martial activities in the Rajputs "whose fighting arm had given him dominion over the land of his fathers, and who stood in paternal and autocratic relationship to traditional followers. What less "natural" than the socially mobile men seeking to add political power to

untrustworthy, quarrelsome, superficially cultivated and social climbing (Rudolph 1963; Bhatia 1994; Krishnaswamy 2002: 298). However, emphasis was placed on the effeminacy and unmanliness of non-martial male Indians (Rudolph 1963).

According to Revathi Krishnaswamy (2002), the 'Bengali Babu' was constructed by the British from their feelings of resentment and fear of the growing number of the Indian middle-class (298). The British were threatened by the Indian's newly acquired rights to access privileges that were once exclusively British (298-299).[68] Rudolph (1963) offers one explanation of the perceived threat the non-martial Indian posed for British authority: the martial groups largely supported British rule, not because they were militant, but because of political concerns (102). The Rajputs, for example, were autonomous princes who would be threatened if the educated middle-class would wield too much political power and rally for Indian independence (Rudolph 1963: 102), while the Muslims were concerned about a Hindu majority in India (Rudoph 1963: 102). As a consequence, the effete Bengali Babu was a mirrored opposite of the ideal of imperial masculinity (Krishnaswamy 2002: 303).[69]

This chapter discussed social construction theory's second characteristic of naturalness, particularly how the West and East were constructed as natural categories. The examples of colonial cartography and imperial masculinity were used to illustrate how the West and East emerged as geographic and ideological categories throughout different periods of the British colonisation of India. In addition to these examples, the

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traditional priestly and literary power, the non-martial Brahmans and Kayasths whose new status was often the product of opportunities England had created, and who claimed now to lead a rural India with which they had no long-inherited leadership ties" (102).

[68] For further examples, see Krishnaswamy (2002: 296-310).

[69] See also Sinha (1995).

role of gender and religious discourses in the construction of West and East were highlighted. These examples, together with the discourses revealed not only how naturalness was assumed and utilised in the construction of categories, but also demonstrated the complexity of this process of constructing the West as masculine and Christian and the East as feminine and non-Christian.

# CHAPTER 4

# KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

The final characteristic of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) theory of social constructionism addresses the construction of knowledge and reality as they occur through a variety of human interactions that take place within particular social contexts. This chapter examines select characteristics of the social context found within the British colonisation of India and English knowledge systems, particularly those systems that involve language and textual study. The fourth characteristic of social constructionism is specifically applied to the colonial British understanding and construction of knowledge of India that begins with an exploration of the western study of Indian languages. . Language and textual study of orientalist scholars will be discussed because they were fundamental to the construction of the West as masculine and Christian and the East as feminine and non-Christian. Observations made by European missionaries of Hindus and Hinduism will be included as part of this construction and will focus on the West's understanding of religious differences and perceived moral weaknesses of the East.

This chapter will also explore the colonial British understanding and construction of Hinduism. That understanding was influenced by foreign definitions, orientalist textual studies as well as the British legal system. The example of the Cult of Thugee will be also explored in light of a colonial construction that portrayed the East as Hindu and unlawful and in dire need of British colonial rule.

## 4.1 Language and Translation

The British victory at Plassey on 23 June 1767 was a significant turning point in Britain's involvement and status in India; some scholars consider it to mark the beginning of Britain's rule of India (Stein 2002: 207) as well as the beginning of the decline of the Moghul Empire (Rickard 2000). The Battle of Plassey was precipitated when the Nabob of Bengal, Suraj-ud daulah breached the Treaty of Alinagar (Rickard 2000) between the Company and the region of Bengal. The Nabob overthrew the British garrison in Calcutta and imprisoned several Company servants in the Black Hole of Calcutta (Rickard 2000).[70] Under the leadership of Robert Clive, the British recaptured Calcutta and established military control of Chandernagore over the French forces with whom the British were in competition (Rickard 2000). Clive also convinced the Nabob's uncle, Mir Jafar, to bribe Bengali soldiers to abandon their weapons and surrender in advance of the British attack (Rickard 2000).[71] The Nabob erred tactically by allowing his troops to use most of their artillery in the early stages of combat, leaving them with very little ammunition for the remainder of the battle (Rickard 2000). Therefore, the British won a seemingly impossible battle and quickly gained control over Calcutta.

The Battle of Plassey was a significant event in the division between the West and the East. From this point forward, the British East India Company was gradually transformed from a financial institution composed of chartered merchants and traders to an institution that was an extension of British administration and authority.[72] This transformation was conducive to creating a climate in which the Company's military and administrative arm pursued the study of Indian culture through language, particularly through textual studies by orientalist scholars. Some members of the military would have engaged in the study of Indian languages out of intellectual curiosity or in order to facilitate their communication, be it limited, with Indians outside of their military community. For Cohn (1996), the victory at Plassey along with the "subsequent appropriation of the revenues of Bengal were to provide the impetus for more and more British civilians and military officers to learn one or more of the Indian languages" (20). The West or Britain was the victor, the conqueror; and India became the conquered. Language became another taxonomy through which, as an object, India was classified.

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[70] The Black Hole of Calcutta was the incident which prompted the British attack. The Nawab of Bengal took control of Calcutta and imprisoned 146 servants of the Company in a hot airless military cell overnight. Only 23 are said to have survived. This incident became a catalyst for the British construction of Indians as despotic and cowardly (Brumwell and Speck 2001: 194)

[71] In return Mir Jafar was to receive the appointment of the Nawab or Nabob of Bengal.

The British interest in language grew from social, political and historical circumstances. After the Battle of Plassey, the Company became more engaged in the moral and material progress of India (Spear 1990: 201). The Company was influenced by the British parliamentary's concern over its moral duty to cultivate and promote the welfare of India's people. In India, the question of the type of welfare that was to be promoted revolved around Hindu, Muslim and British traditions. It was established that the government's duty, via the Company, was to "foster the development of that society along traditional lines" (Spear 1990: 201). This idea was supported and carried out by Company servants, "who acquired the taste and respect for oriental learning and culture.

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[72] The Company's post in Calcutta was used to steadily gain control over the whole subcontinent of India. This was accomplished in part with Battle of Plassey, but also through the company's army, which consisted primarily of hired Indians, who were supervised by British officers. The corps was financially supported by taxes collected from Indians (Marshall 1996: 185).

They were reinforced by the growing interest in oriental culture, Hindu as well as Islamic, which developed during the latter part of the 18th century" (Spear 1990: 202).

After the British victory at Plassey, the study of and knowledge of Indian languages grew in earnest. First, knowledge of Indian languages was necessary for trading purposes. As the Company became more involved in the administration of Indian territory, the need for language proficiency grew. Second, the eventual development of a colonial legal system in India required language knowledge as well as knowledge of India.[73] During this phase, British scholars studied Indian culture and languages, which they found primarily in texts. After Plassey, the British East India Company acquired greater control of the region of Bengal and absorbed numerous properties (Stein 2002: 208). Trade increased and the Company took greater administrative and political roles in the territory of Bengal (Lawson 1993: 114; Cohn: 1996: 72). Bernard Cohn (1996) identifies the period between 1770 to 1785 as the formative phase during which several officials were required to learn Indian languages (20). Knowledge of Indian languages was necessary in order to recruit and train Indian soldiers, to correspond with and further develop alliances and tactics with independent Indian princes, and to read land titles in order to facilitate the collection of taxes (Cohn 1996: 20).

During the governorship of Warren Hastings (1773-1784), two types of scholars emerged: there were British scholars who tried to interpret foreign cultures and languages for the sake of scholarly interest (Marshall 1996:185), and British scholars who used their researches to enact agendas to further the advancement and consolidation of the British Empire (Cohn 1996: 72). Scholarly activities provided a point of Anglo-Indian contact

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[73] This knowledge process was initiated by Warren Hastings (Spear 1989: 171-172)

(Marshall 1996: 185) as they often necessitated interaction between British personnel, Indian pundits[74] and interpreters. This interaction laid the groundwork for the formulation of a new Indian code of law that began with the efforts of Warren Hastings. For the West or Britain, the knowledge of Indian languages became a powerful tool with which to control and construct India. It was during this period that the British began to successfully learn and utilise Indian languages, which was critical to the construction and implementation of their system of rule (Cohn 1996: 22).

Warren Hastings was appointed the Governor-General of India in 1774 (Spear 1989: 167). His accomplishments during his term were many and varied. Hastings is an example of a scholar and statesman who primarily used Indian languages as part of the colonial agenda, but also believed native languages were an asset to understanding the native population in order to rule them. For example, Hastings set out to create a system for the collection of land revenues, which became the major source of the Company's financial stability, and he encouraged the employment of native agents in the collection of taxes and in the police services (Spear 1989: 170-178). However, one of his most noteworthy accomplishments was the promotion of learning Indian languages amongst the Company's servants. Hastings was an accomplished scholar who was fluent in Persian (the diplomatic language of India established under Mughul rule), Arabic, and Bengali (the local language). He was also involved in the Asiatic Society of Bengal[75] in

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[74] Pundit or Pandit is an honourary title given to a scholar with considerable knowledge in Sanskrit and Hindu law. A pundit is usually a Brahmin, who also has knowledge of the Vedas (Bayly 1999: 145).

[75] The Asiatic Society of Bengal was one of the many societies that the British created in India, such as the Royal Society, London's Geographic Society and others that specialised in anthropology, ethnography and folklore (Marshall, P.J. 1996). Very few British were interested in the colonies, and even less people were enthusiastic about understanding the colonies in a scholarly context. Although these societies did not cultivate an interest among the masses, they were important institutions for understanding the empire and colonies. The various societies were an important source for the collection and dispersion of information

1784, and the Calcutta Muslim College to educate and train Indian men for the Company's civil service. He also lobbied for the instalment of a chair in Persian at Oxford University, and argued for the inclusion of Persian and Arabic studies at Fort William College (Cohn 1996: 22).

Hastings is also credited with organising the first publication of the *Bengal Gazette* and *Calcutta General Advertiser* (Cohn 1996: 22; Lawson 1993: 114; Stein 2002). He also sponsored scholars who were interested in studying Indian art and literature (Lawson 1993: 114). Hastings wanted to encourage the Company's employees to respect the native rule of law that was operative in the Company's newly acquired territories, and establish a good rapport with the Indian population (Lawson 1993: 114). He hoped to develop an understanding of Indian culture through its language and on that basis create a sound administration.[76]

Although Hastings was clearly willing to accommodate Indian traditions, in the end he created a system that privileged British principles. Hence, British judges would preside over all trials, and criminal cases in particular would be governed by British criminal law. Sentencing would be determined with the assistance of *qazis*, *muftis* and *malavis* (Cohn 1996: 26).[77] Civil cases that involved marriage, inheritance, caste and religious matters would be dealt with according to Islamic laws based on the Qur'an with

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about the colonies within the empire often recorded in scholarly journals (Marshall 1996:194). The material the various societies produced greatly contributed to the British governing elite's understanding of foreign culture and societies and to the structures and purposes of colonial administration (Marshall 1996: 194-203).

[76] In contrast to Hastings, British official Robert Orme could not see the benefit of translating or using Indian laws. Orme held a view that was popular among other British officials that perceived Indians as lawless and corrupt; and Indian laws essentially based upon superstitions instead of reason (Carter and Harlow 2003: 249).

[77] *Qazi* or *Kazi* is a Muslim jurist or judge who " administered towns according to Shari'a law" (Bayly, 1992: 505) The qazi would administer to both civil and criminal cases such as marriage, divorce, issues of

respect to Muslim Indians and those of the "shaster" or *shastra* (Sanskrit: law book) with respect to Hindus (Cohn 1996: 26). The institution of a legal system that combined British and Indian interests was an ambitious project that required the expertise of many scholars. Despite Hastings' apparent deference to Indian legal traditions, he created solid foundations for the Company's system of government (Cohn 1996: 26).[78]

Some of the most noted orientalist scholars of this period include Nathaniel J. Halhed, William Wilkins and Sir William Jones. The works produced by these scholars were researched and written out of an interest in Indian languages and literature. These works also contributed to the colonial agenda. Nathaniel B. Halhed (1751-1830) compiled an English grammar of the Bengali language and the *Gentoo Code* or *Ordinances of the Pundits* (a book of Hindu laws originally written in Sanskrit, was translated into Persian and then into English by Halhed.[79] Halhed's grammar book was a study of the Bengali language organised in accordance with the European methodology of language (Cohn 1996:31-32). Halhed based his work on western linguistic categories and the Euro-western idea that linked all histories, civilisations and languages to that of classical Rome and Greece (Cohn 1996: 32). The references to ancient Greek and Roman

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inheritance, and murder. *Mufti* is a leading scholar who interprets Muslim law. *Malavi* or *Maulvi* is a Muslim religious and legal instructor (Bayly 1992: 505).

[78] There were British officials, such as Lord Thomas Babington Macauly, who were opposed to Orientalist studies. He criticised the spending of the British government's funds on languages such as Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit in higher institutions. Macauly supported the Anglicist party who advocated that English and an English education should be the principal concern of the government (see further Carter and Harlow 2003: 227-238).

The definitions of the terms orientalism and orientalist are complex and are mutli-layered. In this thesis, particularly this chapter, I refer to a specific definition of orientalism and its related forms. In its simplest meaning, orientalism was the study of Indian languages and literature by European scholars. The study of these areas, in turn led to further European interest and studies of Indian history, culture and religions. I use orientalism to refer primarily to the discipline of academic scholarship. However, I do include and address the underlying implications of orientalism as hegemonic discourse, a discourse that contributed to the western construction of the East as feminine and non-Christian.

civilisations are demonstrated in both of his works.

His grammar is important because it is the main text that provides insight into the knowledge and attitude with which the British began their studies of Indian languages. In his book, Halhed identified Sanskrit as the 'classical' language of India. In his analysis, Sanskrit was the foundation upon which the various Indian dialects, jargons and idioms were constructed (Cohn 1996:33), much like Latin and ancient Greek are considered as the foundational languages of Euro-western languages. Halhed regarded Indian languages such as 'Hindoostani', Bengali (Bangla) and other contemporary dialects as corruptions of Sanskrit and they were thus categorised as 'vulgar' languages (Cohn 1996: 33). Halhed was the first British scholar to identify Sanskrit as a parent language of all Indian languages (Spear 1990:69; Cohn 1996:31).

Halhed also made a distinction between Indian languages and the languages of the Muslims. Sanskrit and Moorish languages such as Arabic and Persian were held in higher regard than the other dialects of India: Sanskrit was categorised as both a sacred and literary language; and Arabic and Persian were both understood as literary and administrative languages (Cohn 1996: 33), which were particularly important to business and commerce.

Halhed likened the British rule of India to that of the Roman conquest of Greece. Like the Romans who studied Greek in order to rule effectively and efficiently, Halhed contended that the British had to learn Indian languages in order to govern and communicate with their subjects (Cohn 1996:31). This was reflected in the translations and commentary of the *Gentoo Code.* Hastings appointed Halhed to compile a translation

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[79] Halhed translated the *Gentoo Code* in an attempt to merge indigenous law with British law in order to

of Hindu law. Up to this point, most British legal officials were unfamiliar with Hindu and Muslim laws and had to rely upon the varied interpretations of Hindu 'pundits' (religious expert or priest) and Islamic 'munshis' (clerks), whom, the British considered to be 'professors of law' or experts in their own systems of law. British officials in the judiciary also needed a standardised compilation and translation of the laws for both communities. Halhed had very little knowledge of Sanskrit and relied upon the expertise of the pundits for their translations from Sanskrit into abstracts in Persian, which were then translated into English (Cohn 1996: 27). However Halhed's project would later be challenged and expanded upon by Sir William Jones, who found Halhed's translations to be awkward and inaccurate.

John Z. Howell was another Orientalist scholar worthy of mention. He was unlike the typical Orientalist scholar portrayed by Edward Said, in that Howell was highly critical of demeaning representations and views of Hindus which were held by most scholars and officials. Howell served as a judge for over thirty years in the zamindar's (wealthy land owner) court in Calcutta. He was particularly interested in Hindu religious practices. In 1767, Howell wrote *The Tenets of the Gentoos* where he addressed the common European portrayal of the Hindu population as unintelligent and idolatrous (Cohn 1996: 25). He asserted that these limited and superficial views were propagated by those who were influenced by the teachings and views of Roman Catholicism. In defence of Hinduism, Howell instead argued that Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism, was far more idolatrous than Hinduism (Cohn 1996: 25). Unlike other scholars who used Christianity as a reference from which they observed and understood Hinduism, Howell

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facilitate trade in India (Spear 1990: 69).

emphasised the importance for observers to conquer their own ignorance and superstitions, and held that anything outside of what they are familiar with must have less value or be inferior (Cohn 1996: 25).

Charles Wilkins (1749-1836) was a writer and librarian for the British East India Company. He later became an examiner at Haileybury College.[80] He studied Oriental languages in England including Bangla and Persian, but was particularly attracted to Sanskrit. During his career, Wilkins published a Sanskrit Grammar and wrote a new edition of a Persian and Arabic dictionary. Wilkins assisted William Jones in the founding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He is particularly recognised for his translation of the *Bhagavadgita,* which he completed in 1785 (Marshall and Williams 1982: 76). His translations were significant in that they supported the idea of a cultivated Indian culture, which countered the common western perception of Indian society as degenerate and despotic (Marshall and Williams 1989: 76, 77).

The most influential of the British scholars was Sir William Jones (1746-1794)[81]. Jones was the most accomplished of the Oriental scholars. He was fluent in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. These languages were essential to his literary and especially legal translations, which became the foundations upon which the British came to govern India (Carter and Harlow 2003: 203).[82] Jones's work with Sanskrit literature resulted primarily from his goal to translate the Hindu laws into English that would allow the British to govern the Indians by their own laws (Cannon 1971: 418), namely, his translation of the Sanskrit *Laws of Manu.* The translation of these laws became a means of translating the 'Hindu tradition' into British jurisprudence (Carter and Harlow 2003: 250). Jones's translations allowed greater accessibility for other scholars and Company administrators to translate and manipulate the codes of the Islamic and Hindu legal traditions, that were then constructed into civilised British laws and governance (Carter and Harlow 2003: 249).

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[80] Haileybury College was established as training college for potential civil servants of the British East India Company. Students at the college studied classical Indian languages for two years and were then required to sit two sets of examinations. In 1858 Haileybury College was closed and was replaced by postgraduate studies at British universities such as Oxford and Cambridge (Bayly 1989: 94).

[81] For more information on William Jones, see (Edgerton 1946).

[82] Scholars such as Michael J. Franklin (2002), offers that Jones' work did not only facilitate British administration, but liberated Sanskrit from the privileged Brahmins, which made the Sanskrit tradition available to the masses (18).

In 1783, Jones was appointed as a judge to the Supreme Court of Calcutta (Cohn 1996: 28). As a judge, Jones became frustrated with translations and the reliance upon pundits and munshis in legal proceedings and believed the Indian system of law should be pure, that is, free from misleading translations (Cohn 1996: 28). In 1788, Jones undertook the task of compiling and translating both Hindu and Muslim codes of law from their original languages directly into English. Jones was particularly critical of Halhed's project because of the perceived weaknesses of the translations and the unreliability of the native translators in legal cases and trials. Jones decided that he would produce a digest containing English translations of both Hindu and Muslim legal systems (Cohn 1996: 29). This digest would release the British judges from the dependence from Persian translations and translators, who some British administrators sometimes assumed were untruthful (Cohn 1996: 29).

In order to adequately pursue this enormous project, Jones met with Ali Ibrahim Khan, who was considered by the British to be one of the leading Muslim judges and scholars (Cohn 1996:28). Jones hoped Khan would provide a Persian translation of the

"*Dherm Shastr Menu Smrety*" or *Manusmrti*.[83] Khan did not have the Persian translation, but he did possess the text in Sanskrit. The pandits rejected Khan's help in the translation of the text into Persian (Cohn 1996:28). Reluctantly, Jones began his studies in Sanskrit for nearly one year in Calcutta. He then took up further studies in Banaras. In 1786, Jones began translating the *Manusmrti*[84]. Jones and other Orientalist scholars regarded the *Manusmrti* as an Ur-text with which Hindu law could be standardised. As these laws pre-dated the Islamic invasions of India, Jones believed it was part of his duty to restore the 'original law' to the Indian population (Cohn 1996:72).

It is important to note that the idea of incorporating Hindu law into the British system of jurisprudence was not favoured by all British scholars and administrators. In contrast to Jones, Lord Babington Macauly contended that the laws of India were not created by the Indians themselves, rather the laws were implemented over the course of India's rule by foreign powers. He opposed translating the 'native' laws into English. According to Macauly, British law was superior in terms of its juridical importance and its enlightened qualities. He believed that only British law should be employed in the governance of India and should be translated into the native languages (Carter and Harlow 2003: 249-250).

The *Manusmrti*[85] was the most significant of the *Dharamashastras* collection (Bhattacharya 1967: 546). *Dharamashastras* is the Sanskrit phrase for 'law guides' (Smith and Green, s.v. "Dharmashastras", 1995: 316). This set of texts have remained an important part Hinduism and to Indian society. Some of the earlier texts of the *Manusmriti* are dated around 400 BCE (Smith and Green, s.v. "Manu, Laws of:", 1995: 682). The *Manusmrti* is considered one of the most important of this collection of sacred texts and is considered next in authority to the *Vedas*. It contains the essential religious teachings and proscriptions for proper conduct that extends to all aspects of private and public life (Stein 2002: 92) The *Manusmrti* contains both religious and legal codes. This text demonstrated how the sacred intersected within Indian society and culture. For example, the text includes the *varna*[86] system, *varna* appropriate occupations, the four *ashrama*[87], life-cycle rituals and addressed the status of women (Smith and Green, s.v. "varnasharamadharma", 1995: 316; Stein 2002: 92). It includes further religious teachings and instructions for rituals, hymns, *mantras* and philosophy The *Manusmrti* also has laws, which are specific to issues such as statecraft and governance. It provided guidelines for the moral behaviours for the general public and of those in various positions of governance, from the king to his ministers (Stein 2002: 92).

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[83] Translated into English, *The Laws of Manu*.

[84] The preface to Jones' *Institutes of Hindu Law: Or, the Ordinances of Menu* can be found in Carter and Harlow 2003: 261-262. Please note there was an error in pages numbers in the publication (page 262 skips to 295).

[85] Also called the *Manavadharmashastra*.

William Jones and his assistant, Thomas Henry Colebrooke, who continued the project after Jones's death, translated, researched and organised their material. The British used their own methodology, which assumed that Indian law and the Indian legal system were codified and based on texts (Cohn 1996: xv), and that the different commentaries and interpretations of them could be organised according to schools and regions (Cohn 1996: xv). Colebrooke based the categories of these schools upon the various linguistic groups and variety of regional customs (Cohn 1996: 71). Like Jones, Colebrooke's solution was to establish a chronology that would yield the most ancient text, which they considered to be the most authoritative and authentic (Cohn 1996: 72). The authority and authenticity of one text would organise and simplify the varieties of Indian schools and languages for the British. Colebrooke also looked to the Muslim legal system that was divided into four schools, and thus categorised Hindu law into four schools.[88] Although Jones believed that Indian law was in many ways imperfect and perplexing in terms of its religious content, he recognised that the inclusion of some of these mystifying elements were necessary as India was crucial to Britain's economy (Harlow and Carter 2003: 249). Colebrooke, on the other hand, edited out portions of the *Manusmrti* that contained religious, ethical, ritual and philosophical material (Cohn 1996: 71). He instead attempted to establish a standard reinterpretation of Indian civil law that continued with Jones's focus on public and private rights, and the ownership and transmission of property (Cohn 1996: 71), basically those laws that were concerned with the implementation and collection of taxes.

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[86] *Varna* system is the Caste system. It was rooted in the Purusha Myth of the *Rg Veda* and further expanded upon in the *Manusmrti* in conjunction with the concept of *dharma*.

[87] The Four Ashrama or the Four Stages of Life divides the life of 'twice born' males into four stages. Each stage helps to guide individuals to perform their *dharma* (social duty) and to ultimately attain *moksha* (release from the cycle of reincarnation).

While *Manusmrti* was regarded as an ancient and authoritative text, its quality and sophistication were challenged by Colebrooke. Upon analysing the *Manusmrti*, Colebrooke determined that it was necessary to reorganise the *Manusmrti*, and thus set out to create new legal categories. The *Manusmrti* included various aspects that were important to Hindu life such as religious doctrines and ceremonies; the structure of education; the institutions, behaviours, duties and rituals of domestic life, household economy; personal morality; rules of governance and war; and negotiation (Mill 1968: 155). All of these features were treated with a similar degree of importance in the *Manusmrti* and were elaborated upon in the following sections and categories,

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[88] Muslim law was divided into two groups and then into four categories: Shia and Sunni which was further categorised into Hanafi, Shafai, Maliki, and Hanbali. Hindu law was grouped into Dayabnaga and

> 1. Debt, on loans for consumption; 2. Deposits and loans for use; 3. Sale without ownership; 4.Concerns among partners; 5. Subtraction of what has been given; 6. Non-payment of wages or hire; 7. Non-performance of agreements; 8.Recission of sale and purchase; 9. Disputes between master and servant; 10. Contests on boundaries; 11 & 12 Assault and slander; 13. Larceny; 14. Altercation between man and wife, and their several duties; 17. The law of inheritance; 18. Gaming with dice and with living creatures (Mill 1968: 156).

Colebrooke took issue with this arrangement of Hindu law. In the notes of Horace Hayman Wilson in Mill's (1968) collection, he comments that Colebrooke regarded these categories as an example of a primitive society's early stage of development (156). The division and arrangements of Hindu law were for Colebrooke a sign "marking a stage of civilisation, this is a very characteristic of circumstance. As the human mind, in a rude state, has not had the power to make a good distribution of a complicated subject, so it is little aware of its importance; little aware that this is the groundwork of all accurate thought" (Mill 1968: 156). In this rudimentary stage, Colebrooke offered, it is more important to create than to classify (156) and is characteristic of such a society's inability to make sophisticated distinctions between laws pertaining to business and personal morality. Colebrooke further stated that the above system of classification was merely a rude and defective attempt, and that even the uncultivated mind could make a basic distinction between people and things (157). According to Colebrooke, the organisation and classification of Hindu laws was irrational, unlike the British law that was based

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Mitakshara which was further divided into the schools of Banaras, Mithala, Maharashtian, and Dravidian (Cohn 1996: 74).

upon Roman laws. The rationality of the systemisation of British law was beyond the capability of the Hindus (157).[89] The British judicial system in India was reformed in 1864 and both Hindu and Muslim legal systems were abolished; the result was the colonial reconstruction of Indian law, which resembled the British legal system (Cohn 1996:75).

## 4.2 The Construction of Hinduism

Contemporary definitions of Hinduism did not develop within 'Hindu' Indian culture and society. The terms Hindu and 'Hinduism,' were foreign, or non-Indian terms that demarcated the Hindus from other groups of people such as Jews, Christians, Muslims, Zoroastrians and Buddhists. Prior to the British colonisation of India, the term Hindu was used to categorise different groups of people in terms of their geographical location and religious identity (Walker 1968: 445). The terms Hindu and Hinduism (originally anglicised as Hindooism)[90] were adopted by the British in the late 1800's and re-constructed by colonial (Lipner 2004: 16) and Christian discourse (King 1999: 100). In this section I will examine the various phases of the construction of Hinduism, but will focus upon the British colonial construction of Hinduism as mystical, despotic, degenerate and heathen (King 1999: 98-101) and this western construction of Hinduism and its association with the East.

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[89] For further detailed examples of Colebrooke's reorganisation and reclassification of Hinduism, consult Mill (1968: 158-200).

[90] Lorenzen's (1999) article discusses the debate over the change in spelling of Hinduism by using a 'u' instead of 'oo' in the originally English spelling Hindooism. The changed is attributed to the Indian nationalist reformer Ram Mohan Roy.

### 4.2 a. The Foreign Construction of Hindus and Hinduism

The word Hindu was coined long before the Euro-west's contact with India. It was created at various points of contact with other cultures and religious traditions. In his article "Hindus as Indian Pagans" (2004), Koenraad Elst provides an insightful overview of the construction and development of the word 'Hindu.'[91] He asserts that the word Hindu originated with Muslim invaders and meant 'Indian pagan.'

The term Hindu was originally derived from its geographical location.[92] The group of people who resided in the north-western area of India called their main river in this region *Sindhu*. The other rivers that originated from the *Sindhu* were called *sindhava* (Mittal and Thursby 2004:10). The Persians, who invaded from beyond this north-western region circa 550 BCE (Mittal and Thursby 2004:10), also used the term *Sindhu*: the river, or the Indus (Elst 2004). The Persian meaning of Hindu referred to the river *Sindhu* and the countries and peoples that inhabited that region and beyond it (King 1999: 99). Following the example of the Persians, the Greek traders, who established contact with India around the fourth century BCE, took the root element '*ind*' and also used the name of the river *Indos* and called the people living along the river, *Indoi* and referred to the Indians as *Indoi* (Elst 2004; Mittal and Thursby 2004:10). It eventually underwent further linguistic metamorphosis and produced the English words *Ind*us, *Ind*ia, and *Ind*ian and later H*ind*uism in the mid 1700's (Elst 2004; Mittal and Thursby 2004: 10). Elst (2004), claims that the Indians of Southeast Asia did not refer to themselves as 'Hindu', but the Turks (Moghuls), Arabs, Mongolians and other foreigners from the West used the root derived from Persian *sindh* to construct their own word for India and Indians. Elst gives the examples of the Arabic *Hind*, the Turkish (Moghul) *Hindistan*, and the Chinese as *Xin-du* or *Yin-du.* These terms were not used within India amongst the Indians; rather, they were used only outside of India by non-Indians (Elst 2004).

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[91] Elst provides details of the phonetic and linguistic modifications of the word Hindu (2004).

The religious categories of 'Hindu' or 'Hinduism' were first constructed by the Persians. They described Buddhists in India as *but-parast* or 'Buddha-worshippers' and the Mazdeans or Zoroastrians were referred to as *atish-parast* or 'fire-worshippers'(Elst 2004). During the Muslims invasions *but-parast,* came to mean 'idol-worshipper.' By the time of the Turkish (Mughul) invasions, *but-parast,* was a term that was applied to all Indian sects. No distinctions were made between the sects, which included the philosophic systems, scriptures, Jain and Buddhist practices; all were placed in the general category of Indian unbelievers or pagans (Elst 2004). The Mughuls did not only base their reference to Indians on greographical location - i.e., Hindus as the citizens of Hindustan, but they also used the Arabic word *kafir,* which was used to refer to the polytheists of Arabia (Elst 2004).[93] According to Elst, the word Hindu came to mean any Indian person who was an infidel or idol-worshipper, which included not only Hindus, but also Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs. Hindu came to mean anyone who was not Jewish (*ahl-i-Yahud , banu Israil),* Zoroastrian (*ahl-i-Majus, atish parast)* or an Indian Christian (*ahl-i-Nasara, Isai*) (King 1999: 99; Elst 2004). Thus, the word Hindu was primarily derived from the languages of the Persians and Muslim Turks in reference to the

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[92] See for example Lipner (2004).

[93] *Kafir* is a term that refers to a non-Muslim who has not submitted to the will of God. It often refers to pagans and infidels, but excludes Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians who are believed to follow an older variation of God's revelation and are often called *Ahl-al-Kitab* or People of the Book.

geographical areas they invaded and to indicate how the Indian belief systems were unlike their own.

During the Mughul Period,[94] Hindus and Hinduism were defined in terms of separation and exclusion from Islam. This separation was not only imposed by the Mughuls, but also by Hindus as a way of distinguishing their practices and identity from others (Lipner 2004: 17).[95] Although the word Hindu does not appear in any Hindu religious scripture, the term became used by Hindu Indians to describe and identify themselves, and particularly to demarcate themselves from Muslims (Lipner 2004:17). Prior to the popular usage of the word Hindu by the British in the 1700's CE, the word Hindu appears in other forms of literature. Lipner (2004) offers the example of the fifteenth century Indian poet-saint, Kabir, who in one of his poems distinguishes between Muslims and Hindus (17). For Hindus, the term 'Hindu' was adopted as a means to distinguish themselves from those groups who had different belief systems and lifestyles (Lipner 2004: 17). Distinction was marked by differences in doctrines, practices, occupation, personal names, ancestral villages and race (for examples, see Lipner 2004). The British approach to Hinduism differed from that of the Mughuls. Cohn (1996) notes that, for example, Hastings attempted to approach the Hindu elite with interest and a sympathetic manner in order to gain knowledge of Hinduism, albeit to support his colonial agenda, whereas the previous Muslims rulers systematically ridiculed Hinduism and focused only on information that would serve as proofs to support their arguments against and intolerance of Hinduism, and the supremacy of Islam (45). Whether this is an accurate assessment or not is open to debate. However, the perception that Muslim rulers had systematically ridiculed Hinduism is one that emerges during the 17th to 18th centuries and can be seen as a result of both the strict rule of Aruangzeb and the British approach to Hindu-Muslim relations. The power of the idea that Muslims in general and the Mughuls, specifically, were anti-Hindu continues to play an important role in India today.

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[94] For more information on the Mughul Period, see Stein 2002: 160-228.

[95] In this context it has been argued that this distinction was particularly relevant to the religious elite, i.e., Brahmins and Mullas (Wolpert 1965: 47-63).

### 4.2 b. British colonial construction of Hinduism

During the period of British colonisation and rule of India, the ideas of Hindu (Hindoo, Gentoo) and particularly that of Hinduism (Hindooism), underwent further reconstructions. Under British rule, one of the significant ways Hindus and Hinduism were understood was in their difference from Christianity.[96] Through its exclusion from Christianity, Hinduism, at least in some instances, was perceived and constructed as a path that bound its Hindu followers to satanic worship, a life of idleness, and barbaric religious and social practices. My examples are taken from selected sources and historical periods, which illustrate the dominance of Western Christian discourse that underlies the colonial construction of Hinduism and Hindus. I will include other prominent discourses that were relevant to a specific construction of Hinduism.

The first example that I will address is the construction of Hindus as devils and their religion as Satanic, heathen, superstitious and idle. Still others believed that Indians were the enemies of Christianity and were the devils of Satan (Cohn 1996: 78). For most Europeans travelling to South Asia, India was understood as the "the home of traditional enemies of Christianity, Satan and his devils" (Cohn 1996: 78). In contemporary scholarship there has been the tendency to emphasise

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[96] Europeans of the seventeenth century "approached Hinduism with expectations based on the classics and on the Bible"(Marshall and Williams. 1982: 7).

> that European accounts of the New World...dwelt less on the strangeness of the "other" but rather on familiarity. The "exotics"...could be fitted into a familiar web of discourse, as they were after all heathens and pagans, and "no matter how bizarre and offbeat he appeared the unbaptised exotic was just that –heathen."[97] When travelling in a strange land, even meeting an old enemy, the devil, is something of a comfort" (Cohn 1996: 78).

Identifying a traditional and familiar enemy provided comfort in a place that was new and different (Cohn 1996: 78).

Cohn (1996) explains that when European (including British) travellers of the early 1600's to mid 1700's, encountered strange and 'exotic' peoples, they were often regarded as part of a 'living museum'[98] from an earlier period in Europe's early past (Cohn 1996: 78). The peoples of India were also understood to be biblical characters. For example, in books of Christian tradition, Hindus were referred to along with Jews and other ancient near eastern peoples (Cohn 1996: 78). One particular Christian understanding of Hinduism at this time was that it was a religion that was founded at the time of Adam and Eve, which continued through Noah, whose descendants rebelled against Moses and instigated the worship of the golden calf (Cohn 1996: 78). Oddly though, the Brahmins were regarded as the same as the Levites, and some European Christians believed the Indians to be either descendants of the Lost Tribe or of Noah's son, Ham (Cohn 1996: 78).

Another example of a similar construction of Hinduism by Christian Europeans is found in the writings of James Mill (reprinted in 1968). In Mills's chapter, "Religion of the Hindus," he describes Hinduism as corrupt and controlled by Brahmins (229). It was polytheistic, since the Hindus continued to worship ancient gods from the earliest and lowest stage of their society (231), and it was an irrational and superstitious religion that lacked the simple and rational teachings of Mohametism (264). Finally, Hinduism is based on the power of nature which is personified by various gods (261). That would imply nature or animistic worship.

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[97] See also Ryan (1981: 525).

The terms Hindu and Hinduism gained significance in British discourse in the late 1700's (Lipner 2004: 14). These terms were assigned negative designations and were considered as all-inclusive categories that captured the undesirable characteristics of the non-Judeo-Christian "Other" in India (King 1999: 99). Europeans, particularly the British, were influenced by Christian discourse, which helped shape a category of Heathenism into which Hinduism was placed. The European Christian view acknowledged the existence of four major religious groups: Jews, Christians, Mahometans (Muslims) and Heathens (King 1999: 99). Members of the Heathen group included not only Indians, but also Africans and the American Indians (99). They were considered to be associated with or children of the Devil (99). In addition to Heathens, Indians were also called Gentoos (or gentiles) and Banyans or Banias (money lenders) (King 1999: 100; Lipner 2004: 24).

King (1999) argues that the term Hinduism became a western explanatory and descriptive construct (100).[99] Hinduism became a signifier of a collective and an all-

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[98] The British believed that Indians were 'untouched' by evolutionary progress and technological advancements.

[99] From the late 16th to the 17th centuries, Europeans understood non-European and non-Christian people and regions in relation to Christianity, "the Oceanic expansion of the 16th century had made Europeans aware of religious diversity on an entirely new scale. Whatever may have been hoped for them in the past, the peoples of Asia [including South Asia] proved not to be Christian in any large numbers; when they

encompassing religious entity that was understood by both British and Indian worlds. Hinduism was a category that was constructed in the early 1800's by orientalist scholars in order to refer to a coherent Indian belief system that included myths, rituals, beliefs and laws (King 1999: 100). The orientalist scholars asserted a commonality and unity amongst the variety of Hindu traditions because they understood Hinduism from the perspective of western Christianity (King 1999: 109) and constructed Hinduism with its tremendous diversity as one single non-Christian world religion (King 1999: 100).

This category was a construct that was engineered and built on presumptions held by both colonial and Judeo-Christian discourses.[100] British colonial hegemony was significant in the construction of Hinduism. British colonial rule was maintained through the establishment and control of the educational, political and media institutions in India (King 1999: 100). The British created an education system that focussed on European literature, history and science. Indian languages, culture and religion were studied in the English language, from the perspective of the British (King 1999: 101). The information that British and Indian students and citizens received about the various elements of Indian culture were shaped and transmitted through British institutions.

King (1999) writes that British hegemony functioned in two very specific ways in the orientalist construction of Hinduism. First, orientalist scholars identified what they believed to be the key religious concepts and teachings of Hinduism in Sanskrit texts, and thereby textualised the tradition (100). Second, was their innate propensity to

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were put into the balance, Christians had to admit that they themselves were only a minority of the world's population. What these Asian religions were and how they fitted into a view of the world, which for nearly all Enlightenment remained an essentially Christian one, were still topics of absorbing interest for those who concerned themselves with Asia in the eighteenth century (Marshall and Williams 1982: 98).

[100] See Marshall and Williams (1982: 98-127) for more information on the ways Christianity provides a framework through which Europeans understood non-Christian religions, particularly Islam and Hinduism.

construct and define Hinduism in term of a normative paradigm based on their understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition (100). The textualisation of Hinduism was based on the West's literary bias and its emphasis on the role of sacred religious texts in the understanding of a belief system (100). Orientalist scholars searched for and studied texts because their academic training valued and relied heavily upon textual study.

The process of textualisation impacted the construction of Hinduism in different ways. First, it omitted and debased oral traditions and popular streams of Hinduism. Oral traditions were not visibly represented in texts and were labelled as superstitious and demeaned as perversions of the textual tradition. Second, textualisation advanced the colonial project of the textualisation of culture. Only scribal communities and authoritative translators of Hinduism became privileged as authorities on Hinduism. Thus only a certain group of elite Indians and their customs were represented. Third, focus was placed on the priestly texts or *Dharmashastras* (102). Scholars used these to represent a large portion of what was constructed as Hinduism.[101] Although the *Dharamashastras* differentiated between various castes and *ashramas*, these texts were used as the foundation of Hindu law for Hindu Indians. Hindu society was made to conform to the *Dharamastras* and became a tool of the British administrators to manipulate and construct the religion presented in these texts along with customs of Indian society they wanted to prohibit (King 1999: 102).

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[101] Often, the role of elite Indian communities in the construction of Hinduism is ignored. The Brahmins contributed to the orientalist construction of Hinduism because they emphasised their concerns such as the importance of the *Vedas* and brahmanical beliefs (King 1999: 102). Members of the Indian elite also participated in the process of Said's understanding of orientalism. The Brahmins possessed the authority and knowledge that were unavailable to non-Brahmin Hindus which allowed them to study and describe their tradition. These activities however differed from the tradition itself.

Orientalist scholars turned to one of the elements within the Judeo-Christian paradigm, the emphasis on the importance of figures of authority. Therefore, the British sought out the expertise of the *Brahmins* whom they saw as the religious leaders or ecclesiastical authorities. According to the British, the *Brahmins* participated in the colonial construction of Hinduism, as the Brahmns believed Hinduism was in a state of decline and saw the opportunity for stricter reform. The scholars used the Brahmins and constructed a unified Hinduism that would bring together the different castes and sects under one single tradition, which facilitated colonial manipulation and control (105).

The second example is selected from Protestant Christian missionary sources. The observations of British Protestant missionaries further contributed to the construction of the West as masculine and powerful and the East as feminine, indolent and decadent. From the 1600's to the early 1800's, British missionary activity was restricted in India. The Company officials denied missionaries licences to reside in India. The Company feared that missionary activity would instigate anti-British sentiment amongst the Indian citizens and would interfere with economic activity (Spear 1990: 280).[102] During the 1700's conversions to Christianity were rare (Bayly 1990:137; Lawson 1993: 154). However, in the 1790's, the missionaries were more successful in producing literature such as journals, diaries and books in which missionaries recorded their observations and their interpretations of Hindu cultural and religious practices (Lawson 1993:154). Such works became influential in the Company's administration's perception of, interaction with, and rule of Hindu Indians (Spear 1990: 281).

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[102] "The Company would not give missionaries licences to reside for fear of the effect of their preaching on the feelings of the people. In consequence the first British Protestants had either to live outside the Company's jurisdiction as the Baptist William Carey did in Serampore, or to serve as Company chaplains like David Brown of Calcutta or Henry Martyn from Cambridge. In 1813, the ban on entry was raised" (Spear 1990: 280).

The missionaries who travelled in and around India as well as other colonised territories during the 1700 to the 1800's, were from a variety of British Protestant denominations such as the Baptist, Anglican and Methodist churches. Missionaries who were best known for their fieldwork were from the Church of Scotland (Bayly 1990). One such missionary from Scotland was the Reverend William Tennant. Tennant visited India in the 1780's and published his book *Indian Recreations. Consisting Chiefly of Strictures on the Domestic and Rural Economy of the Mahomedans and Hindoos* in 1804. In his observations, Tennant generalises Hindus as lazy and superstitious. Tennant believed that Hindus had some virtues such as abstinence, which were cultivated by Hinduism (Bayly 1990: 152). According to Tennant, Hindus were gentle in nature. He perceived the Hindus differently from the Muhammadans, whom he thought to be cruel. Hindus possessed some virtue because "of their early marriages and, as he astonishingly observed, their numbers of wives 'offers' them an opportunity of gratifying or extinguishing their passions as soon as they arise" (Bayly 1990: 152). However, the festivals of Hinduism presented another problem: "Hindu festivals spoil much of the good work 'as they tend to dissipate the minds of indolent people and withdraw them from those labours from which they derive their support"[103] as well as to impede their motivation to strive for economic success and industrial progress (Bayly 1990: 152). For Tennant, any virtue found in Hinduism was overshadowed by its weaknesses.

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[103] Quotation taken from W. Tennant 1804 I: 102.

The caste system was one such example.[104] Tennant asserted that the caste system was a socio-cultural practice that was rooted in Hinduism. Tennant noted that the caste system was problematic because it not only interfered with the spread of Christianity but it was hierarchical and therefore, non-egalitarian, and, lastly and most importantly, it functioned in opposition to the British notion of the 'emulation of betters,' which was understood as the cultivation of moral and economic growth (Bayly 1990: 153). The notion of the 'emulation of betters' was rooted in the discourse of the Scottish Enlightenment (Bayly 1990: 151). Like other missionaries and scholars, Tennant was influenced by the seventeenth century Enlightenment thinkers, who placed emphasis on the idea of "moral culture." This notion was understood as the virtue or moral autonomy in an individual as the foundation of political freedom and economic prosperity (Bayly 1990: 151). The differences between British and Indian societies could be explained by using this discourse. Society was understood to develop and progress in stages that began with the nomadic stages, evolving through a series of stages, and culminating in a high civilisation that was marked by invention and utilisation of industry (Bayly 1990: 152). Christianity was regarded as the most developed and 'perfect' religious system (Porter 1985: 599) that could stimulate both the moral and industrial progress among non-Christian societies and cultures within the British Empire (Porter 1985: 599; Bayly 1990: 152). Christianity was regarded as a force that could civilise and generate commerce in the colonies of the Britain (Porter 1985: 600). For Tennant, and other missionaries and westerners, the caste system was constructed upon an artificial division of classes in which particular social and spiritual privileges, and most importantly, particular occupations, were assigned to each caste. It was believed the caste system debilitated an individual's motivations to pursue higher levels of moral and economic achievements.

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[104] See also Nicholas B. Dirks (2001).

Tennant also regarded Hinduism as a tradition that promoted superstitions, which only further hindered the moral and industrial progress of the Indian, particularly the Hindu people. Superstitions were indicative of social and moral stagnation and further encouraged Indians to abandon not only their virtues, but even their kind and patient natures (Bayly 1990: 152). They were induced to commit barbaric acts of infanticide, ritual murder (Thagi or Thugee) and widow burning (Sati or Suttee) (Lawson 1993: 154). Tennant believed that conversion to Christianity would create a productive people and help temper Indian natures in order to quell these acts of barbarity. In this context, the West constructed an image of itself as Christian, moral, civilised, and progressive, while the East was mirrored as heathen, amoral, uncivilised and regressive (Porter 1985: 612).

Missionary accounts during the late 1700's to early 1800's became one of the authoritative sources of information on Indian culture, society and religion (Dirks 2001; Humes 2003: 155). Nicholas Dirks (2001) notes that missionary literature was abundant and became the primary source of ethnographic information on India. Missionaries had direct contact with the indigenous population, their accounts were considered first-hand and were therefore held to have considerable authority (Dirks 2001: 173). These accounts focused on religious and cultural practices that missionaries perceived as barbaric such as infanticide, sati, the cult of Thugee, and rituals and practices such as self-flagellation, hookswinging, and animal and human sacrifices (Spear 1990: 187; Humes 2003:155). Missionaries understood and described these practices to be rooted in and legtitimised by Hinduism; and these practices were acknowledged by British and

European observers to be key components of Hindu society. Missionaries described their interactions with Indians and particularly their observations of Hindu religious and social practices in demonising and sensationalistic portrayals in order to highlight their challenges in attempting conversion activities and to invoke support for missionaries from their European readers (Dirks 2003: 173).

### 4.3 Thugee

In this section I will explore the colonial construction of the cult of Thugee. Thugee is another select example of a colonial taxonomy which demonstrates the construction of the West as masculine and Christian and the East as feminine and non-Christian. The colonial construction of Thugee will be discussed within two contexts. First, I will examine Thugee as a construct based upon the written accounts of British administrators. Second, I will examine the colonial construction of thugee within the context of the British system of jurisprudence which attributed criminal activity of the East to Hinduism, particularly to the worship of the goddess Kali.

The cult or group called Thugee[105] were known as a hereditary group or fraternity of assassins who would steal from their unsuspecting travellers and then murder them by strangulation (Walker 1968: 501). Although missionaries provided various accounts of this group, they were not the first group of foreigners to remark on the thugs. In the 12th century, the Chinese traveller, Hiuen-Tsang, wrote an account of Thugee, whom he described as hereditary bandits. They first robbed their victims and then murdered them as part of their religious rituals (Walker 1968: 501). The British also took notice of the cult of Thugee. Dr. Richard Sherwood compiled and published a work about a group of delinquent Indian thieves. Sherwood referred to them as *phansigars*, which means "noose" because they strangled their victims. Sherwood claimed that he gained their confidence and was admitted into the Thug group. He promoted his work as an authentic and accurate account of Thugee practices. He further claimed to have provided the most detailed and accurate account of the 'mysterious and horrifying' practices of this secret cult by including a specialised terminology only known among the group's members. Later H. Wilson translated the *Kathasaritsagara,* an ancient collection of stories in Sanskrit literature. This story describes the goddess Durga, who resided in the Vindhya mountains. According to this story, Durga needed to be placated by her followers, who would offer animal sacrifices and human heads to her. Her devotees, in this story were linked to a band of thieves who would first rob and then kill their victims as offerings to Durga.

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[105] Thag in Hindi, Sthag in Sankrit, meaning to conceal or deceive (Walker II 1968: 501).

For the British, in 1808, the cult of Thugee became no longer a subject that remained a distant phenomenon found only in scholarly European accounts, translations and literature. The existence of Thugee or thugs was confirmed for the British when Thomas Perry, the magistrate of the British East Indian Company, encountered a case in which sixty mutilated bodies were discovered in wells, ditches and along the highway in Etawah district[106] in North East India (Lloyd 2006: 2). Perry initiated a series of interrogations, which determined thousands of thugs were living under the protection of local *zamindars* (landowners), and on this basis began a series of arrests in the Etawah area (Lloyd 2006: 3). For 20 years after the initial and relatively isolated case of Thugee murders, the Company administration became preoccupied with Thugee. This renewed interest prompted the establishment of the Thugee Department (TD) and later, the Anti-Thug Campaign (ATC), both of which were created in order to quell any thug activities and associations (Lloyd 2006: 3). William Sleeman who was the General Superintendant of the TD noted that it was difficult to convict thugs because most people were too frightened to testify against them or were unaware of the thug activities, so "the proof of thugee, it seemed, could only come from the thugs themselves" (Lloyd 2006: 3).

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[106] Tom Lloyd (2006) notes that the district of Etawah was a vulnerable district because it was newly acquired by the Company in 1808. The area had a high population of Indian merchants and pilgrims. Etawah had an unstable agricultural economy and had a reputation for criminal activity (1).

To a large extent, the British implemented their colonial authority in India through the imposition of their system of jurisprudence. The British military and policing agencies invested in methods of interrogation and intimidation to extract information and to interview those associated with or accused of criminal activity. Lloyd (2006) notes that some scholars

> have investigated the constitution of 'thugs' in the legal discourse of colonial India, noting in particular the dialectical processes by which the TD came to understand 'thugee' on the basis of cross examination of approvers[107] to the power-play between the interrogating officer and the suspected 'thug'. This leads to the dialogic colonial account, in which the accused's version was simply combined with the Company's, but a dialectical one, whereby the colonisers' judicial power moulded the 'thuggee' into what the Company needed it to be. In this sense, TD officers sought affirmation of what they already knew. This is not a straightforward conspiracy theory – the colonisers did not invent an entire thug myth and then force suspects to swear to its 'truth'. Instead, as Metcalf put it, 'thugee' "enabled the British to give voice to their own enduring fears and anxieties...[becoming] a metaphor for the representation of what they feared most in India, the inability to know and control their colonial subjects" (10).[108]

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[107] Approvers: accused thugs who confessed to hereditary affiliation and participation in ritual murder.

[108] Quotation (Metcalf 1994: 41)

As a result of this process, a dialectical colonial taxonomy evolved that contributed to the construction of a dichotomy between the European Christian West and the Indian non-Christian East. The Thugee was one example which signified the anomie, violence and idolatry of the East (Roy 1996; Lloyd 2006:9). For the British, the Thugee were more than criminals who signified a threat to British law and power, but they came also to signify a threat to British morality.

Captain William Sleeman's interpretation, reports, and writings on the thugs were not only the most popular, but also the most influential sources that were used in the creation of Anti-Thug legislation (Roy 1994: 130; Lloyd 2006: 26).[109] Unlike Wilson and Sherwood, Sleeman went beyond a general description of the thugs. According to Parama Roy (1994), Sleeman is credited with "establishing the story of Thugee as a moral narrative and embedding it in the culture of an orientalist India" (132). Sleeman produced meticulous accounts based on several indigenous and European sources,[110] but is purported to have also interviewed the thugs[111] and gained access to knowledge specific to their group (Roy 1994: 132). His works

> globalize[d] and codifie[d] discrete accounts of crimes at different times and places into a metanarrative of hereditary crime. On the evidence of the approvers, he created gigantic and detailed "family" trees of captured and uncaptured thugs that provided copious details of each man's crimes, place of origin, place, caste hierarchy, and personal and professional antecedents; he mapped out all the *bhils* (places of slaughter and burial) in central India; and he also compiled a dictionary of *Ramasee*, the "language" of the thugs. Every thug then could be located on Sleeman's gigantic grid, and information and operations were centralised (133).

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[109] See Tom Lloyd 2006: 25-50 for specific examples such as Act XXX of 1836, Thugee and Dacoity Departments.

[110] See excerpt from Wm. Sleeman's, *The Thugs or Phansigars of India: History of the Rise of Progress* in Carter and Harlow 2003: 297-307. For additional excerpts see also Carter and Harlow (2003: 285-334).

[111] Sleeman's collection is known as the *Conversations* in Lloyd (2006).

Sleeman's works outlined a standard image of thugs, their activities and their natures which became the prototype used by the colonial administration and British judicial system in India (Roy 1994:133). The accusations of thugs found in Sleeman's works, played on British insecurities of losing control and stirred the British administration to apprehend and prosecute thugs without a trial (Humes 2003: 159). Sleeman used the thugs to justify military battles against them and further advance the development of British laws throughout India (Humes 2003: 159). This also opened up more opportunities for the expansion of "the industry of policing and surveillance techniques, as well as ethnographic documentation," all of which were integral to the construction of colonial knowledge and particularly of categories in colonial India (Roy 1994: 133).

As part of his studies and reports on Thugee, William Sleeman focussed on the thugees' connection to the Hindu goddess Kali, a fierce emanation of Durga. The construction of the West as masculine and Christian and the East as feminine and non-Christian is evident in the works of Sleeman and especially evident in his description of Kali. Aside from Kali's connection to this cult of murderers, she was depicted as dangerous, wild, the goddess of death and destruction, who was appeased by blood sacrifices that were often assumed to be human (Kinsley 1975, 184). For most of the British in India, the characteristics of this female god were antithetical to that of Christianity and further served as evidence for a primitive and non-Christian native imagination (Kinsley 1975: 184). For many British scholars and writers, such as William Ward and Alexander Duff, Kali was a symbol of the "perceived depravity of Hinduism" (Lloyd 2006: 26). Sleeman also highlighted colonial contempt for the *Brahmin* priests who encouraged the violent rituals of the thugs and who also benefited from the items stolen from their dead victims (Humes 2003: 158-159). According to Sleeman, the purpose of the supposed ritual killings was not merely to collect items for the priests from the victims, but they were also offerings to Kali, who would grant the thugs assistance in their perceived project to overthrow British power (Humes 2003: 159).

Lloyd (2006) notes that Sleeman along with British theologians also pointed to the irrationality and injustice of Hinduism as a religion that sanctioned murder in contrast to Christianity, which was understood by the West to be a tradition that was based upon rationality and justice. Sleeman with the others, such as George Swinton (11), confirmed that thugee was a "result of religious paroxysms 'typical' in the practitioners of India's indigenous religions: "the Hindoo religion,' wrote Sleeman, 'reposes upon an entire prostration of mind, that continual and habitual surrender of the reasoning of faculties" (28).[112] The thugs were regarded as "living proof that religion, if improperly inculcated, may be the vehicle of the most detestable abominations by with which sin is introduced into the world" (28).[113] The British were also struck by the perceived remorselessness of the thugs for their murders. The thugs seemed to be a blood-thirsty group who did not take responsibility for robbing and strangling innocent victims, but instead shifted the responsibility of their actions to appeasing Kali. Sleeman believed that this was a typical case of "immunity from conscience" (Lloyd 2006:28). Those thugs who were prosecuted were not only guilty for their crimes but were described as "the bearers of a malign faith and representatives of the potential for depravity inscribed in Indian social institutions" (Lloyd 2006:28).

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[112] Quotation taken from William Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections,* Vol.I, p. 213.
[113] Quotation from F. Hollick (1840: 18).

For Sleeman branches of the British legal institution in India such as the TD and the ATC were part of Britain's civilising project in India (Lloyd 2006:28). The persecution of thug activities was a means of cleansing India of another Hindu excess and superstition. Ridding India of the thugs also justified the colonisation of India and Britain's colonial mission to help India progress from its downfall and "stasis from a corrupt priesthood that had enfeebled the population and exploited a 'religion' liable to 'immorality'" (Lloyd 2006: 29). The institution of the British legal system was one of the main sources of colonial knowledge that constructed the thugee as a colonial taxonomy. The Thugee was constructed based upon what the British perceived as the 'monstrous' (Lloyd 2006: 42), the dangerous, the criminal and the irrational; qualities that were the mirror opposite of those which defined the West. As a colonial and legal taxonomy, the Thugee was an example cited by the British to illustrate that the Hindu religion was to a large extent synonymous with irrational and criminal behaviour.

This chapter examined the role of knowledge systems such as language and, to a lesser extent, religion. These systems of knowledge were two of the most significant that helped the British distinguish between the categories of West and East. Language, particularly the knowledge of Sanskrit, was required to translate Hindu religious and legal texts into English. These translations were essential to the creation and implementation of the British legal system in Indian in order to control the colonised Indian population. Upon these translations by orientalist scholars, Indian religious and criminal laws were perceived as untimely, ineffective and irrational. Later, British administrators accepted and relied on the perceptions of British missionaries, some who understood Hinduism as demonic, and idolatrous and as a belief system that encouraged moral laxity, especially lawlessness. The cult of Thugee was used an example to illustrate these negative qualities in a legal context. Attention was drawn also toward the misdirection and dire consequences resulting from the worship of the goddess Durga/Kali, which further served to distinguish Hinduism from the morality, rationality and masculinity of Christianity and the West.

# CHAPTER 5

## Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the construction of a binary classification commonly understood as the West and the East. In this binomial paradigm, the West has been constructed as dominant and often been designated as masculine and Christian, while the East has been constructed as subordinate and designated as feminine and non-Christian. This binary of West and the East is worthy of investigation as it remains a significant construction still in use in contemporary scholarship to categorise our world, and its cultures, societies, languages and religions in our attempts to understand them.

The construction of the West as masculine and Christian and the East as feminine and non-Christian has been analysed within the context of Edward Said's (1991) understanding of orientalism and orientalist scholarship, and also within the context of Peter Berger's and Thomas Luckmann's (1966) social construction theory. Said's understanding of orientalism and its role in the West's construction of the East or the Orient has come to be regarded as the standard interpretation (Prakash 1995) in contemporary scholarship. In the most general terms, Said understands the construction of the West and the East or the occident and the orient as a product of the West's power to construct and to colonise the East, particularly through western discourses and knowledge systems such as orientalism and orientalist scholarship. This construction of the West and the East emerges as the binary pair of Us/Them.

Although Said's orientalism provides a starting point for my analysis of the West and the East and is interwoven throughout my thesis, I have drawn more significantly from Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory, as laid out by Vivien Burr (1995). Social construction theory proposes that knowledge and reality are constructed through mutual agreement of the majority of members within a particular socio-cultural system, and are maintained through institutions, discourses, knowledge systems and language. Reality and knowledge are constructed according to historical and geographical specificity, through notions of what a particular socio-cultural system has constructed and understands as 'natural' or as 'taken for granted' facts, and are sustained by social processes and various systems of knowledge.

The construction of the West and the East by the British colonisers of India has been analysed in relation to the characteristics of social construction theory. The first characteristic, historical and geographical specificity, is used to explore how the East and West were constructed within the context of the 1500's when competition for trade routes, the spice trade and the trade of luxury goods were paramount for the Western colonial powers. The West was constructed as masculine, active, adventurous and progressive while the East was constructed as a distant land filled with superfluous treasures and spices that awaited the exploitation of the West, associating the East, at least through a Western lens, with feminine qualities.

The second characteristic, naturalness, was illustrated by cartography and imperial masculinity. Both revealed the importance of the discourses of gender and religion in the construction of the West as masculine and Christian and the East as feminine and non-Christian. Within the practice of cartography the binary construction of the West and the East focussed on the discoverer and what was discovered. The West was constructed as the discoverer, the masculine explorer, the creator of boundaries, which were defined by the discourses of religion and gender considered natural within a particular historical and geographic context. The East emerges as inert, portrayed as the *terra nullius* or virginal territory that awaits discovery by the European male explorer. The notion of imperial masculinity served to further support this particular construction of the categories of the West and the East. Within the context of imperial masculinity this binary was based on Britain's understanding of martial and effete races in India, which was attributed in part to the qualities of masculinity and strength that were purported to be part of the Christian religion and of weakness and femininity believed to be inherent qualities cultivated within the Hindu religion.

The last characteristic examines how knowledge is sustained through social processes and emphasises that different systems of knowledge exist. The binary construction of West and East is examined in the context of the British East India Company's military and its administration. The Company's administration relied on and used the knowledge and expertise of orientalist scholars who for the most part were encouraged and employed by the administration to study Indian languages and Indian religious texts to support the creation of a legal system that would allow the British colonisers to rule more efficiently. Within the development of this legal system, the West was constructed as masculine, rational, law-abiding and Christian, and the East as feminine, irrational, dangerous, unlawful, and non-Christian, particularly Hindu. The cult of Thugee is one example that was used to illustrate the colonial British perceptions of the ills of the East based upon British jurisprudence. The British constructed Thugee as an example of unlawful native behaviours which were based largely on the Hindu religion, and required correction through the application of Western legal and religious principles.

Although Said's orientalism has been and remains an important theory with which some scholars can engage the construction of colonialism and the binary pair of the West and the East, social construction theory also contributes to this discussion. This thesis has demonstrated how Said's orientalism and social construction theory both emphasise the importance of knowledge. Both theories focus and address the different kinds of knowledge systems, and how and by whom knowledge is constructed. They further reveal the relationship between knowledge and power, and show us how knowledge in its various forms can help us to understand our world. However, the use of social construction theory explored in this thesis advances the analysis of the West and the East one step further by demonstrating the complexity of the construction of our knowledge and reality. While Said's orientalism conveys an important but narrow understanding of how the West and the East are constructed, social construction theory, highlights various other significant factors within this binary that contribute to the construction of our perceptions and understanding of the world around us.

Most importantly, this thesis used social construction theory to help uncover the complexity of the construction of the West/East binary and explored how this binary can influence our investigations. While the West/East binary is a useful tool in the initial study of religions, it provides only a limited and superficial understanding of them. First, this binary is a western construction that is based on the artificial division of the world, its ideas, cultures and religions. Consequently, not all world religions such as syncretic, oral and indigenous traditions, may fit neatly into either West or East. Second, a binary implies a hierarchy, which often unintentionally values the West over the East. This can applied to our preconceived notions and our scholarly locations, which may in some way influence our investigations of other traditions. Third, my exploration of the West/East binary within the contexts of the characteristics of social construction theory, orientalism and religious studies, helped to reveal the varied dimensions that are involved in the construction of this binary pair such as history and geography, the notion of naturalness, knowledge systems and discourses which impact our investigations of religious traditions.

This thesis indicates that further research in this area could include other factors and discourses such as politics, economics, race and psychology in the creation of knowledge and reality within a colonial context. As social construction theory is relatively unknown outside of the disciplines of literature, sociology and social psychology, this thesis has demonstrated that it has the potential to be a useful analytical tool within the discipline of religious studies. This theory can be of help in the analysis of the interplay of different discourses, histories, geographies, and knowledge systems in the construction and development of different belief systems. Because social construction theory seeks to understand multiple factors in the construction of knowledge and reality, it complements the multidisciplinary nature of the discipline of religious studies.

# APPENDIX 1.

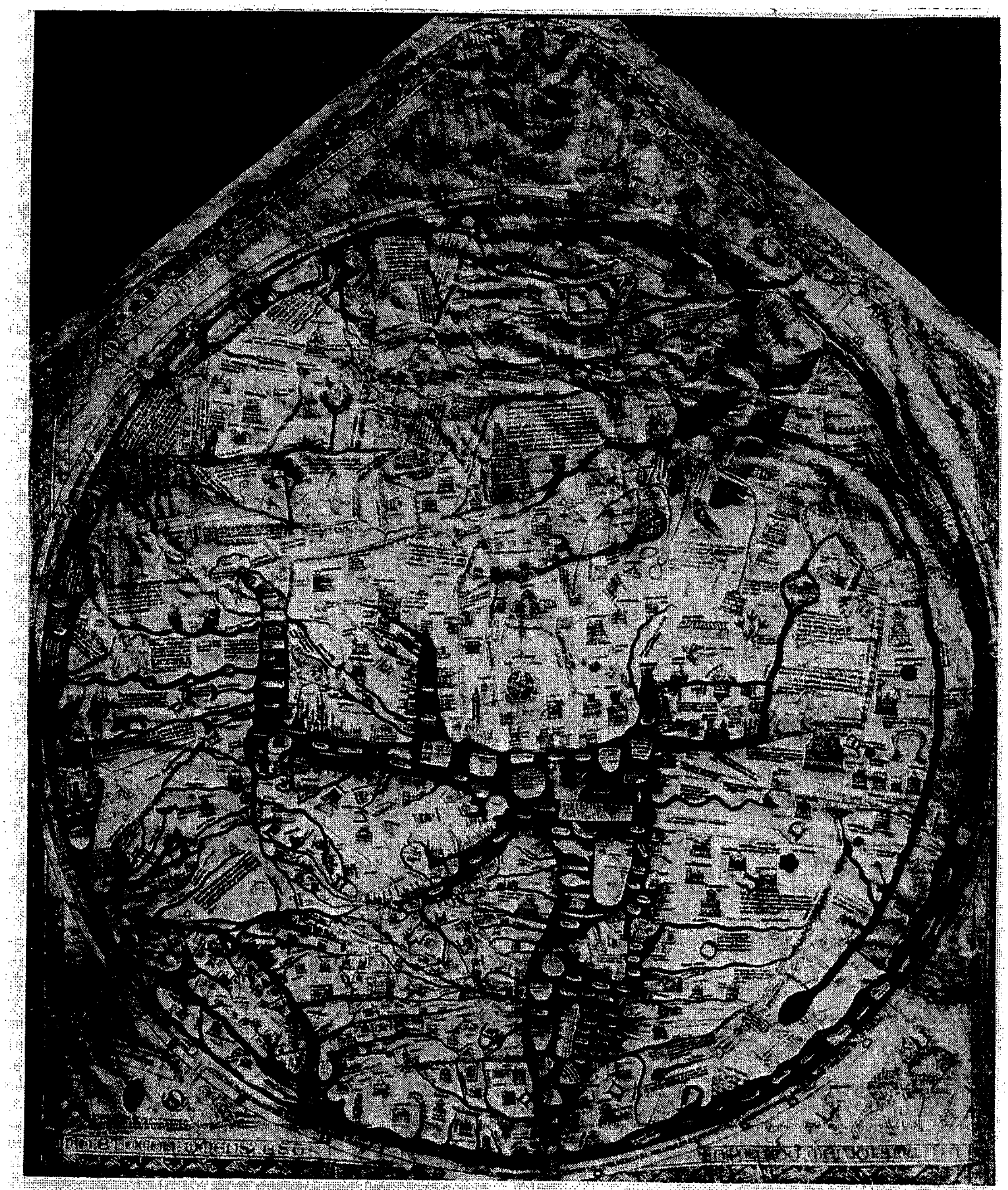

FIG. 18.20. THE HEREFORD MAP, CA. 1290. This famous map in Hereford Cathedral represents the culmination of the type based on the history of Paulus Orosius (fourth century). Its compiler, Richard de Bello, also drew on the works of Strabo, Pliny, Augustine, Jerome, the Antonine itinerary, and

Woodward (1987:311)

# APPENDIX 2.

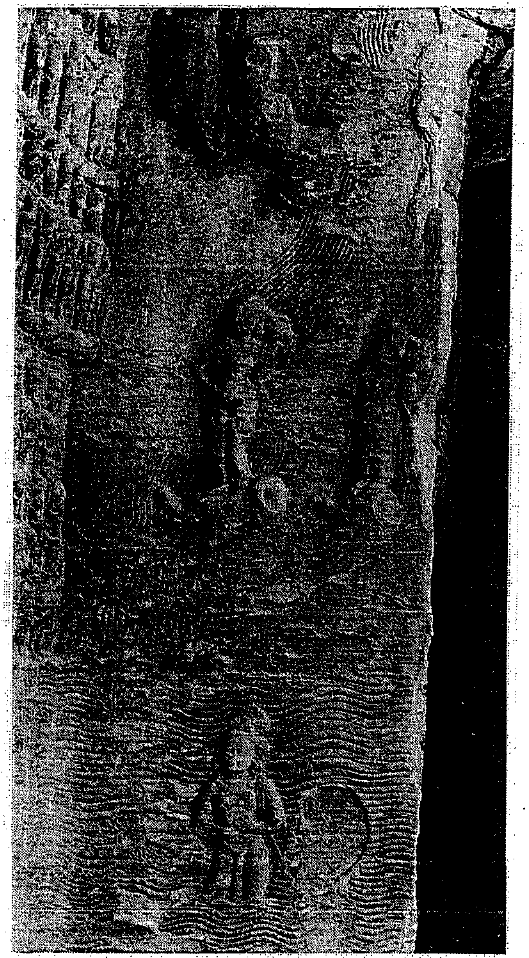

FIG. 15.9. THE GANGA AND YAMUNA RIVERS. This bas-relief in stone is part of a large sculptured ensemble at Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh, ca. A.D. 400. These sacred rivers are identifiable by their iconic representations as female deities standing on their emblematic *vāhanas* (mounts), the *mākara* (crocodile) for the Ganga and the *kūrma* (tortoise) for the Yamuna. The confluence of the two rivers occurs at the ancient holy city of Prayāga (Allahabad).

Schwartzberg (1992a:312)

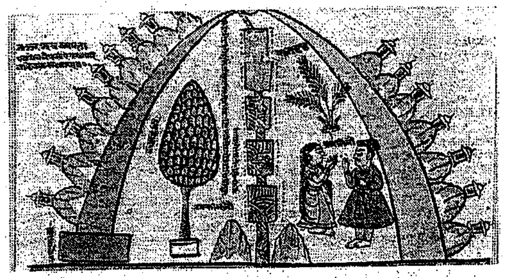

FIG. 16.25. UTTARAKURU, THE REGION NORTH OF MOUNT MERU. Represented here is a very small part of Jambūdvipa just to the north of Mount Meru, the small circle at the top of the map. The bar at the bottom represents the east-west Nila (Blue) Mountains from which two arcs, the Vakṣāra (Elephant-Tusk) Mountains, project toward Meru. Midway between them flows the Śītā River through five lakes. Also shown are a couple (humans here being always born in pairs) beneath the wish-fulfilling *kalpavṛksa* tree, and to their left is the *jambū* tree, from which the continent's name is derived. This leaf from a manuscript (?) is gouache on paper, Rajasthani, from the eighteenth century.

Schwartzberg (1992b:369)

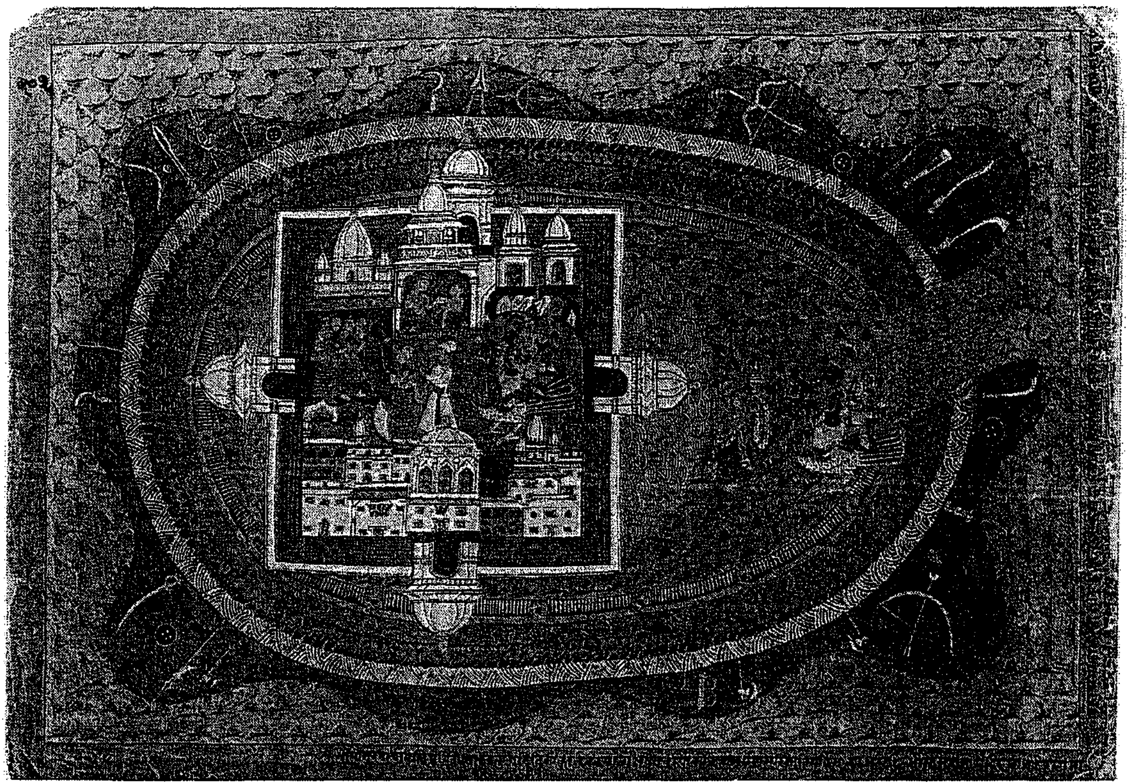

FIG. 16.11. KRISHNA AND HIS CONSORT DESCEND TO PRĀGJYOTIṢA (ASSAM), SITUATED ON A TORTOISE-SHAPED EARTH. This delightful painting, gouache on paper, Nepali, eighteenth century, is from one of many printed recensions of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, recounting some of the exploits of Lord Krishna. It combines the cosmographic conception of a tortoise-shaped earth with the idea of concentric ring continents and oceans.

Schwartzberg (1992b:348)

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