

CONFIGURATIONS OF THE MODERN INDIAN RENAISSANCE



by

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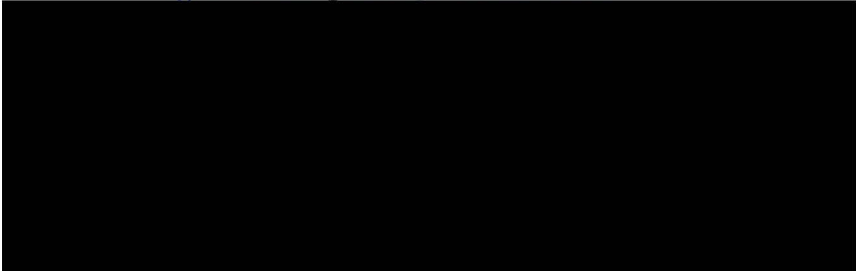
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ABSTRACT

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The 19th and early 20th C. witnessed a revival of Hindu culture which has come to be known as the Renaissance. Stimulated by contact with Europe, and affected by the imposed requirements of British rule, the Hindu upper castes created within their milieu a consciousness and reaffirmation of their traditional role in Indian society. This social movement was reinforced by education, social reform, political growth, literary development and religious and philosophical revival.

Emanating primarily from the centres of colonial rule, the upper caste revival employed western styles of literature and education, European models of administration and government, and revised Hindu socio-religious doctrine. Over a span of 100 years this community of Indians established itself as the recipient of British authority, and the modern interpreters of Hinduism. The process of 'stimulus diffusion', developed by A. Kroeber to explain certain kinds of cultural growth patterns, was a major principle operating throughout the contact period.

Incorporation of western influence at first created a trend towards assimilation, giving pronounced superiority to European culture. This produced a period of reform which sought to rid Indian society of many

cultural features antithetical to an evolving group of brokers and mediators bent on seeing India develop as a disciple of the West. For the first two generations after 1800 exhuberance and idealistic thinking of modernizing Indians went largely unchecked. It was not until the economic drain of the subcontinent was becoming evident, and the number of educated exceeded the positions available to them, that a reaction set in. The growth of nationalism and the concomitant revival and reinterpretation of Hinduism's socio-religious structure was due in part to competition within Indian society for the rights and privileges of social preeminence.

The emergence of a middle class element within the educated Hindu broker community, which contested both the aims of British rule and the assimilation of it by many Indians is a feature of the social evolution of the Renaissance. Class mobility, made possible by the superimposition of the British administrative-economic system opened new areas of cultural growth and development, yielding significant achievements in Literature and Philosophy, and giving militant nationalism its most vocal exponents. Hindu revivalism in the Renaissance period was closely aligned with extreme forms of national expression, and individuals such as Aurobindo Ghose played an active part in bringing literature and religious doctrine to bear on the issue of Swaraj (self-rule).

The social and cultural manifestations of the Renaissance were limited to the upper caste strata of Hindu society involving only a minority of the population. Due to the literacy and authority of this group, the socio-religious changes which resulted from the transfer of power eventually reached a broad social base. These developments conform to M. Singer's understanding of the Great Tradition in Indian civilization being influential and at times decisive in affairs both secular and religious, in spite of the small numbers involved in its preservation, interpretation and continuance.

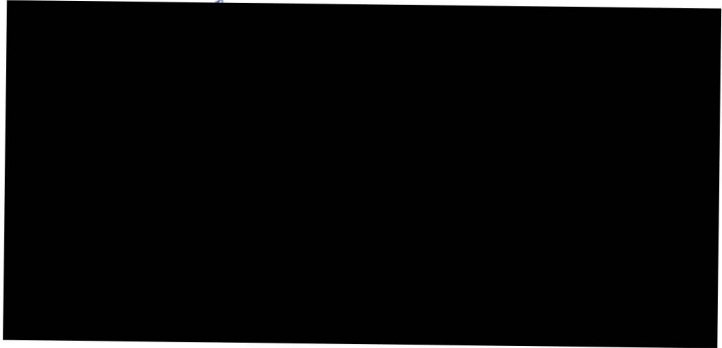


TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I INTRODUCTION	1
The British in India	1
The Modern Indian Renaissance: A Definition	7
Purpose, Scope, and Method	18
Notes to Chapter I	27
II CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND THEIR SOCIAL EXPRESSION	29
Education	31
(a) Influences and Development	31
(b) Education and Social Reform	37
Political Growth	38
(a) Moderacy and Extremism	38
(b) The Congress	44
Religion and Philosophical Interpretation	47
(a) The Process of Reform	50
(b) Muslims and the Revival	54
(c) Other Indian Faiths	59
Literature	61
(a) Pre-eminence of the Bengal Renaissance	61
(b) The Effects of Literary Growth	66
Notes to Chapter II	70
III AUROBINDO GHOSE: A PERSONAL CONFIGURATION	74
The Nationalist Movement	79

CHAPTER	PAGE
Culture Broker	82
Notes to Chapter III	86
IV SOCIO-CULTURAL PATTERNS OF THE RENAISSANCE	88
Cultural Processes: Contact Phases	92
Social Processes: The Changing Status of the Brokers	97
Conclusion	102
Notes to Chapter IV	105
BIBLIOGRAPHY	106
APPENDIX: Biographical Profile of Leading Renaissance Individuals	109

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

I THE BRITISH IN INDIA

The sub-continent of Asia comprising the modern states of Pakistan and India equals Europe in size and population. Its panorama of peoples and cultures reaches far back into the mists of pre-history, offering scientific enquiry a storehouse of richly documented information to further our understanding of the stimuli, reactions, and inherent principles governing society's development. The anthropologist, concerned to ascertain, compile, and analyze the facts of Man's attempt to understand and control his environment, discovers India as a veritable workshop, and vibrant living social growth, in which all essential data lies at every hand for a general and special investigation.

India emerged from centuries of foreign rule within this generation. How one specialized group met, accommodated and overcame the final period of alien control is the central theme of this thesis. More particularly, and dictated by limitations of purpose and space, I will examine how the impact of British rule in India aroused and re-defined its traditions, and provided the cause, the catalyst and the modernized mechanics for an element of Indian society to re-assert its historical pre-eminence, and carry the nation to independence.

The conclusions, however tentative, which the anthropologist can infer from the 19th century Indian experience illuminate and chart the evolution of the political, social and economic issues which beset that nation today. The immensity of the country in land and peoples, its variety of languages and regional influences, the laminations of cultures and implied conflicts with roots deep in centuries of organized social development, generates data and possible guidelines not only of universal utility to anthropologists who wish to measure and influence humanity's condition, but of essential importance to any foreign assistance for India, however resourceful and well-intentioned the effort might otherwise be. By examining the cultural processes, set into motion by the directed contact of colonialism, and their effect upon one element of Indian society which assumed the mantle of authority from the dispossessed colonial rulers, this paper hopes to add in some small way to the great mosaic of Indian enquiry and knowledge.

British presence in India lasted for almost 300 years, from the formation of the East India Company in 1650 to the realization of independence in 1947.<sup>1</sup> It has provided a comprehensive case-study of colonial rule, exemplifying for scholars and historians a model of "civilizing conquest", replete with wholesale economic exploitation, racial supremacy, religious bigotry, and

ruthless subordination of native need to suit the ledgers of foreign ownership. Characteristically, the excesses of physical and economic oppression stimulated the conscience, and even the outrage, of a sensitive element within the colonial authority, so that the essential cruelty of colonial domination was relieved and influenced periodically, with more or less effect, by the intervention of social and missionary reform.

To Indians in general, however, British conquest seemed merely to supersede continual alien domination back through remembered history. But differences between the European presence and the Mogul empire it displaced gradually displayed an emphasis on economic exploitation which suddenly jerked the sub-continent into a completely new environment of technology and administration. European colonizers evaluated subject peoples as a material resource, and literally grist for the mills of commerce and industry. Human values were applicable only as they might add to efficient exploitation of farm, mine, factory, and native consumer potential. To put the vast raw material of India onto the treadmill of capital, the colonial ruler had to first construct the gigantic network of communications and administration necessary to effective economic exploitation. Recruitment amongst the native population to assist in the operation of such a complex technical enterprise accelerated the cultural

confrontation, set its immediate terms of reference, and gave instant and enormous importance to the traditional native element equipped by status, training and ability to provide the kind of manpower so urgently needed to work the colonial machine.

This huge reservoir of humanity which the colonial power measured as energy for the imperial extraction process held the Hindu faith by a 75% majority.<sup>2</sup> For more than 2500 years its theology had permeated the daily life of Indians at all levels with a philosophy, rituals, traditions, and social patterns which provided great cultural diversity, and regional variation. One of its principal features was its caste system, in which effective influence and socio-political control was vested in less than 15% of the Hindu majority.<sup>3</sup> Dominating this traditional elite were the Brahmins, whose literacy and general ascendancy within the native population made them the natural focus for the attention of the colonial authority in its effort to assemble a cadre of native assistance.

Before the arrival of the British, in a process of hundreds of years of adaptation to foreign rule and the accommodation and absorption of numerous alien cultures and religions, the Hindu elite had become decentralized, benign, and eroded to a discernable, but low-profile leadership with no positive or energetic influence

in overall state government. The British system, and its requirements of literacy, discipline and community acceptance in recruiting native help, re-defined and re-asserted the traditional order in Hindu society during the 19th Century. In practical and conspicuous terms, the Hindu elite was restored and confirmed within its own society, with the most profound implications for the ultimate re-organization of India under British control and the nationhood which would emerge from it. To begin with, the re-affirmation of its position kindled in the Hindu upper castes a new consciousness of their ancient origins, and stimulated an enthusiastic reformation and re-assertation of their role in the Indian community.

The first century of British rule was a period of consolidating the East Indian Company's base in Bengal<sup>4</sup> and gradually expanding inward to become the effective authority throughout the sub-continent. Unlike former invasions, which came overland from the north, this colonial conquest was by sea, from the west. Seizing the major ports and great coastal plains, Britain gradually drove out or contained its European competitors, using its naval might to reduce or remove Dutch, French and Portugese incursions, whose merchantmen and warships probed the coast of India. Organizing her civil machinery and military installations as she progressed mile by mile and state by state, Britain in this period, alternatively

by force or astute threat of armed subjugation, established her rule of the entire country.

The culture-contact of ruler and ruled was only of unilateral advantage in this formative era. On the one hand Britain's organization of an administrative infrastructure to consolidate and operate the conquest had of necessity to recruit, train, and engender a degree of loyalty within that element of the native population with the available qualifications to staff the colonial apparatus. On the other hand, the essential master-and-slave relationship was clear enough to both sides of the bargain. Slowly at first, and then with increasing momentum as the colonial system began to succeed in its objectives, the upper-caste Indians wedded to it began to organize, within their own milieu, a consciousness and a re-affirmation of their traditional role in Indian society. Thus began the revival of Hindu culture, known generally as the "Renaissance", from the term given it by Indian leaders in analogy with European movements which came to their attention in their study of, and accommodation with, their new rulers.

Moreover, in establishing English as the lingua franca to tie the administrative machine together, the British gave a tool of unification and correspondence to the Hindu culture, numerous important elements of which had been separated one from the other, and even isolated, by enormous distance and language barriers. In country-

wide terms, therefore, the apparatus constructed by the colonial power to impose and operate its own regime, at the same time inspired a native cultural revival and gave it the common ground of communication and mutual adversary against which to re-formulate its identity and purpose. Indeed, it can be observed, if somewhat ironically, that this Hindu reformation was an antithesis to British rule, and modern Indian government a synthesis of the confrontation, which might have had quite another expression, and very long delayed, had not the colonial period occurred how and when it did.

## II THE MODERN INDIAN RENAISSANCE: A DEFINITION

The modern age in Indian is generally said to have begun with the life of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a Bengali Brahmin, of the wealthy class of merchants born in 1778 - died 1832. He is generally recognized as the spearhead of what was to follow in the next 100 years.<sup>5</sup> Other sources make reference to some literary figures who had begun the movement in Bengali prose slightly prior to Roy, who as a scholar and educator began his active period in the 1810's, thus it is useful to recognize them simultaneously. It is the general concensus that 1800 can be taken as the date of the beginning of the Renaissance. From the outset British influence was the precipitating force which induced the modern movement, in diverse and often contradictory

ways. Initially, the presence of the B.E.I. Co. had begun the process of directed contact that was accelerated after the British Government terminated their economic monopoly in 1813.<sup>6</sup> The few missionaries who had been in India and had learned native dialects in order to spread the Gospel, had also effected little up to this point in the way of generating new forms of expression among Indians. This was a limited purpose however, for it was not the intention of the British to initiate a native revival. Indeed, the actions of the colonial administration at all stages indicate the opposite was true. It was in spite of British attempts to restrict their involvement with Indians, that the Renaissance began and gathered both adherents and momentum.

The first stage can be discerned as an attempt to incorporate Christian religious teaching both through the learning of English, vernacular languages and biblical scholarship, largely through the medium of Protestant missionizing. The drive of the Hindu community to understand the nature of the Christian God and talk with the Christian ministers was consistent with the popular concern for religion and philosophy in India. The pursuit of this enquiry beyond the missionaries, into the sources of their philosophies and theologies, produced within 30 years, a group of Indian thinkers, well instructed in Christianity, who produced effective and

scholarly comparisons between European and their own classical beliefs.

Here the figure of Roy is again primary. He applied his long and intensive study of English language, Christian religion, philosophy and science to his own culture and began the period of reforming moribund Hinduism. This comparative analysis was quickly followed by the establishment of "Sabhas" - societies for the discussion of the issues posed by the new philosophies and theologies, and their relevance to Hindu reform.

The interest in European culture spread quickly. With the establishing of schools of medicine and science, an acquaintance with the egalitarian philosophies of Mill and Comte, and the prestige of Imperial Britain, many Indians began to deprecate their own culture in favour of the foreigner's.

Though this criticism and tendency to adulation often produced extremes both of mimicry and condemnation, there were some constructive results which motivated the secondary movement within the Renaissance - that of social reform. Most knowledgeable Indians knew that Hindu religion and social custom had degenerated to a condition entirely inconsistent with its scriptural foundations.

Stimulated by models of European reform, conscious of the corruption within their own system which had gone unremedied for centuries, and stung by scathing

criticism from their new political masters who had both the credentials of success and the power to share it in some way with a deserving protégé, the Hindu elite addressed itself to the challenge of reviving its convictions, restoring its image, and re-installing itself as the natural leadership of India. This awakening is manifest in the request by Sabhas all over India, for the British to provide education and facilities to help Indians learn about the West.

Evident need dictated the direction of new education for Indians, both within the country and abroad. The allied disciplines of Law and Letters were favoured for their use in civil administration. Medicine and engineering attracted thousands of students for the physical upgrading of the people and the land. Moreover, the enthusiasm for western ideas and education in this period (1840-1890) inspired intramural Indian concern with the direction and destiny of their country. Thus began the discussion groups and political associations which soon grew into formidable native societies with widespread acknowledgement and influence. These did not become recognized political bodies until the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. The growth of the press and the increasing tendency to speak out on the issues which concerned them, marks the third movement within the Renaissance.

As this process gathered momentum towards the turn of the century, much had continued to change in the fields of Renaissance activity already set into motion, and though they had begun as a response to an external stimulus, they continued as phenomena reacting within themselves. Religion is a most useful example here.

The formation of the Brahma Samaj in 1828 marked the first step in the modern reinterpretation of Hinduism.<sup>7</sup> However, it was exceedingly liberal and unitarian, eliciting an inevitable conservative reaction. The Brahma Samaj faltered, but was revived in 1842. After 1885, which marks the period of Hindu revivalism, there was a radical shift toward orthodox Hinduism, which promoted religious intolerance and pedantic dogmatism. This came to a peak in the late 1890's and early 1900's, when the Muslims were finally effectively driven out of consideration in the religious sphere.

Similar fluctuations in education, in terms of philosophical emphasis, political stance and subjects taught, in what languages and to whose standards, occurred. It was the same with literature and politics. These will be dealt with in depth as each particular field comes into closer view. The Renaissance did not display a single uniform growth, but rather a dynamic multi-variable expression in many directions.

The culmination of the late 19th century phase

of the Renaissance was the growth of nationalism. This feature is highly important, and perhaps can be assessed as the element which carried the rest through to fruition. The idea of a nation state to result from the unified efforts of all the provinces became a feasible objective as a result of British achievements within India. The communication links, the administrative equipment, and the unification in the form of one language, were part of the colonial apparatus. Indeed, federalist theory and practise was part of the Imperialist baggage, which historically sowed the seed of its own destruction by providing the ways and means of native succession. This spirit and force of nationalism was the renovating and elevating principle of the Renaissance, and from 1870 through 1914 (and in fact until independence in 1947) education, religion, and the arts, gave substantial attention to the phenomenon of emerging self-rule (Swaraj) in India.

Political expression in this coming of age was split between conservative, liberal, and moderates on the one hand and radical extremists on the other. Though the former trio is still the party (Congress Party) which governs India, there has been significant representation by extremist elements who held from later in the 1800's that British social democracy could not work in India. Though the Government has never been controlled by dissident members, Tilak, Pal, Dayal, Aurobindo, Sen, and

others of extremist persuasion were vocal and influential in the political sphere, and stand out as immensely constructive and respected forces.

The First World War greatly reduced Britain's imperial strength and began a new era in her colonial activity. Indian politics took a new direction after 1917, marking a different phase in national growth. Many of the grand old men of Congress and Letters who had died in the early 1900's were not replaced until the emergence of post-war India. The Golden Age of Vedantism, which was the spiritual florescence of the Renaissance, occurred in the late 1890's and early 1900's. Although aspects of the revival movement continue even to the present day, its principal manifestation and personalities had flourished and passed into history by 1914.

To this point the Renaissance had emphatic concern with education, religion, politics, and philosophy, which were the curriculum of Indian revival. Literature prospered as an aspect of political and religious re-assessment. The graphic arts in general, however, had little stimulus or attention. Music, painting, drama, and sculpture, had no appreciable development during this period, except for a limited resurgence of Bengali drama. Architecture was only the reconstruction in toto of imported styles. Science also had few frontiers for Indians and limited native achievement resulted. In all these areas the Renaissance fervour for knowledge lacked

creative expression, perhaps because of the political and social exigencies of the time, which offered small scope for other interests.

Especially in the arts and architecture there were neither European nor native innovators who had broad enough knowledge or experience to lead or direct new schools of form and expression. Essentially, the early Renaissance areas of creativity were those in which Indians could adequately incorporate something of the western influence, and respond with improvements within the existing *modus operandi*; or if it was different from the traditional, within the framework of the distinctly British system. In other words, what did not happen during the Renaissance was due to the forced nature of the entire phenomenon, essentially restricted and artistically uncreative, and answerable to a suspicious alien overseer.

The period from 1800-1914 was characterized, as has been described, by an eager adaptation to education and learning, an incorporation of new thoughts and values into the thinking of Indians, with resultant social reform; growth of associations and ultimately political participation in the Congress; emergence of a new literature, directed especially after 1870 to nationalist themes; and reform and revival in Hinduism, culminating in the Age of Neovedantism at the turn of the century.

These central themes are supportive of the overall growth of nationalism, which, as it has been mentioned, diverged along moderate and extremist lines. The forms and alliances which characterize the political growth say a great deal about the function of Hindu revivalism and Indian nationalism. Hinduism is a religion whose ultimate theological foundations are not altered by its political ambitions.

Within the body of the discussion of the Renaissance, the following issues appear as important points of understanding. In terms of Indian society, how far reaching was the social reform and education? Whom in the end, did these aspects of the modern age really affect? As we look at political institutions and their development it is important to know who was being represented, and for what reasons and upon what grounds these political institutions were based. In the sphere of religion, what did Hindu revivalism mean to the cultural integrity of the other religions (Buddhism, Jainism, Islam) and of whom was the revival representative?

It has been customary to talk of the Renaissance as if it had swept across India with great force, and had made sweeping advancement its program; changing the fabric of Indian culture, and even the growth of her civilization. This would be true only if we could state that the Renaissance changed the ways of the majority of the people, and

made cultural innovations and developments which markedly altered the face of the society. The Renaissance was in fact confined to a small minority (ca.5%) of the Indian people, and did little in its first 100 years to move outward and encompass the mass of Indian society. It was a phenomenon which remained in one stratum of Indian society, and was expressive of that group's interests and alliances.

In studying the Renaissance, we realize that to appear in the records of the period with a claim to historical importance, an individual had to compete constructively within the areas we have discussed. To do that adherents had to have social status in the traditional Indian hierarchy. They then had to acquire the superimposed qualifications of the English language, a knowledge of international affairs, and otherwise demonstrate suitability and acceptance by the colonial patron, which sought to promote loyal support, not rebellion.

Although the effects of the Renaissance at length penetrated to all strata of Indian society, the movement had to have both leadership and membership from the most privileged ranks of the society to begin with. Those with social advantage kept it by adaptation and assimilation. The Renaissance therefore not only endorsed a native elite which mediated the cultural interface, but at the same time revived the traditional status of a group

which had been obscured and disunited during the period of Muslim rule.

The power and authority traditionally vested in the hands of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas was largely eclipsed before the arrival of the British. India had become a mere remnant of a once well-established, closely knit and well integrated Hindu society. The elite hoped to restore it through the Renaissance, improving and reforming it in the process. The balance required that someone take into their hands the affairs of state, education, religious training, and social reform. This was achieved by those Indians who had traditionally done this job throughout the heritage of the civilization ... the Brahmins, and Kshatriyas.<sup>8</sup> The Renaissance revalidated these castes claims to that position in the society, and effectively helped India to revitalize itself along traditional lines.

It must be remembered that the British imperial program for India required establishment of colonial contact. Successful empires require such support, and in India this particular administrative problem was easily solved. Ideally, the conquered state should have, as India in fact had, an element in its society accustomed to leadership and cooperation with foreign interests, as well as a background of literacy and political moderation. That the situation the British found in India on their

arrival satisfied their recruitment program so neatly was fortuitous for both parties. It made the phenomenon of the Renaissance not only possible, but inevitable.

### III PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHOD

The phenomena present in the Renaissance display a mass of inter-acting data which require methodological portrayal. The choice of an adequate theoretical and methodological model for this purpose suggests a cultural historical approach in order to adequately encompass and relate a continuum of evidence through a span of a hundred and fifteen years.

We can approach the Renaissance from several points of view. As a culture contact response or reaction; as a period of cultural growth with marked characteristics; and as a pattern of cultural development which may represent a type or constant. Viewed as a religious revitalization, or cultural revival, the whole phenomenon could be reduced to smaller parts and studied. Using acculturation theory, or personality theory, it would be possible to explore specific facets of the Renaissance. What I would like to do is attempt to form a holistic picture of the Renaissance as a cultural period - make a macrohistorical survey of the characteristics of the Renaissance, and give an accurate representation of one facet of the cultural pattern.

In this endeavour, the works of A. Kroeber develop an applicable model for our initial approach. History is seen as a progression of phases, with marked features of each, and an underlying cultural growth pattern which gives a meaningful direction to the whole. In the instance of the Renaissance, we have a well-documented historical period which can be readily examined in the light of this model.

In essence, we have established thus far the characteristics of the Renaissance, in its early phases 1800-1914. Now we turn to an examination of the inter-relations of these characteristics. We can augment this further by detailed analysis of the individuals concerned in the Renaissance growth and the role which they played in the era.

Can we perhaps predict what might be found in the Renaissance which can be construed as a pattern, using Kroeber's thesis as our point of departure? Are there symbiotic elements which will be constant for this particular nationalistic growth which has common relations with other situations at other times? Though Kroeber does not himself examine the Renaissance of Modern India, the use of his methodology is suggested by Milton Singer who recognizes "It seems likely that another phase of cultural 'Renaissance', reconstitution and creativity emerges in the Modern period stimulated by encounter with Europe."<sup>9</sup> This

understanding of an important culture period can be completed with some empirical data.

These following statements and conclusions<sup>10</sup> suggested by Kroeber develop a picture of what might be expected in our research here. As regards culture contact in general, at a purely geographic level, Kroeber states "Geographically, a radiating spread of culture growth can usually be traced from a first hearth of focus over the larger area finally occupied."<sup>11</sup> "The spread is perhaps most often from the centre outward; but the original focus may be situated on a geographical margin, and the spread therefore be fanwise rather than radiating. If so, the focus is likely to lie on a frontier exposed to foreign stimulation."<sup>12</sup> We might expect in our case, that emanations would occur from Bengal primarily as well as Bombay and Madras, as these were the areas of profound culture contact.

Regarding nationalism, Kroeber predicts the possible state of affairs. As an elementary statement of infusion of new culture content and nationalism he says, "We can trace a connection between the nationalistic florescence and previous exposure to higher culture. It does not seem to matter whether this exposure was amicable or hostile: it occurred in equal strength."<sup>13</sup>

To some degree, the British subordinated the Indian culture, and did not condone or support a widespread

Indian revival. For this reason much of the early expression of the Renaissance, and even later developments, involved strong western influence. On this matter we have a telling statement. "It is certainly true that high achievements by suppressed nationalities are rather rare. If such a nationality contributes, it is usually through the medium of the culture of the ruling people; like the Irish, who participated in English literature and music."<sup>14</sup>

The possibility that national growth can occur independently of an associated culture growth is unlikely, as is stated simply "Even the more elementary forms of national success presuppose at least some cultural development. Patriotism needs symbols around which it can rally."<sup>15</sup>

When we come to regard the place of the arts in the growth of the Renaissance, we find that literature, (including drama and journalism) predominates. Other arts, such as sculpture and painting, are absent until the 20th Century, and well after nationalism had emerged as a powerful force. The following assertions can perhaps give us an understanding of why this might be. "As compared with the intellectual and aesthetic activities so far examined, (philosophy, science, philology, sculpture, painting), literature is distinctive in two aspects. It is capable of becoming more nationalistic; and its medium is on the whole a less specialized and technical one."<sup>16</sup> Also, "The essential medium of every literature is nothing

more than the speech which is the common possession of all members of the society."<sup>17</sup>

The generalized functioning of phases shows a parallelism in the fields of aesthetic and intellectual endeavour and national growth. In our study of the Renaissance the complimentary nature of these is noticeable. "It is clear that aesthetic and intellectual endeavours resulting in higher values preponderantly realize themselves in temporary bursts, or growths. In all the higher civilizations examined, the same sort of bursts or growths tend to characterize nationalistic development, as expressed in successful political organization and expansion."<sup>18</sup>

The fact that we can discern a pattern and sequence of events in the Renaissance which indicate an interplay of the facets of literature, religion, philosophy, etc., is of considerable importance. The order of succession is not predetermined or mandatory, "There is no marked evidence of an inherent order of succession in which the several cultural activities develop."<sup>19</sup> But we are left with a succession of events, due to the mounting of cumulative cultural energy "That ... growths tend to occur associated may be attributed to the fact that distinctive success in one activity presupposes a high degree of cultural energy, and once it is aroused it is unlikely to remain restricted to a single activity."<sup>20</sup>

In the situation under study, we have a predominant religious motif which underlies, and at times

characterizes, the movement and growth of the Renaissance. This aspect has an historical context which shows perhaps some confirmation here. The following statements are generalized but have a validity nonetheless, "Religion in general precedes aesthetic and intellectual development of note."<sup>21</sup> and, "Religion which is accentuated by powerful drives ... is likely to annex and subordinate the arts and sciences for its own purposes."<sup>22</sup>

Finally, in observing the occurrence of first an adaptive phase of culture growth, which adopted the institutions and the medium of the cultural imposers, followed by a reaction against this, and a seeming disruption in the progressing pattern, there is an observable and historically repeated phenomenon, "Content tends to grow cumulatively, whereas forms are more or less predetermined by their origins. The result is that a certain set of forms may be realized or fulfilled while the content of the culture is still growing. In that event the consequence is a partial dissolution with reconstitution on an ampler scale: after which the patterns may proceed in a new growth or pulse."<sup>23</sup> When we observe nationalism in this light, there can be no doubt that the British mode is representative of the first part, with reconstitution occurring after adjustment is made for traditional content.

The projection of a schema, as with labelling, has inherent limitations. Certainly it is a superior

attitude to approach material without a prejudice or biases which are noticeable blocks to acquiring knowledge. But without some assortment process, and model of the situation at hand, there could be no systematic handling of material. The chosen direction for this thesis is an attempt to order the Renaissance material within the limitations of a format which will adequately demonstrate patterns of growth and culture change. Similarities with other situations may arise, but attempts at comparison will not be made. Within the confines of work done on similar ages by anthropologists and historians (i.e., the recognition of a cultural florescence)<sup>24</sup> the above quoted predictions and generalities ought to be applicable. In this light, methodology and theory both adapt to the factual documentation of what occurred in the Renaissance period 1800-1914.

Kroeber's thesis is based on the historical phenomenon of creativity and genius occurring together in clusters at certain times in history, giving peculiar features to certain ages. As agents of the times, certain persons became recognized as influential and great, owing to the significance of their contribution to the times. In this way, the recognized men and women of history stand out and reflect issues and needs of the times. Though he did not go further in his own analysis of historical figures than their area of contribution, and the time of

their most important work, he laid out an approach to historical data which easily lends itself to amplification and diversity. This is what I intend to do with the expansion of the data on the Renaissance.

As already shown, there were given areas of culture growth which characterized the Renaissance. Within these areas arise groups of individuals who were the cultural figures - innovators, organizers, "geniuses" - and were the brokers of the Renaissance. Leading figures in social reform, educational development, religion, philosophy and literature were the men and women whom history associates with the cultural growth in modern India. These persons constitute the social group which made the Renaissance what and how it was. To know about them is to know what occurred in the era from 1800-1914.

The position of this group, as a mediating elite between Britain and India, as well as the cultural innovators and makers of cultural history, is strategic, and says much about the power intendent in this type of growth situation. The specific cultural response and social background of the group tells us a great deal more than is immediately evident from a look at the events of history at the time. From this vantage point, we should be able to further the analysis of what the Renaissance was, by identifying the leading figures connected with the growth pattern.

It is not difficult to sort out from the historical record the prominent figures of the times, for they are amply recorded. Standing as they do in the light of man's recording of what is important, the men and women of the Renaissance form a composite of individuals which carries in it the characteristics of the age. Within this group, the evident influence of western education, the upper caste and class status which reaffirms the hereditary role of leadership and governance which the Renaissance period required of a portion of Indian society, supports the overall theme of this thesis. The commonality of these factors within the lives of prominent men and women in the end yields a social pattern which is part of the cultural definition of the Renaissance.

The Appendix contains a representative sample of innovators and brokers who were the agents of social change in the period under examination. Elements derived from this will be incorporated as they warrant attention in the description of the cultural processes of the Renaissance. A more substantial review of the findings is reserved for presentation in the concluding chapter.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

- <sup>1</sup>V.A. Smith, OXFORD HISTORY OF INDIA, 1958.
- <sup>2</sup>Anil Seal, THE EMERGENCE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM, 1968, p. 28.
- <sup>3</sup>IBID., p. 36.
- <sup>4</sup>V. A. Smith, OXFORD HISTORY OF INDIA, 1958, pp. 465-480.
- <sup>5</sup>B.R. Purohit, HINDU REVIVALISM AND INDIAN NATIONALISM, 1965, p. 16.
- <sup>6</sup>V.A. Smith, p. 525.
- <sup>7</sup>B.R. Purohit, p. 17
- <sup>8</sup>Anil Seal, EMERGENCE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM, 1968, p. 28.
- <sup>9</sup>Milton Singer, WHEN A GREAT TRADITION MODERNIZES, 1972, p. 268.
- <sup>10</sup>A.L. Kroeber, CONFIGURATIONS OF CULTURE GROWTH, 1963.
- <sup>11</sup>IBID., p. 845.
- <sup>12</sup>IBID., p. 845.
- <sup>13</sup>IBID., p. 792.
- <sup>14</sup>IBID., p. 794.
- <sup>15</sup>IBID., p. 795.
- <sup>16</sup>IBID., p. 453.

<sup>17</sup>IBID., p. 763.

<sup>18</sup>IBID., p. 838.

<sup>19</sup>IBID., p. 843.

<sup>20</sup>IBID., p. 843.

<sup>21</sup>IBID., p. 843.

<sup>22</sup>IBID., p. 801.

<sup>23</sup>IBID., p. 844.

<sup>24</sup>Term coined by Kroeber to describe a peak or "flowering" of culture.

## CHAPTER II

### CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND THEIR SOCIAL EXPRESSION

This chapter will examine the separable courses of cultural activity which together yield the developmental profile of the Indian Renaissance, between 1800 and 1914. Education, political growth, religion and philosophical interpretation, and literature will be investigated separately in order to establish the schema for a total growth configuration. For initial investigation, the four areas noted can be treated in a historical manner, and converted to a processual format as patterns emerge. This methodology will help keep the central theme in focus, as well as delivering comparable units of study within each activity examined.

Though European contact, and especially western education, should be given due recognition as the instigators of the process of Renaissance cultural definition, it must be remembered that what we are examining here is the response to, and adaptation of, this influence by Indians. The same outlook must be applied to political growth, which in many instances evidences the influence of the institutional format of the West, as well as the close reins applied to politics by the British, which curbed anything but the most innocuous procedures.

To what extent the Renaissance exhibited florescence in aesthetic and intellectual values can be

best reviewed in the fields of literature and religious philosophical interpretation. These are closely aligned and committed to the more fundamental areas of cultural activity, (e.g., social reform, and political development) and in many ways reflect a dependence upon the latter for their source and values. But even as they stand alone, the evolution and pattern within each demonstrates the creativity and innovation of the period.

In evaluating each of these cultural activities, and examining their patterns and processes, the theme of national growth ought to be remembered as the ultimate expression of the Renaissance. It is unnecessary to recognize a conscious application of cultural energy in this direction by all participants in the fields discussed, and in fact, the eventual outcome was evidently not anticipated until the Renaissance was well underway. Even then, it was never certain that nationhood and cultural self-expression would be the final result. In fact, however, the cumulative effect of the educational expansion, religious reform and revival, literary rebirth, and political development, resulted in the creation of the modern Indian state. As the investigation proceeds, it will be apparent how these activities interact in the growth configuration of the Renaissance.

## I EDUCATION

### (a) Influences and Development.

The purposes of Indian education as introduced primarily by the Christian missionaries and by the British government, were twofold. In the first instance, the missionaries attacked polytheism and the caste system, spreading western teaching in order to demonstrate the fallacies in Indian culture, and promote Christianity. Though primarily religious in intent, their schools managed to convert few to Christianity; they did, however, plant the seeds of self-appraisal in the minds of the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the British administration, it was important to have educated Indians to fill political, administrative and economic needs of Britain in India. By the middle of the 19th century the Government had taken over from the missionary in the role of educator. As the economic pace of India increased, the political and military subordination of the territory developed the need for an involved bureaucracy to administer political rule.<sup>2</sup>

The arrangement of authority was such that Europeans filled key posts in the state machinery and Indians filled subordinate positions. The establishment of an extensive high school and college system, suited the needs for clerks in government and commerce, lawyers for the new legal system, doctors, technicians, and teachers. This program of anglicization was a part of the dream of

Empire, and it was assumed that common language and education was a political necessity. In addition, imperial Britain conceived of itself as a saviour, destined to civilize the world by proliferation of British culture, education, method, and values.

The objective of the British was assisted at the outset by the aspirations of the Indian elite. The perpetuation of the old style of education was seen by many, especially Ram Mohan Roy, as detrimental to the Indian people, with superstition and ignorance as the lot of those who persisted in the Sanskrit system.<sup>3</sup> The founding of numerous associations for the dissemination of modern thought was a phenomenon which gave further impetus to the growth of an educated cultural elite.

Unfortunately, the process of education was not as enlightening as it might have been, and the trend of anglicization produced some noxious results. The Indians newly acquainted with, and anxious to learn and adopt western thought and method, went to extremes. Branding their own system as barbarous, and accepting the western evaluation of India as "backward", the anglicized Indian created a subculture of mock anglicism in India. Socially unacceptable to both ruler and ruled, they formed a frustrated and isolated fraternity. Unable to attain real leadership in the new movement toward cultural vitality, they were a rootless fragment of an environment which they

condemned and rejected.<sup>4</sup>

The further spread in the use of English, the admiration for British rule, and the dependence on Britain for future development, oriented a large section of literate natives in directions which alienated them from the majority of their own people. Their uncritical subscription to the standards and methods of the new rulers provoked a reaction against the new liberalism which had tended to distort and inflate the merits of western culture. The backlash became an important factor in the growth of nationalism, of anti-British sentiment, and an interest in revival which sought to restore the status of the discredited native society and culture.

Two theories of education were implemented in the first part of the 19th century. One was known as the "Anglicists", the other as the "Orientalists". Macaulay was the outstanding protagonist of the former, with the enthusiastic support of the esteemed and influential Ram Mohan Roy. This group aspired to create a class "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and in intellect".<sup>5</sup> English would be the medium of education.

The second approach was that of the Orientalists who felt that advantages of western science and knowledge among Indians would be enhanced with the addition of Sanskrit and Arabic literature. A division arose in this

school along the lines of language, with one segment (influenced by Hastings and Minto) advocating Sanskrit and Arabic as the medium of instruction, the other (influenced by Munro and Elphinstone) promoting western education taught in vernaculars.<sup>6</sup>

This constant struggle finally ended in 1935 when the Anglicist view triumphed.<sup>7</sup> However, in the Renaissance period up to 1914, the influence of the Orientalists figured strongly in the growth of traditionalism in India.

Education took its major steps forward in the 1880's with large-scale education promoted by the groups already mentioned - missionaries, government, and progressive Indians. The restrictions within the area of education limited the possibilities of development, providing social clubs scope to supplement the general movement.

Education alone did not control admission to all areas of growth. Business, for one, required capital, and unless a college graduate was wealthy, clerkship was his only expectation. Similarly agriculture offered no opportunities. Colleges had no facilities for agricultural science. Absentee landholders, although they might attend college in Bombay or Calcutta, had no ambition to work or improve the land which they controlled.<sup>8</sup>

All education revolved around public services and professions, and this defined the social group which

could supply the recruits. The traditional occupations of the high castes in India were as the administrators and literati of their community. The non-elites could also occupy these positions but with limited social sanction, thus making their participation in the new system minimal.

The Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.) paid the highest salaries, and offered the most prestigious positions in the British system. Entry into this was difficult for Indians as it required residence in England for study and examination. By 1887 Indians had become well versed in the procedure, and the few coveted positions in the I.C.S. had numerous applicants.<sup>9</sup>

This limitation, and other such instances of underfulfillment of needs, created great dissatisfaction among the growing educated elite. There were not enough jobs to absorb the expanding literati. Many individuals who had set their sights on higher goals in the new system had to settle for teaching or clerkship. The legal profession, on the other hand, prospered in this era. By the end of the 19th century the increased volume of regulations and litigations had greatly increased the need for lawyers and judges. English was the language of the courts, and training along western lines mandatory. The growth of the legal profession and the large number of qualified persons available for the positions served to

raise professional standards about 1873. Lawyers who possessed superior qualifications began to demand, and receive, special privileges.<sup>10</sup>

The legal profession had considerable power and influence in the emerging Indian nation. Urban lawyers began to form the political nucleus of India. This growth is evident when we look at the composition of the Indian National Congress, where almost all the presidents in the 1885-1914 period were members of the legal profession.<sup>11</sup>

The modern system of education played a dual and contradictory role in Renaissance India. While it served to meet the political, economic and administrative needs of the British, it also disseminated the political thinking of modern Europe giving a spark to Indian nationalism, in its struggle against British rule.

Modern education stimulated, but did not create the Nationalist Movement. It generated a degree of contempt for western ideas among many Indians, and encouraged contrasting material to formulate the doctrines of Swaraj. Nationalist rationale was generated in the field of classical scholarship, initiated by the Orientalists, and continued by ambitious Indians of the emerging middle class.

The education of the Nationalist leaders generally included some contact with western learning.

The original motivation of this education, i.e., the adaptation to British rule, was repudiated, and other avenues of development, consistent with Nationalist theory and objectives, replaced the subservient direction.

The growth of vernacular schools and classical education in the 1880's and 1890's attests to the stability of tradition within the social context. The re-affirmation of classicism as an answer to the intrusion of the British, including some of the work of the Theosophists<sup>12</sup> and Orientalists, was an integral part of the foundation of Indian nationalism.

The failure of western education to reach the masses was due largely to the coveted status of the positions available to Indians, and the nature of the education imparted. The traditional education never had been a proper enterprise of but a few upper caste individuals, so that the revival of classical scholarship reflected this limitation. In the instance of both areas of education and learning the privileged positions were reserved to the upper classes, and what little information reached the people was through the dedicated effort of privileged individuals, often biased towards nationalism.

## II EDUCATION AND SOCIAL REFORM

Education conferred on the social reform movement a broadened world-view which encouraged Indians to

examine their socio-religious system and discard many of its objectionable features. The abolition of sati,<sup>13</sup> sanction of widow remarriage, and the abolition of child marriage, were improvements derived from humanizing doctrines of the western culture. Documentation as to the precise social effects of these phenomena is lacking, and we can only speculate on the disruption caused by the western "enlightenment" of Indian culture. The fact remains, however, that the remodelling of traditional customs was often excessive. Anglicized Indians' uncritical exhuberence for change provoked a defensive orthodox reaction equally partisan. The social reform movement therefore relates directly to the Hindu reformation, which though initially stimulated by western learning, was in essence an indigenous aspect of a generalized revival phenomenon.

### III POLITICAL GROWTH

#### (a) Moderacy and Extremism

Though the ultimate culmination of the political development of the Renaissance was the achievement of independence in 1947, the early stages of nationalism were divergent and only vaguely directed toward this goal. British administrative policy discouraged all but the mildest native political expression. Even the foundation of the Congress in 1885 was officially countenanced only

because it seemed to offer a safety valve for accumulated grievances which might otherwise find a remedy in rebellion.

It follows from this that the political tools were held by the moderates, and acceptable native political objectives conditioned by compliance with British administrative policy. In this sense, the political apparatus antagonized more than it appeased those elements determined on a course of independence and self-rule.

The cleavage in one direction or another forms the polarity of Indian Renaissance politics. Moderacy and liberalism characterized Congress leadership during its first 30 years. The institution of the Congress was conceived as an instrument to amalgamate effective British administration with the reasonable expectations of the Indian people. Yet the Congress itself was essentially a forum for the talented and newly enculturated upper caste elite, representative of a small, but unified voice. It was atypical in terms of the general population because its membership and operation was by its nature restricted to those who could acquire the ruler's language, western education and training available to a very small minority. Unification of the Indian nation, and consolidation of a popular political base was not of immediate concern to the members of the Congress. Moreover, the expression of demands which might induce criticism and sanction from the British depended on willingness of Congress members to

reflect and support views which might well be at odds with their own self-serving and frequently narrow persuasion.<sup>14</sup>

Although the extremist element in the Congress was never represented in its presidency, it was both vocal and energetic in all political activity. Whereas, by the turn of the century, the Congress wished to comply with, and adapt to, the British influence, the extremists proposed to dispossess the British, and administer India by Indians. The phenomenon of this political cleavage is most interesting in this regard, for it was with the radical political approach that the forces of revivalist Hinduism aligned, while the congressional majority inspired little in what could be called a nativistic realm.

Moderacy and liberalism were conspicuously the products of the first two generations of Western influence after 1800. Radicalism and extremism followed, and can be seen as a reaction to the tide of moderate politics. This action-reaction phenomenon is aligned closely with the similar manifestation in the religious sphere of Renaissance growth - the first period of objectivity and understanding, followed by a period of radical orthodoxy and exclusivism.

These trends form a pattern discernible as the main characteristic of the Renaissance - a movement towards assimilation and adoption of British values and procedures -

followed by dedicated reaction against them. This oscillation was equalized eventually after extended conflicts had moderated the differences and produced a modus vivendi.

The political sphere in the period from 1800-1914 was dominated by upper caste, western educated Hindus of a liberal or moderate ideological stance and an attitude of accommodation to the British. The prevailing caste arrangement and the recent re-affirmation of traditional social segregation continued to obstruct direct participation of the lower caste. Two influences combined against a true democratization - the imported social-political hierarchical system and the confirmed traditional caste structure. Though the latter is heavily criticized in the polemics of many politicians of the period, the real dissolution of caste influences, even at an administrative level, did not eventuate until well into the 20th century.

In the interim, the concessions to reform the caste system were largely rhetorical and more or less sincere. Practical reform through the political apparatus made progress toward lower caste representation slow and uncertain. Gradually, however, popular sentiment, organized and aroused by the extremists against the British, looked to support from the non-elite, bringing into closer contact the hitherto divided segments of Indian society. In this force of unification, the amalgamation of politics and religion played a vital part in

the realization of nationalism.

Formal political agitation began in 1849 in resistance to the imposition of particularly odious racial laws.<sup>15</sup> The British Indian Association<sup>16</sup> was formed by a number of Bengali leaders - Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Raja Digambar Mitter, and others, including Harish Chandra Mukherji, the pioneer of independent journalism in India. The Bombay Association<sup>17</sup> was formed at about the same time under Jaggonath Shankersett and Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the "grand old man" of India. The "Madras Native Association"<sup>18</sup> was formed as the first active group in South India, and became prominent in 1878 under the leadership of C. Subramania Iyer, Ananda Charlu, and others. Another association, the Sarva-Janik Sabha<sup>19</sup> was started in Poona in the 1870's under Krishnaji I. Nulkar and Sitaram Hari Chiponkar. Up to the 1870's the political Sabhas were not of an organized or coherent type. They had no common political creed or any programme which was constructive even at a provincial level. They existed in order to protect vested interests, only occasionally criticizing the government as part of their defensive posture.

Popular political pressure of the period resided in mainly two areas; one was with sympathetic Parliamentary members in England, Burke, Henry Fawcett, and Charles Bradlawgh to mention three. The other was the growth of the press and the increasingly important role it

played in spreading information to the general public. In 1885 there were 478 newspapers<sup>20</sup> in India, the majority printed in the vernacular languages.

In 1876, the Indian Association<sup>21</sup> was formed in Calcutta by Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendra Nath Bannerji. This was the first radical political institution and grew out of the repressiveness of Lord Lytton's administration. Unlike the British Indian Association, which was confined to the landed aristocracy, the Indian Association, supported by the political awareness of the press, created a new middle-class political consciousness.

The first political campaign in the history of the Nationalist movement was begun by Babu Bannerji over the reduction of the age limit for the I.C.S. examination.<sup>22</sup> Throughout North India, political campaigning attracted large crowds, and the following year (1878) a tour of South India brought together the first all-India agreement on a common political platform.

The political developments of the 1880's crystallized the difference between Indians and Anglo-Indians. The Anglo-Indians chose a parasitic attachment to British society and drew apart from Indian culture. Indians with a tendency to self-reliance looked to their own community for political action and social reform. This period shows the birth of the most profound national sentiment, the "mother"<sup>23</sup> cult and its allied sacred mantra "Bande

Mataram".<sup>24</sup> Political militancy in the form of "leagues" was the direct and applied manifestation of Indian self-defense. Politically moderate leagues equally committed to greater self-expression for Indians, but with a desire for accommodation to the British developed. The National League<sup>25</sup> of 1884 was established by Sir Jyotindra Mohan Tagore, and the Mahajana Sabha<sup>26</sup> was established under G. Subramania Iyer in 1884. 1885 saw the founding of the Bombay Presidency Association<sup>27</sup> under the leadership of Badruddin Tyabji, Kashinath Teland and Pherozeshah Mehta. In 1883 a national conference was held in Calcutta, with a large number of delegates from across India. A second conference in 1885, largely a Bengali gathering, terminated prematurely at the announcement of the first meeting of the National Congress at Bombay.

(b) The Congress.

The establishment of the National Congress was due largely to the work of Allan Octavian Hume working in conjunction with Lord Dufferin and Indian members of the theosophical society. Himself a theosophist, and a devoted servant of India, Hume worked diligently for the formation of a political body which would serve an "educated India".<sup>28</sup>

The Congress served several purposes. Firstly it relieved pressure on the British administration by

giving Indians an arena for their complaints and differences.<sup>29</sup> In this it was successful, the Congress formally acknowledging the benefits of British rule in its first meeting.<sup>30</sup> This tone of accommodation characterized the Congress throughout its history to 1917.

As its second purpose, Congress gave Indians a place and a method for petitioning on grievances. This too proved successful, and through the proper organizing of bureaucratic channels the Congress was enabled to refine, consolidate, and communicate its deliberations. Historians concede that congressional activity in fact had little influence in the actual day to day governing of India, although its general and long term effect was decisive.

The final and most important function of the Congress was to confirm in the minds of Indians a sense of participation in the beneficial institutions of British rule. Without a body such as the Congress, Indians would be oppressed subjects without representation, a mutilation of the imperial image. The Congress in this sense was little more than tokenism, heavily criticized for its subservience by the extremist nationalists. It was not until 1915 that there was a concerted effort within the Congress to support Home Rule, and seriously attack the principles of imperialism and Britain's right to govern India.

The liberal hopes and aspirations of the National

Congress, and the generation of western-educated, upper caste Indians, was severely challenged with the growth of terrorism and radical agitation. The sons of the intellectual and cultural elite of men born in the 1840's grew to be the "angry young men" of the 1890's and turn of the century India. Their feelings toward the Congress were scathing and critical. They saw their fathers' generation as uncritical puppets of the British administration. The accommodation to foreign rule, and the acceptance of British culture and custom accorded so readily by the older generation, was completely abhorrent to their successors.

The religious revival of the Arya Samaj, and the literary revival of Bengal were incorporated into the political field of extremist nationalism. Armed with the ideology of the Hindu tradition, and impelled by the idea of national self-realization, the radical movement attempted to remove the pall of apathy and compliance as epitomized by the Congress.

However, a broad base could not be built on the esoteric revivalism of high-caste India monism. Though the Extremists aspired to the cause of energizing the masses, they could not do so in a way which appealed to the Hinduism of rural India. This gap was sufficient to force the attempt at a large cultural movement to manifest itself as a phase of terrorism, which lasted

from 1897 through the First World War.

This period witnessed both the Punjab and Bengal riven by internal strife. The Punjab Land Alienation Act, and the Partition of Bengal, 1905, aroused the growing forces of Hindu Traditionalism, allied with militant nationalism, which began to displace the Brahminical and upper class influence. This alliance of popular causes marshalled the support of the lower castes of the regions; and it was evident by the First World War that Brahminism could no longer monopolize the authority of native India.

#### IV RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION

Ram Mohan Roy was the pioneer in religious reform of the Renaissance.<sup>31</sup> His universalistic thinking and knowledge of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity made of him a prime figure in social reform as well. As he found fault in all orthodoxy and criticized Hindu polytheism as well as the trinity, both the Brahmins and the missionaries were against him. Forced by this pressure to go along his own lines, he founded his first religious institution - the Atmiya Sabha<sup>32</sup> - in 1815, and his most important, the Brahmo Samaj,<sup>33</sup> in 1828.

Roy first brought the sacred books of the Hindus into public light and published, in Bengali, Vedantic and Upanishadic literature. The Brahmo Samaj was the vehicle for his views on Hindu society and culture. Among other

issues, Roy was opposed to child marriage, hereditary priesthood, the caste system and inequality of women.

The work of the Brahmo Samaj was continued by Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) who was a moderate in matters of social reform. A more active and modern thinker, Keshab Chandra Sen, a member of the Brahmo Samaj, worked in the 1850's for more radical social action, attacking Brahmoism on the basis of its still closed and ritual-bound nature. This led to a schism in 1868, and the radical wing led by Sen founded the Bharatiya Brahmo Samaj.<sup>34</sup>

The new Brahmos, much against the will of orthodox Hindus, worked on breaking down the hitherto restrictive character of Hinduism. The New Marriage Act, legalizing Brahmo and civil marriages was successfully passed, and the 1870 establishment of the Indian Reform Association did further work improving the status of women and education.

A further division occurred in 1878 when Sen's daughter was married according to orthodox rites to the Maharaja of Kootch Behar. Many felt that Sen had violated the new tenets of Brahmoism, and had reverted to the old ways. Though in some instances the Brahmo Samaj inspired Hindus to feel proud of their religion and culture, the general effect was to criticize Hinduism and give greater credence to the ideologies of Christianity. Though never

becoming baptized Christians, they quoted its morality and ethics to attack the foundations of Hinduism.

The final schism led to the downfall of the Brahmo Samaj, which by the time of the Congress in 1885, had only about 8,000 members, and organization was weak.<sup>35</sup> However, many of the early leaders of the Congress were Brahmo Samajists, and historians agree that this religious movement laid the groundwork for a new political India.

There arose a counter-movement in religion with the establishment of the Arya Samaj in 1875 at Bombay.<sup>36</sup> Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) was the founder, and was labelled a revolutionary by the orthodox. He criticized idolatry, repudiated the caste system as it then existed, questioned the authority of the priesthood, and wished to remove the restrictions on vedic knowledge for availability to all Hindus. He worked for the education of women. The founding of Dayananda College by the Arya Samaj was a reaction against the slow acculturation process going on, with a call for national literature and education in the vernacular languages. It also claimed that the study of sanskrit was a necessity, and that the moral and spiritual truths of Hinduism should universally be recognized and practiced.

As compared with the basis of the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj must be considered as less advanced and more reactionary. It did have appeal for a greater number of Indians due to the emphasis on Hinduism, albeit reformed

and renovated, and the fostering of traditional values rather than imported or foreign ideas. In 1911, it had 243,000 members.<sup>37</sup>

The Ramakrishna Mission, based on the teachings of the Bengali Saint Ramakrishna (1836-1886) and forwarded by the diligent work of Swami Vivekanada (1863-1902) is the final stage of revivalism of the 1800-1914 Renaissance period. Based on Hindu scriptures, it nonetheless preached the unity of all religions, and tolerance was at the foundation of the movement. It is an association which has spread in the west, and has been extremely influential in the modern understanding of Indian religion.<sup>38</sup>

#### IVa. THE PROCESS OF REFORM

The early reformers felt that Indian society needed reconstruction and that the adoption of western ideas and institutions would be enough to effect the change. This, however, brought about a neglect of the essential character of Indian society, and a reaction was inevitable. The revivalist movement which was set in motion as an attempt to de-anglicize India, promoted the use of local vernacular to educate and communicate with the people. It had for this reason a greater appeal to the masses, and implications of a real egalitarian principle. This quality of democratic persuasion did not distinguish

leaders of the previous reform period, who usually spoke English, and habitually criticized the Hindu traditions.

The Arya Samaj may be considered as the strongest of the revivalist movements. Dayananda was most effective in his return to the Vedas as the source of Hinduism of the times. The doctrinal basis of the Arya Samaj made this point clear in its basic precepts:

- (a) to recall India to the forsaken Vedic paths
- (b) to preach the Vedic gospel throughout the whole world. "Back to the Vedas", was the watchword of Dayananda.<sup>39</sup>

The social programmes of the Arya Samaj were also in line with this process of revival. Shuddi - meaning purification - was the proselytizing aspect of the Samaj. Non-Hindus, or Hindus who had converted to other faiths, were encouraged to join. This work was much resented by the Muslims. Sangathan - union - was the second principle which claimed the solidarity of Hindus and worked to formulate the conscious cultural brotherhood of Hinduism. Needless to say these doctrines drew a line between the Arya Samajists and non-Hindus.<sup>40</sup>

The work of revival was assisted by foreign elements, and especially the work of the Theosophical Society. Founded in New York in 1875, by Madame H. Blavatsky and H. Olcott, the Society gave considerable

credibility and importance to Hinduism and Buddhism and thus found ready audience among educated Indians. Annie Besant, once president of the National Congress wrote:

"When Mme. H.P. Blavatsky and Col. H.S. Olcott, the early founders of the Theosophical Society, first set foot on Indian soil, what was the condition of India and of Hinduism? Scepticism and materialism had eaten out the life of the nation. The crowds of the so-called English-educated class were followers of Huxley, Mill and Spencer, and had entirely forgotten their literature; were contemptuous of the past and hence hopeless for the future; they were copying English ways, English manners, filling their houses with English furniture to the destruction of Indian arts and crafts. They had lost all national spirit. De-spiritualisation had brought about national degeneracy. There was no activity of national life, no pulsing of the national heart ... Colonel Olcott and Mme. Blavatsky saw that not until India recognised the value of its ancient faith could there be any bond of unity among the Indians, separated by provincial jealousies and hatreds. So they began with the revival of religion; they pointed out the value of Hindu teachings; they held up the Vedas as the glory of India, proclaimed the value of Indian thought and the priceless heritage of the Indian people; until at last the Indians began once more to pride themselves on their past, and to realise that the Hindu scriptures were not the babblings of children or the fancies of savages, but were the foundation of a mighty system, the glory of the past and the life of the future."<sup>41</sup>

However, the working of the Theosophical Society had such an other-worldly nature that it was difficult to see how the Indian masses could associate themselves with such esotericism. In fact, the composition of the Society was almost entirely English-educated middle class Indians. It distinguished itself also from other revivalist movements in its stance on radical reform or revolution. It

espoused the "downward filtration" theory, that changes come from the top, and reform movements must first capture the support of the educated minority.

In direct contrast to this was the Ramakrishna Mission, which grew out of the soil of India, and was of a classical nature. Ramakrishna was a common man who had traditional mystical insight. His major disciple, Vivekananda, was an intellectual who felt that the simple message of true revelation ought to be carried to the rest of the world. With this principle he gained western recognition and his attendance at the 1893 Parliament of Religions in Chicago brought new confidence and pride to Indians and Indian scholarship. By the turn of the century, a total transformation had occurred in the self-image of India. No longer the student of the West, or the child of Imperialism, it saw itself as an intellectual and spiritual partner in the universal search for human salvation.

The political divisions within the religious movements cited here illustrate the interweaving of social and theological elements which characterize Hindu intellectualism generally and its renaissance particularly. Nationalism and India self-identity slanted the energy of the Arya Samaj, and the popular work of Vivekananda and the Rama Krishna Mission. The inspiration provided by the religious teachings and philosophical interpretation

by the work of these groups gave extreme nationalism its foundation for action. The work of the Brahma Samaj and the Theosophists had quite the opposite effect. They maintained a secure and conservative rein on political sentiments and fostered a conciliatory and adaptive attitude toward British institutions.

Reform turned to revival in the 1870's, as Indians grew increasingly aware of the exploitative nature of British Rule. It was apparent that one element of the society had sacrificed Indian culture for adherence to western values to the disadvantage of orthodox strength. Revival by concerned Indians worked to restore a balance and reinforce traditional ascendancy. The forces of the Revival eventually assumed a counter-reformation posture in the rejection of western values. Even scientific learning did not escape the anti-western backlash in the revivalist obscurantism of this era. In Bengal this period of revolt, especially focusing upon the issue of British land redistribution, became an expression and a test of this new traditionalist/nationalist cooperation.

#### IVb MUSLIMS AND THE REVIVAL

The Renaissance initiated the final separating process of Hinduism and Islam. While the periods of reformation and revival in Hinduism were taking place, Indian Islam was experiencing its own changes. It would

be useful here to describe these and explain their relation to the Renaissance.

Islam and Hinduism had been co-existing on fragile terms for several generations before 1800. Attempts at rapprochement were frequently undertaken, but the general state of relations was one of antagonism and disunity at the time the British arrived. The Muslims hoped the western invasion would improve their relative position. The adjustment to British Rule substantially paralleled the pace and style of Hindu accommodation of colonial imperialism.

Syed Ahmad Khan<sup>42</sup> (1817-1878) was the Muslim leader who had the greatest influence in the 19th century. He felt strongly that Indian Muslims should accept western culture and reform themselves with the aid of British influence. He based his reforms on religious literature - especially the Koran. He was a cosmopolitan, and open-mindedly approached religion with the idea that the underlying tenets in all faiths amounted to unitarian agreement.

The Indian Muslims cited historical authority in their efforts at reformation, and argued for identity with western civilization on the premise that western science and modern liberalism had their roots in Islam. Muslim reform shared with nascent Hinduism its middle and upper class orientation. To successfully adapt to the British economic system, and cultivate opportunities

to participate in the colonial reorganization of India, the Muslims followed the pattern of accommodation and collaboration set by their Hindu neighbours.

The reform movement of Sir Syed was absorbed by revivalism, under the influence of Amir Ali.<sup>43</sup> Resembling Dayananda in his approach, he also displayed a certain inconsistency in his philosophy. For example, he espoused liberalism, rationalism and tolerance, but he also defended orthodoxy in its exclusion of women from religious affairs. The Ali Garh movement, an outgrowth of the Naduvatul Ulema Institution founded at Lucknow in 1874 was a further extension of the revivalist tendency.<sup>44</sup>

Finally the Ahmadiya Movement,<sup>45</sup> under Mirza Shulam Ahmad, succeeded in keeping the revival at a peak during the period of 1890-1908. Challenged by the West, in the pattern of the Hindu confrontation, Muslims strove to re-assert equality with western thought and superiority within their native environment.

The social and political effects of revivalism were unfortunate, if we regard the eventual disunity among Muslims and Hindus as a failure to close ranks against foreign rule independent of their own cultural re-affirmation. The revival bred sectarianism and bigotry among both Hindus and Muslims. The search for historical justification vis-à-vis British culture naturally looked to different origins which at the same time rekindled

ancient animosities.

This phenomenon can be attributed not only to the historical differences between Islam and Hinduism, but also to the manipulations and tactics of colonial rule. Without going into the political philosophy of "divide and conquer", it is sufficient to say that the British discouraged subordinate unity as a presumptive menace to colonial rule. The eventual emergence of separate states for the Muslims completed this culture alienation, an eventuality which in any event lay dormant within both Islam and Hinduism awaiting only the appropriate historical context to manifest itself.

The religious sphere displayed a phase development which was ultimately paralleled in the political arena. This correspondence was demonstrated throughout the period under review. In religion the response to the challenge of Christianity displayed initial resistance, followed by defense through imitation, and finally to self-confidence, and reassertion of tradition. Other classifications of the process (e.g. Farquhar)<sup>46</sup> see the opening phase of social reform promoted by Christian influence, checked by reference to older beliefs and finally developing to complete re-assertion of historical doctrine. These processes are clearly exhibited in the succession of Hindu movements - the Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj being the first phase of reform, followed

by the Arya Samaj which worked to slow the tide, and finally the Ramakrishna Mission which arrested it. Similarly in Islam the movement of Sir Syed Khan, followed by Amir Ali, and finally ending in the Ahmadiya movement, demonstrates an identical sequence.

In politics the early phase of the Congress was led by moderates, with many leaders reflecting an allegiance to western thought as expressed by the Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj. The growth of nationalism as an Indian cultural movement came with the increasing influence of the Arya Samaj. Violent nationalism, and the rejection of western ideas and values, culminated at the turn of the century in the high point of revivalism as reflected in the movements of the Arya Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission.

The influence of these groups may be also evaluated for the relative effect of reform and revivalism on their common audience. The data shows that on the whole, the leaders of the reform and revival movements derived from the superior caste and class of Indian society. However, the social base of the Reform was much narrower than that of the revival, effecting no general social improvement. In contrast, the leaders of the revival of upper caste and emerging middle-class status, by defending tradition implied identity with the broad social base of Indian society. However, it is also true that the revival had its greatest influence in the upper strata of educated Indians rather than among the masses. This

situation indicates that reliable support for social change would probably derive from some third influence in Indian society, which in fact occurred after World War I.

The power contest between differing groups was at the same time competition between Indians for the influence and coveted positions within the British system. The surplus of applicants for the positions available embittered the contest, and increased the friction between the social strata - a rivalry which stimulated and deepened sectarian divisions. Moreover, the dynamics of this process of social adjustment emphasized the central fact of Indian development - the inseparability of religion and politics as a controlling feature of Indian cultural change.

#### IVc OTHER INDIAN FAITHS: Parsee, Jain, Buddhist.

The Parsee community centred in Gujerat and Bombay was both wealthy and influential in Indian 19th Century society. Prominent community leaders, with the acceptance of western culture, opened educational institutions and participated in European business ventures. Reform movements began in 1851 with the Rahmumai Mazdaznan Sabha, founded by young men newly graduated from Elphinstone College, Bombay; among the founders was Dadabhai Naoroji, later to become Congress' second president.<sup>47</sup>

Reform was centred on community and religious issues and western education and values were recognized as a boon. Similar to both Hinduism and Islam in its process of reaction to western influence, a traditional revival was engendered. The Rahe Rust or "True Way" society was established in the late 1860's by Zoroastrians who felt that modern influences were eroding the religious base. With the aid of the Theosophical Society, this conservative group formed a separate and antagonistic element in the Parsee community. The ultimate conflict between the reform and revival sects marred conferences arranged to attempt a program for community reform in 1910 and 1911.<sup>48</sup>

The Jains, like the Parsees, form a small, but prosperous group within Indian society. Jain religion, in the centuries prior to colonial rule, had lost its cohesion with Hinduism absorbing many followers, as well as influencing Jain doctrine. With the advent of the Renaissance, the educated men of the community held that both modern and traditional educations must collaborate in order to end this assimilation into Hinduism. The three sects within Jainism, the Digambara, Svetambara and Sthanakavasis motivated by the cultural influence of European education held reform conferences in 1893, 1903 and 1906, respectively.<sup>49</sup> The work of the Jain Young Men's Association, fostering contacts in Europe and

promoting schools and libraries, did much for the forwarding of Jain doctrines up to 1914. Jainism does not evidence the ideological struggles established by the reform-revival process.

Finally, Buddhism under the influence of the learned Singalese Anagarika Dharmapala, (born 1864) together with Krispasaran Mahathera (born 1865) was subject to reform in Bengal in the 1880's. The reform promoted a reorientation to traditional texts, and established links with other Buddhist centres outside of India. The Mahabodhi Society was founded by Dharmapala in Ceylon, and opened a centre in Calcutta, 1892. The Bengal Buddhist Association was founded by Krispasaran in the same year. The literate urban class benefitted from these activities but the uneducated hill people and villagers were left largely untouched.<sup>50</sup>

## V LITERATURE

### (a) Pre-eminence of the Bengal Renaissance.

The literary growth of Renaissance India was an index, if not a mirror, of the times in which it flourished. Developing as it did in the forefront of artistic endeavour, it reflected the theme of nationalism most completely after the 1870's, and became a vital instrument in progress towards autonomy. The stages of literary growth is another phenomenon which charts the pattern of

the Renaissance.

The literary forms and ideas of the early Renaissance period evidence the stimulating influence of the contact with the West. Though the innovative characteristics of Indian literature demonstrate the creative capacity within the culture, it was conspicuously energized by the new education in this field. Notably, this first new phase in literature developed in Bengal, and was the parent of modern Bengali literary prose. The father of this movement is Ram Mohan Roy,<sup>51</sup> who used Bengali prose for the first time to express higher thought and philosophy. His concern with religion and reform (not yet nationalistic at this stage) prompted him also to compose songs and religious hymns in Bengali. The range of interest and expression expanded into all cultural areas as the interest in new education widened literary horizons.

The Bengal Renaissance, though in itself a minor cultural florescence, contributed to the total aesthetic growth of India, and Bengali literature had an important bearing on the development of Indian nationalism and politics. Between 1865-1875 many poets and novelists arose. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, who was one of the foremost authors, also initiated Sanskrit in Calcutta University, and re-opened the study of ancient Indian literature. This gave the educated of Bengal a literature<sup>52</sup>

which began to challenge the best of Europe. Akshay Kumar Datta (1820-86) and Vidyasagar raised Bengali to the level of a literary and scientific language. The publication *Tattwabodhini Patrika*,<sup>53</sup> edited by Datta, was a landmark in the annals of Bengali literature in the 1840's. Vidyasagar and Datta were both reformers with different styles, but the same social orientation.

Keshub Chandra Sen, a student of traditional texts, was the exponent of Brahmoism in English, and raised the British eyes to the eloquence of the Upanishads. As a "swarthy prophet" he helped give national consciousness and pride to India, and began to stem the tide of acculturation and assimilation. Other literateurs, Michael Madhusudan Dutt<sup>54</sup> of Bengal, who wrote the first modern epic in Bengali, and Ranglal Bannerji, who wrote of thrilling tales in Rajasthan, stirred up the patriotic pride of Indians. Deenabandra Mitra, in "*Neel Darpana*", portrayed the darker side of British rule in a depiction of the hardships of the Assam peasantry.<sup>55</sup> Hem Chandra Bannerji, poet and song writer, wrote of the political indignities of India and finally, the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterji, with the influence of his monthly paper "*Bhanga Darshana*", completed the field of nascent literature which gave a feeling of national self-respect and pride to the people of India. Chatterjee's works glorified Hinduism's defiance of Muslim power, while

espousing revivalism. His stance was that of social reaction against western cultural domination, raising nationalism to the place of religion in the minds of Hindus.<sup>56</sup>

Dramatic composition also saw its birth in Bengali, in 1854. Ramnarain Tarkalankar<sup>57</sup> published "Kulina-Kula Sarvasva", an attack on the social evils of polygamy. This trend in drama continued throughout the next 20 years, when the nationalistic theme began to displace the generalities of social reform.

At the same time as Bengali literature was developing its own format, the missionaries and the Government were energetically translating English works into the vernacular. The body of this material was religious and scholarly, and appealed on the whole to the rank of educated society which could absorb such material. Fort William College was founded at Calcutta in 1800 for the purpose of training English civilians in Bengali and Sanskrit. Its students not only produced basic works such as grammars and dictionaries, but also initiated the production of instructive and generalized material which stimulated the growth of indigenous literature. Hindi was also influenced and reoriented by the work carried on at Fort William College. (Bible, 1809 in Hindi).<sup>58</sup>

Traditionally, as with Indian literature generally, this art form had been monopolized by poetry.

Poetry continued to flourish until 1860, largely under the patronage of the chiefs of Bundelkand, Jaipur and other places. Outstanding contributors were Padmakar (1753-1833), famous for the two works "Jagat Vinod" and "Ganga Lahari", devotional works of conspicuous merit. Giridhar Das (1833-1860) was another notable figure in Hindi poetry. Hindi prose began with the works of three leading writers, Lallulal and Sadac Mishra, whose recognized works are "Prem Sagar", and "Nasiketopakyan", respectively, and Insha Allah Khan who produced "Rani Ketki Ki Kahani".<sup>59</sup>

The advent of the lithographic press in 1837 at Delhi gave enormous impetus to publishing generally, and greatly increased the availability of Hindi literature. The first newspaper in Hindi was published in 1826.<sup>60</sup> By the 1860's, Hindi literature had begun to manifest the trend to nationalism and revivalism. Swami Dayananda, founder of the Arya Samaj, formulated and published his ideas in Hindi. Finally, this era produced the distinguished author Bhartenov Harischandra (1850-1885), whose plays, poetry and articles marked the birth of national consciousness in India, and earned him recognition as "the father of modern Hindi literature".

The quest for a unifying language in India is noticeable in the various attempts made to use English, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Marratti, in the expression of

nationalistic sentiment. In this regard, regional interests were emerging as a force which in many instances competed with nationalism. The use of English as the official language of administration conflicted with efforts to raise the status of the vernaculars. The effectiveness of nationalistic propaganda, as it began to emerge in the literature of the Renaissance, was qualified by the language barrier which existed between educated regional groups, and the literary gap which separated the masses from its traditional leadership.

#### Vb. THE EFFECTS OF LITERARY GROWTH

The phenomenon, the literary gap, is of particular importance in understanding why a Renaissance activity, such as literature, could be confined to the upper strata of Indian society, and even separate Hindus from Muslims. The process which brought modernity and innovation to literary endeavour conditioned and isolated a community which created and maintained a complete, if involuntary monopoly on the activity. The effect of the Renaissance on literature was primarily to create forms of speech, grammar and pronunciation adapted to English and subsequently Sanskrit language models. The infusion of western culture brought prose, novel, poetic and dramatic styles into the sphere of native languages, altering their essential non-literate (verbal) nature in

consequence. The creation of a literati which through familiarity with these new styles began to adapt and innovate the native tongues, slowly divorced the new creation from the realm of popular speech.

Likewise, the classicist revival, which gave Sanskrit a new status in the Renaissance, contributed further to the movement of literature away from the common people. Books, newspapers and formal speech, conducted in Hindi or Bengali were therefore not only intended for a literate public, but one which had adapted to, and could appreciate the nuances of modern interpretation. This situation is evident particularly in Bengali, where the Renaissance was considered most complete: "in no other speech of India is the literary tongue so widely divorced from that of ordinary conversation as in Bengali".<sup>61</sup>

Renaissance literature possessed the elementary disadvantage of creating an elite which could only become more widely separated from the illiterate, the more it accepted new styles and innovated with the additions. For nationalism, the way back to the people, as mentioned previously, was blocked by a slowly growing language barrier. Impelled by the need for a common tongue, yet stifled by rivalry or prejudice, the popular movements only reached social groups which shared their language.

The antagonism of Muslim groups, who shared a common language with Hindus in several areas, was

increased by these borrowings from Sanskrit and English. The distinctions which began to interfere not only between caste and class relations and regional groups, but also between ethnic groups, were eventual results of the literary Renaissance at the turn of the century. Though a process of adaptation was being brought about within the rural, verbal traditions, this was much slower and less developed than manifestations at the literate level.

The development of the literate tradition was aided by the upgrading of educational facilities in the rural regions. During the period of 1800-1914, this progress was very slow, and favour was shown to exploitation of urban centres as sources of both general and technical literacy. As India's population at this time was essentially rural, most of the nation remained illiterate. It was not until later, in the 20th century, that this imbalance was redressed. A pioneer in both literature and education who is worthy of mention here is Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) whose poetry and prose won universal acclaim. Awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, he did much to interpret Bengal and India to the West.

Literature, religion and philosophical interpretation, political growth and education do not exhaust the areas in which cultural activity was evident. They are, however, the essential components of the Renaissance

growth configuration which provided the medium for Hinduism's cultural reassertion. The processes operating in this social and cultural change will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND THEIR SOCIAL EXPRESSION.

- <sup>1</sup>A.R. Desai, SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF INDIAN NATIONALISM, 1966, p. 139.
- <sup>2</sup>IBID., p. 140
- <sup>3</sup>R.C. Majumdar, GLIMPSES OF BENGAL IN THE 19TH CENTURY, 1960, p. 31.
- <sup>4</sup>The origins and growth of the Anglo-Indians. Chapter 1, V.R. Gaikwad, THE ANGLO-INDIANS, 1967.
- <sup>5</sup>Desai, 1966, p. 139.
- <sup>6</sup>J.N. Farquhar, MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT IN INDIA, 1967, pp. 5-14.
- <sup>7</sup>In 1935, Governor General Lord Bentinck dedicated all funding to British education.
- <sup>8</sup>Anil Seal, THE EMERGENCE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM, 1968, p. 115.
- <sup>9</sup>IBID., p. 118.
- <sup>10</sup>IBID., p. 127.
- <sup>11</sup>See Appendix 1
- <sup>12</sup>A complete discussion of that work in J.N. Farquhar, MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN INDIA, 1967, p. 208-290.
- <sup>13</sup>Immolation of a man's widow upon his funeral pyre.
- <sup>14</sup>A short commentary on this situation is to be found in D. Argov, MODERATES AND EXTREMISTS IN THE INDIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, 1883-1920, 1967, pp. 30-58.

- 15 The "Black Act" - deprivation of the Indians' right of appeal to supreme court.
- 16 S.R. Mehrotra, THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1971, p. 51.
- 17 IBID., p. 59.
- 18 Anil Seal, THE EMERGENCE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM, 1968, p. 198.
- 19 Mehrotra, 1971, p. 405.
- 20 P. Narain, PRESS AND POLITICS IN INDIA, 1970, p.8.
- 21 S.R. Mehrotra, THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1965, p. 164.
- 22 S.R. Mehrotra, THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1965, pp. 274-278.
- 23 The cult of Kali, the Goddess of destruction, and mother of strength. Worship of her, and the symbolic identification of Kali with India, was meant to inspire destruction of the British.
- 24 "Hail to the Motherland".
- 25 Mehrotra, 1971, p. 151.
- 26 IBID. p. 404
- 27 S.R. Mehrotra, THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1965, p. 403.
- 28 S. Ghose, THE RENAISSANCE TO MILITANT NATIONALISM IN INDIA, 1969, p. 128.
- 29 A.R. Desai, SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF INDIA NATIONALISM, 1966, p. 319.
- 30 IBID., p. 321

- <sup>31</sup>J.N. Farquhar, MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN INDIA, 1967, p. 29.
- <sup>32</sup>IBID., p. 31
- <sup>33</sup>IBID., p. 34
- <sup>34</sup>A description of these developments is to be found in N.S. Bose, THE INDIAN AWAKENING AND BENGAL, 1960, pp. 80-105.
- <sup>35</sup>K.P. Karunakaran, RELIGION AND POLITICAL AWAKENING, 1965, p. 50.
- <sup>36</sup>IBID., p. 63.
- <sup>37</sup>IBID., p. 54.
- <sup>38</sup>B.G. Ray, RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN MODERN BENGAL, 1965, pp. 33-57.
- <sup>39</sup>K.P. Karunakaran, RELIGION AND POLITICAL AWAKENING, 1965, p. 65.
- <sup>40</sup>IBID., p. 66.
- <sup>41</sup>IBID., p. 69.
- <sup>42</sup>A.R. Desai, SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF INDIAN NATIONALISM, 1966, p. 395.
- <sup>43</sup>B.G. Ray, RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN MODERN BENGAL, 1965, p. 185.
- <sup>44</sup>IBID., p. 186.
- <sup>45</sup>K.P. Karunakaran, RELIGION AND POLITICAL AWAKENING, 1965, p. 81.
- <sup>46</sup>A model developed for his study of the genesis of religious movements in the 19th century.
- <sup>47</sup>J.N. Farquhar, MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN INDIA, 1967, pp. 81-91.

- <sup>48</sup>J.N. Farquhar, MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN INDIA, 1967, p. 344.
- <sup>49</sup>B.G. Ray, MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN BENGAL, 1965, p. 324.
- <sup>50</sup>IBID., pp. 161-172.
- <sup>51</sup>N.S. Bose, THE INDIAN AWAKENING AND BENGAL, 1960, p. 198
- <sup>52</sup>K.K. Datta, DAWN OF RENASCENT INDIA, 1969, p. 198.
- <sup>53</sup>IBID., p. 39.
- <sup>54</sup>N.S. Bose, THE INDIAN AWAKENING AND BENGAL, p. 207.
- <sup>55</sup>IBID., p. 211.
- <sup>56</sup>B.R. Purohit, HINDU REVIVALISM AND INDIAN NATIONALISM, 1965, pp. 72-79.
- <sup>57</sup>N.S. Bose, THE INDIAN AWAKENING AND BENGAL, 1960, p. 202.
- <sup>58</sup>K.K. Datta, DAWN OF RENASCENT INDIA, 1969, p.55.
- <sup>59</sup>IBID., p. 54.
- <sup>60</sup>IBID., p. 54.
- <sup>61</sup>Anil Seal, EMERGENCE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM, 1968, p. 47.

CHAPTER III

AUROBINDO GHOSE: A PERSONAL CONFIGURATION

Aurobindo Ghose figures in the history of modern India as an exemplification of qualities which distinguished the leaders of nationalism appearing after reform was yielding to the reaction of traditionalism. His personal configuration as a culture type is substantiated by the numerous and varied qualifications which have been reviewed in this thesis, and delineation of him as a culture broker is therefore a description and summary of traits common to other personalities which abound in this period.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose who was born at Calcutta on the 15th of August, 1872, and died at Pondicherry on the 5th of December 1950, participated in India's great modern cultural movement, the Renaissance. He appears historically as a prime mover in the national consciousness of the emerging Indian state, a social philosopher, and interpreter of the ancient traditions of Hinduism. In his lifetime, India emerged from colonialism to self-rule, and his contribution to the spirit of the struggle for Indian autonomy is remembered by the love and reverence in which he is held by both Indians and foreigners. To show how he was a part of the social development of India, and acknowledge his contribution, we will deal with both his activities and their interrelation with the phenomenon of India's 20th century political transformation.

The central issue is how Aurobindo's patriotic consciousness was directed and developed, in the context of a developing cultural unity among divergent social groups.

The active years which Aurobindo spent in education and politics<sup>1</sup> and the profound understanding of religion and society which he acquired, qualifies him in the features which have been delineated as Renaissance characteristics. He achieved special distinction in journalism and prose, concentrating these talents on the national problems of his time.<sup>2</sup> His personal configuration and motives are appropriate to an investigation into all aspects of Hindu revivalism.

Aurobindo lived in the generation which brought revivalism and extremist nationalism to its peak. The culmination of all that was incubated by the spread of education, and the social reaction against cultural subordination, is seen in the Hindu militancy of the first decade in the 20th century. This apex in the merging of Neovendantism and cultural nationalism was the maturing of a new pattern in the Renaissance development, which contained the seeds of 20th century growth towards independence and self-rule.

Aurobindo's family background was of the denationalized, acculturated, anglicized type described previously. Aurobindo's father, Krishna Dhan Ghose, was thoroughly anglicized and became a devotee of western superiority. After medical study in England, he returned

to India in 1871, converted to English manners and customs, its language, and its condescending and superior attitude towards India and its culture.

He married Swarnalata Devi, the daughter of a prominent Brahmo Samaj leader, and succeeded Devendranath Tagore in the presidency of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj. Krishna Dhan Ghose intended anglicization of his children, and Aurobindo was educated from infancy in the English language. The Ghose household renounced its native Bengali which Aurobindo did not acquire until he had reached maturity.<sup>3</sup>

This biased domestic environment, followed by 14 years of education in England, did not in fact confirm in Aurobindo an anti-native bias. On the contrary, in a response which characterized young Indians of his background, he energetically participated in the movement to evict western cultural ideals and values, and restore the culture of his homeland.

In his early years, Aurobindo was educated and trained exclusively in the English school system.<sup>4</sup> Both in India and England his first 21 years involved the best in modern education of that time. He shared this experience with hundreds of young upper-class Hindus whose parents saw in colonial rule an opportunity to restore their cultural authority and improve their material status. Flattery of their new masters included not only enthusiastic acceptance of British values, but a servile repudiation

of their own heritage. Many talented Indians, such as Aurobindo's father, did in fact achieve substantial success within the colonial apparatus, becoming dedicated admirers of European civilization in the process. Although their hostility towards their own culture was frequently a sincere rejection of obsolete and repugnant features of traditional Hinduism, their sons soon accused them of confusing use with abuse, and sacrificing historical native values for a short-term parasitic career as colonial servants.

After completing his schooling, Aurobindo returned to India when he was 21 years of age to join the service of the State of Baroda.<sup>5</sup> He was successively French teacher, professor of English, and vice-principal of the Baroda college. His political interest in the idea of revitalized India soon drew him to the roots of his native origin, and he began a systematic study of Hindi and Bengali. He reinforced this with a study of Sanskrit and the scriptural traditions of Hinduism. His reaction to his early years of anti-native environment was being compounded by experience with the Indian realities of colonial discrimination and oppression. The urban centres of India were a ferment of confused, ambitious, and discontented young Indians who, like himself, mixed their disenchantment with dreams of restoring heroic Hinduism. Intellectual India's early expectation of partnership with a grand British imperial age was quickly dissipating in the

day to day facts of colonial exploitation. The alternative was organization, agitation, and unified resistance, towards a goal of political supremacy built on a refurbished Hindu ideal.

In an assessment of Aurobindo both as an individual and as an example of the broker in this period, the limitations to isolating a prototypical "Renaissance" Indian should be recognized. Moreover, the several constraining features of 19th century Indian civilization seriously qualified the scope of individual effort, and tended to emphasize differences which might otherwise have been obscured in subscription to common ideals and mutual objectives.

To begin with, fewer than 8% of Indians were literate.<sup>6</sup> A third of the elite higher castes could not read or write, and were frequently educated in only one vernacular of the innumerable native languages. English in time was to become the common tongue; and in fact was to be the only language in which tens of thousands of Indians could read or write. The consequence of this cultural deficiency was that, during the most part of the century under review, the literary effort of leaders such as Aurobindo circulated amongst a very small audience, with virtually no expectation of popular reaction except through the uncertain medium of rural scribes and the "bush telegraph". The deprecating comments on the Indian

Congress as an "exclusive debating society"<sup>7</sup> had a particular point in reference to written material, for in fact the literary community spent most of its effort virtually writing to itself. This was especially restrictive in certain areas, such as Aurobindo's native state Bengal, which was pre-occupied with its provincial problems. Publication on contemporary issues shrank to a negligible circulation, both unavailable and probably unintelligible to the majority of literate and concerned Indians of other areas. As for the public at large, it was physically impossible for them to understand, or to become part of, the Renaissance unless its meaning and its message could reach them in terms both appropriate to their daily lives and consistent with their elementary aspirations.

## I THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

The most structured form of social action to which Aurobindo committed himself was the Nationalist Movement.<sup>8</sup> It was the assembly area for nationalist ambitions, with specific economic, social and political programs. Aurobindo's contribution was a mixture of politics and spirituality, in both of which his forceful eloquence won wide support. Though he considered it equally important for India to adhere to the essence of monism, while disavowing dogma and ritualism, in social

reform he argued for action and innovation. Combining his classical Hindu scholarship with the practical experience of Bengali political activity, he emerged on the political scene in his early thirties in support of Boycott, Swadeshi and Swaraj (indigenous goods and the Home Rule).<sup>9</sup> In private life he pursued his interest in Yoga, and deepened his spiritual enquiry leading finally to asceticism in 1910. These influences were described and acknowledged in his journalistic writings in Bengal in the period 1906-1910.

Aurobindo promoted nationalism as a means of arresting the impoverishment of India by British imperialism. He reflected an increasingly popular conviction of Indian intellectuals that India's traditional values and social format could adequately replace the colonial administration. He made this proposition conditional, however, on modernizing of the scriptural authorities and a restatement of the doctrines corrupted through centuries of abuse. He effectively employed journalism as a forum to encourage general discussion and support for nationalism through restored Hinduism.

Although Aurobindo vehemently condemned the inhumanity of colonial exploitation and its socially disruptive methods, he recognized the immense value of European technology and education for Indian development. He advocated using the tools of western civilization as a

model for the creation of a modernized state which would reconcile traditional Hindu values with the advantages of imported technique.<sup>10</sup> When he realized that Britain had no intention to voluntarily assist and accelerate a liquidation of its own regime, but on the contrary, planned to extend and perpetuate its Indian investment, Aurobindo's attraction to the nationalist ambition was confirmed. Indian moderates resisted the timing, if not the principles, of nationalism, persuaded that self-rule was premature and unworkable. The British reacted to the extremes of nationalistic agitation by intermittent jailing of Aurobindo and his colleagues.

Aurobindo in this period energetically expressed his militant conviction by joining and leading the rebellious element in his native state of Bengal, where dissident groups formed a temporary and uneasy alliance to enforce boycott of British goods and services and its related weapon of "Swadeshi" (indigenous goods). The cause of Home Rule (Swaraj) was promoted overtly and by clandestine organizations both by the press and by direct appeal to the public down to the village level. Although Aurobindo claimed no great success for the Home Rule Movement in Bengal at this time, history shows that the intensity of its propaganda and the latent threat of nationalistic zeal, did in fact moderate the British attitude on its imposition of imperial schemes within that province.<sup>11</sup>

## II CULTURE BROKER

The effect of western culture in the intellectual, aesthetic, and administrative realms was felt by the small majority within the society's upper strata. The process of bringing this encounter and the changes which it effected, to the people was more than merely translating English into vernaculars, or distributing newspapers. The total change in configuration which was occurring had to be gradually absorbed and accepted within the patterns of Indian culture. The work of persons like Aurobindo involved not only the adaptation of culture traits and values of the West with their corresponding effect on Hindu ideals, but also the reorganization and interpretation of them for both the upper and lower strata of society.

In this process of mediation, Aurobindo's position between the emerging elite and the people of India may properly be described as that of culture broker. His status within the contact community and his long association with British culture qualified him for this position of interpretation and innovation. His effectiveness in active involvement 1903-1910 was limited and frustrating. Had his work been of greater influence and received adequate responses in support of the socio/political programs which he espoused, he perhaps would not have renounced his worldly life so completely.

The role which he and many other Indians of his type played, was restricted for several reasons. Aurobindo

was a member of the privileged upper castes and though his sympathies and intellectual persuasion led him to espouse the cause of awakening India, he could not bridge the gap between the elite and the people. The tendency for the elite to "talk to themselves" was compounded by the inability of the literati to identify and carry out their work with the people at lower levels.

The righteous indignation of Aurobindo and other nationalist leaders was a minority feeling in the political affairs of emerging India. Gandhi, who 20 years later used many of the doctrines established by Neovedantism,<sup>12</sup> and employed tactics of political action developed within the era of extreme nationalism, succeeded where Aurobindo and others failed.<sup>13</sup> This success was due to his greater affinity with the common man, the now widespread dislike of British rule, and the effects of the upper class Renaissance having attained a broader social base.

The synthesis which finally resulted in the unifying work of Gandhi and others was predicted and prepared by the Renaissance, beginning with accommodation to western science and technique. Yet the revival of tradition and the reassertion of the upper caste had to also occur as a means of preserving and reordering Hindu tradition. This process was largely a matter of time. The brokerage of Aurobindo, and the effects made by other

nationalists and revivalists was premature, and could have no large scale effect. Attempts at acceleration of the process were frustrated by British rule, and the conservative attitude of the majority of newly instated elite.

Aurobindo's field of brokerage was limited and defined by the social milieu from which he came, and the colonial situation which confronted him. Had he restricted himself to Letters, or purely religious pursuits, there would have been little conflict of values in his Renaissance contribution. Yet this was not a viable course once the political direction of extremist nationalism became so closely bound with the religious and literary development of the Renaissance. It was unlikely that an individual would become involved in one activity without being influenced by the others, and many individuals became brokers in several areas simultaneously. Commitment to struggle with the British on the one hand, and attempting to accelerate the process of social awakening on the other, resulted in considerable pressure on those concerned. The stress placed on Aurobindo eventually found its release in worldly renunciation, while that on his brother Barin, in terrorism and political suicide.

Aurobindo's retirement to French Pondicherry in 1910 was not an atypical response. It did, however, bring about a completely new way of life for him, and he never

returned to his native Bengal. Similarly, other Renaissance leaders, notably Rabindranath Tagore, retired to a life of dedication in the fields of education, spiritual development and Letters.

CHAPTER III. AUROBINDO GHOSE: A PERSONAL CONFIGURATION.

- <sup>1</sup>From his arrival at Baroda in 1893 until departure to Pondicherry, February, 1910.
- <sup>2</sup>His later writings developed the themes of internationalism and the divine destiny of mankind.
- <sup>3</sup>R.R. Diwakar, MAHAYOGI, 1972, pp. 22-23.
- <sup>4</sup>"Sri Aurobindo on Himself", COLLECTED WORKS, 1972, Vol. 26, pp. 1-9.
- <sup>5</sup>"Sri Aurobindo on Himself", COLLECTED WORKS, 1972, Vol. 26, pp. 9-21.
- <sup>6</sup>INDIAN YEAR BOOK, 1900. p. 111
- <sup>7</sup>The viewpoint of the extremist nationalists. Lajpat Rai, YOUNG INDIA, 1916, pp. 145-146.
- <sup>8</sup>IBID., pp. 172-175.
- <sup>9</sup>His own account of his political life gives a resume of his tactics. "Sri Aurobindo on Himself", COLLECTED WORKS, 1972, Vol. 26, pp. 21-71.
- <sup>10</sup>"Sri Aurobindo on Himself", COLLECTED WORKS, 1972, Vol. 26, p. 31.
- <sup>11</sup>It has been suggested that the agitation caused by the Nationalist Movement was a precipitating factor in the British Government's decision to rescind the Partition of Bengal, in 1912, as well as move the administrative capital to Delhi. Smith, 1958, p. 777.
- <sup>12</sup>Refurbishing the caste system was a doctrine of Vivekananda, see "Caste Culture and Socialism", COLLECTED WORKS, 1964.

<sup>13</sup>"Doctrine of Passive Resistance", Sri Aurobindo's COLLECTED WORKS, 1972, Vol.1, pp. 83-118.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIO-CULTURAL PATTERNS OF THE RENAISSANCE

This thesis has sought to review and analyse the modern Indian Renaissance as a profound cultural response of an ancient eastern society to a sudden, massive, and highly organized western conquest. It has examined, within the scope of the century preceding the First World War, the reaction of upper caste Hindu intellectualism to the challenge of survival and adaptation, and delineated the political and religious activity which re-defined and re-oriented an entire continental culture.

The material selected and assembled in this thesis provides for discussion of two areas of anthropological concern; (1) results of culture contact among the literate presenting a number of dominant cultural activities and (2) the composition of that Indian broker group which responded directly to European presence, incorporating an innovating upon ideas, materials, models and institutions of the West.

Study of the dominant cultural activities which distinguished the Renaissance will be dealt with below as a contact-history in the three phases of it which occurred in the revival movement. The emergence and evolution of the brokers to their final status in national independence will be reviewed and explained with representational support which graphically illustrates the dynamics of the socio-cultural interaction in this period of intensive

cultural activity. In both of these areas of enquiry Kroeber's "process of diffusion"<sup>1</sup> is demonstrated as elements of western civilization were encountered and integrated within the new cultural milieu. "Acceptance without modification" is demonstrated in the general adoption of material artifacts and methods, such as railways, the telegraph, and other administrative tools essential to colonial organization. "Stimulus diffusion", both inventive and acquisitive, permeates the entire environment of the East-West confrontation from the advent of the British period to the day of final emancipation. Diffusion was marked from the beginning in the upper caste adjustment to and adoption of the European model of selective representation, organization, and expression in the development of Sabhas, the Congress, and a general appreciation of parliamentary effectiveness.

The British judicial system, itself a refined product of diffusion from centuries of development on Roman and pre-Roman models, recommended itself from the outset to alert and talented Indian intellectuals as a preferred avenue to influence and authority. Indeed, as has been remarked elsewhere and in greater detail in this material, the sophisticated appraisal and adaptation to the Anglo/European cultural model by the Indian upper castes was not only the stimulus of the Renaissance, but provided concepts, tools and apparatus for the eventual re-emergence of native authority. In this phenomenon

Kroeber's principles of diffusion are not only validated, but his observation that supposed "cultural loss" is usually, in fact, a meaningful "displacement", is pointedly demonstrated. Indian culture, revised, rephrased, and reactivated in the revival movement, became much more than old wine in new bottles. Concessions made to alien authority did not abandon, but rather reserved, elements of native culture not immediately compatible with absorption of new methods and ideas. Essentially native value, momentarily dispossessed in the diffusion process, was revived and re-asserted with new strength, as the Renaissance gained knowledge and momentum. Analysis of the broker-group shows its success contingent on shrewd alignment with the diffusion process. The extremist element alienated itself from effective authority largely through disagreement with the pace and timing of moderate politics. Sharing the principles and convictions of Indian rights, but disagreeing over what forms of social action were justified in the colonial situation, the extremists provided 'interference' to the processes in action.

British rule saw this activity in its governing terms as presumptive and rebellious. The dominant native group assessed it as premature, provocative, and a hazard to an acceptable growth of Indian authority. Since this dominant native group was also the broker, it found itself in the classical exercise of mediating the confrontation to conciliate not only the colonial ruler, but the

revolutionary native element in its own culture which would inevitably have to be dealt with in other terms when alien rulers had departed. The governmental procedures for the orderly accommodation of contesting factions was not the least of the diffused cultural elements absorbed in the Indian elite for employment on its own behalf in post-emancipation India.

Beyond these conspicuous and important manifestations of diffusion in Law, Government and Communication, Indian culture embraced western methodology through the entire range of art and science. The poetic and prose forms of Europe were employed to revitalize and re-interpret both traditional and contemporary authorship. Medicine leapt forward with adaptation of western science and technique to the rich heritage of native physical knowledge. The printing press and modern methods and materials of the graphic arts gave new tools and inspiration to a culture with a vast treasury of ceramics, painting, and sculpture preserved from prehistorical times. The stimulus-diffusion process was expressed successfully throughout the sub-continent at every cultural level because, in Kroeber's terms, "that was the kind of door on which it was knocking."<sup>2</sup> The depth, the scope, and the beauty of Indian culture was a "sleeping princess" which was able to respond to the European presence with an astonishing and impressive array of talent.

## I CULTURAL PROCESSES: Contact Phases

Between 1800 and 1914, three distinct phases of culture contact are apparent. These developed out of a longer relationship with the B.E.I. Co., which had already established some of the terms of contact relations in the 18th century. The processes which characterize the British-Indian relationship are depicted here as a dynamic and changing involvement. The interrelations of Education, Political Growth, Religion-Philosophy and Literature discussed in Chapter II form the basis of the following results and conclusions.

### Renaissance Contact History

The Indian Renaissance was the Hindu cultural reaction to the British conquest. Political subjugation and the impressive example of modern European technology inspired the literate elite of India to re-examine their own tradition as a foundation of unity under oppression, revival and reinforcement of social caste authority, and accommodation to colonial rule preliminary to recovery, wholly or in partnership of national power.

#### Phase I: Culture Contact and the Growth of an Elite, 1800-1850.

The first period of the Renaissance was one of contact with British education, primarily in the colonial urban centres of Calcutta and Bombay. The literary

castes of Bengal, as shown, monopolized this connection with British Rule. The opportunities for wealth and status under the new rulers were superior to conditions under Muslim domination. Civil education was welcomed as a constructive measure, but Christian mission schools were not. Exposure to western values prompted a re-appraisal of native traditions. Thus the growth of educational institutions, and coeval social/religious reform marks the first phase of the Renaissance 1800-1850.

Phase II: Political Growth: Moderacy, 1850-1885.

This era is marked by the gradual emergence of representative bodies recruited from the educated, upper strata of Indian society, primarily in the centres of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The educational system was established by that time, and religious liberalism and tolerance characterized the ideological and social attitude of the times. The period is further characterized by optimistic expectations of rapport with the British administration, and a general tendency to adopt British cultural influence as a normal environment.

The anglicized Indian had brief popularity with uncritical acceptance of all things British and contemptuous rejection of tradition. These extremes prompted others to re-evaluate and defend native cultural integrity. It was a period of anxious readjustment. The culmination

of this phase was the creation of a representative native body - The Indian Congress, which expresses accommodation or assimilation as the main trend in the culture growth. The period ended in 1885 with the emergence of a counter-trend towards traditionalism and orthodoxy.

Phase III: Hindu Revivalism and Militant Nationalism, 1885-1914.

This phase saw the cultural reaction consolidate into the associated religio/social movements of revivalism and militant nationalism, each drawing on Hindu tradition for authority and direction, with differences in emphasis and interpretation. Education reverted to vernacular language and traditional studies. Recalling the Golden Age of Hinduism was the theme of contemporary literature. The mystique of the Renaissance merged personal identity with national aspiration, and self-realization became synonymous with self-rule. This phase confirmed the effects of the first two, but developed as a counterweight to complete acculturation. The defence of Hinduism reached militant maturity, with the Arya Samaj, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, all rallying in the cause of Nationhood.

This period reached its climax by the First World War, with Neovedantism as the ultimate expression of Hindu revival, and militant nationalism fading as Congress began to find common ground with Britain for a formula of Home Rule (1917 +).

Throughout these three phases, there was an overriding quality of the involvement of only a minority and specific participant group. Though the effect of the growth of militant nationalism was to ultimately bring the Renaissance to the people, this was a task which was unrealized until the time of Gandhi. This feature illustrates and validates the thesis that the Renaissance was a high-caste revivalism, aimed at the reassertion of traditional social relations and values. It was both coherent with Britain's policy of colonial rule and with the fact that traditional authority in Indian society lies at the top, among the Brahmins and Kshatriya. However, the mode of reassertion, with emphasis on an improved social order to encourage popular support, conditioned the terms of Home Rule and British agreement. Education and social reform spread the cultural power base at the expense of the upper class.

The process of national growth, an aspect of the phenomenon we have been examining, was greatly altered by the presence and interference of a foreign power, notwithstanding that alien domination was its major impetus. The Renaissance may be considered as a relatively rapid cultural reaction toward an intruder, turning the superior alien cultural tools against their owner. Although the initial phases of accommodation to conquest produced an essentially symbiotic community, the cultural confrontation

was a marked imbalance favouring the invader.

The fact that colonialism had to take more than it gave, as a condition of its success, ensured an inevitable hostile native reaction. This response looked for support in traditional ideologies and values, and precipitated the generalized phenomenon of the Renaissance. It was a classical instance of relative deprivation inducing an appropriate cultural reaction. In the instance of India, the events occurred in such a manner that ultimate reaction had huge proportions - a total national growth, and the redefinition of a national religion.

Because the Renaissance was a struggle within the upper levels of Indian society for emergence into a redefined and reorganized structure the corresponding religious redefinition was largely confined to that cultural level. Moreover, the revival concerned only the redefinition of traditional scriptures, and did not substantially alter traditional cultural practice. Indeed, it is a valid comment on the entire Indian Renaissance that the British conquest re-affirmed and ultimately restored the Hindu socio/religious ascendancy squarely within its traditional cultural authority.

In terms of our anthropological model, the Indian Renaissance is of considerable interest for the range of cultural influences which were so dynamically illustrated in more than a hundred years of documented

activity. Education, social upheaval and reform, traditionalism and reaction, political growth from subjugation to independence and cultural revival, show an instructive pattern applicable to numerous situations in contemporary human affairs.

Reference to, and support from heritage and tradition, with consequences of revival, is a phenomenon frequently generated by mass contact. In the instance of the Indian Renaissance, the result was a classical revival, with little accommodation in terms of assimilated culture traits of a religious nature. Adoption of the British technical and institutional format by Indian society was fairly complete.

## II SOCIAL PROCESSES: The Changing Status of the Brokers.

The Appendix contains a biographical profile of leading Renaissance individuals. The information provided by that data can help us to further understand how the culture contact was adapted by Indian society's brokers. The following observations and conclusions drawn from the biographical material will necessarily deal in generalizations. Specific reference to trends in each activity, presenting a comprehensive assessment of the total configuration has representational value, and is not a statistical measure of the broker group.

Representation of Muslims and other minority

groups is low in the biographical material. Whether this is a deficiency in the data, or a real situation is open to interpretation. One might expect that only a minority of non-Hindus would be evident in cultural activities so heavily subscribed to by the dominant cultural group. For this reason, it would be highly speculative to make conclusions on internal trends of non-Hindu groups based on the scant data. Except for the information stated below on the Muslims, the focus of interpretation is the Hindu community.

#### MUSLIMS

##### Results:

- a) None originate from Bengal, Bombay or Madras.
- b) The upper class predominates
- c) Muslims are more highly represented in the later phase of the Renaissance.
- d) In Religion-philosophy and Literature all are traditionally educated.
- e) In Education and Politics all are western educated.

I EDUCATION: This field of cultural activity involves the participation of persons who worked to establish institutes of learning, of varying levels and curriculum.

##### Results:

- a) Brahmin caste predominates.

- b) The class status is mixed, with an emerging tendency for middle class involvement in the later phase.
- c) Bengal is highly represented in the early phases, a more regionally varied profile emerging in the later.
- d) Western education predominates the background of learning in this group.
- e) Educational activity was the general domain of reformers in the early phases, giving way to a more specialized interest group, (educators) who functioned in the role of educational development.

II POLITICS: Divided between moderate and extremist factions, the political sphere was represented generally by persons who dealt within the confines of a structure influenced heavily by the British administration. Individuals cited in this activity were the apparent leaders of the Indian people in their confrontation with foreign rule.

Results:

- a) The Brahmin and Kshatriya castes are fairly equal in representation.
- b) The upper and middle class is equally represented among the moderates. The extremists

show an almost exclusive middle-class affiliation.

- c) Bengal and Bombay are predominant regional areas.
- d) Western education is the norm for nearly all.
- e) Among the moderates, Law is the major field of professional endeavour.
- f) Among the extremists, a variety of occupation is displayed. Journalism is well represented.
- g) The extremist group emerges some years later than the moderate.

III RELIGION - PHILOSOPHY. The members of this field of activity were largely involved with reformation and revival. The majority were reformers and leaders, not philosophers.

Results:

- a) Brahmins predominant.
- b) Class status moves from an upper class norm in the early phase to a middle class norm in the later.
- c) A wide range of regional activity is indicated.
- d) Traditional education gives way to the introduction of western education in the later phase.

- e) Mainly non-professionals occur.

IV LITERATURE: This group includes persons who contributed to Literature in one or more Indian language, as well as English. The artistic and popular capacity of Literature, and not the scholarly or scientific has been developed in this field of brokerage.

Results:

- a) Predominance of Brahmins.
- b) The middle and upper classes are equally represented.
- c) Bengal is predominant in the early phases, diverse regions in the later.
- d) Western and traditional education are equally represented.
- e) There is an extremely wide range of professions indicated in this group.

## CONCLUSION

The modern Indian Renaissance during the 19th and early 20th centuries was the reassertion of the traditional Hindu socio/religious structure as the dominating culture of the sub-continent. Resulting from its contact with Europe<sup>3</sup> it demonstrates acceptance of diffused material, ideas and institutions of the West and their incorporation into traditional Hinduism. The province of Bengal, and particularly the city of Calcutta, site of the British invasion and headquarters of its colonial administration, was the hearth and focus<sup>4</sup> of a cultural growth which ultimately encompassed all of India.

Western style education, both abroad and localized, stimulated indigenous social reform, and produced a community of brokers. By directly mediating the British-Indian cultural interface in politics and administration, and functioning as brokers in other traditional roles, this social group redefined its own position of authority in Hindu society. Literary expression fused western style with traditional themes and both influenced and stimulated the native idiom in contemporary affairs. External stimuli initiated religious speculation which preceded a revival and reorientation of the Hindu system. The progression of influences, frequently paralleled and overlapped, motivated and encouraged education, social reform, political growth, literary renaissance, religious

revival, and political nationalism. During these stages of development, literature was the only art form significantly utilized in the emergence of a national consciousness.

The British cultivated and organized one element of Indian society with indigenous qualifications to assist the colonial apparatus. The requirement of literacy and community status gave natural preference to the Brahmin upper class in the administrative structure which they dominated through the early phases of national growth. Opportunities for social and material advancement within a burgeoning commercial community, and a generalized dynamic growth of interest and activity in all aspects of native life, initiated marked social mobility, and the emergence of a middle class as a significant element in developments which followed. Within this new sphere, elements of native intellectualism found a location and a means of livelihood with greater scope for personal expression free of direct British control and class domination by their own race. The broker community examining and defining tradition in terms suitable to its emerging social status, reshaped and developed for common knowledge the social, religious and literary heritage of Brahminical Hinduism.

Informed and conditioned by the momentous political changes occurring in Europe, the literate native

community gradually produced a dissident group which disaffected with foreign rule for reasons both personal and altruistic, crystallized its opposition with a fury of journalistic sedition and other critical literature. Hindu revivalism moved hand in hand with the trend to nationalistic ambition, and provided mutual support to reach out beyond the cities for popular subscription. This symbiotic reinforcement of Hinduism had the incidental effect of alerting traditional religious minorities to the danger of being caught between two hostile forces, and prompted Jainism, Buddhism, Islam and the Parsees to their own defensive movements of revivalism and reinforcement.

The religious reform and revival of the urban areas was an effort to reassert and reconcile ancient values as a classicists' response to maintain traditional identity within an increasingly secularized political power group. Its common cause with nationalism was hindered and ultimately frustrated by the barrier between the newly redefined Great Tradition and the Little Traditions of agrarian India. Inability to surmount this obstacle to alliance for a limited purpose within a limited time was the vexation and frustration of extremists such as Aurobindo, which drove them to the despair of terrorism, or to havens of literary or religious activity beyond the turmoil of daily confrontations and disappointments.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER IV SOCIO-CULTURAL PATTERNS OF THE RENAISSANCE

<sup>1</sup>A.L. Kroeber, CULTURE PATTERNS AND PROCESSES,  
1963.

<sup>2</sup>IBID., p. 224.

<sup>3</sup>M. Singer, WHEN A GREAT TRADITION MODERNIZES,  
1972. p. 268.

<sup>4</sup>A.L. Kroeber, CONFIGURATIONS OF CULTURE GROWTH,  
1963, p. 843.

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APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF LEADING RENAISSANCE INDIVIDUALS

The information compiled in these tables comprises an individual and group profile of prominent Indian personalities of the modern Renaissance. The purpose of this portrayal is substantiation of themes and issues raised in this thesis. The collected material is meant to lend representational support, and will not be treated statistically. Four areas (1) Education (2) Politics (3) Religion-Philosophy and (4) Literature are delineated.

The choice of individuals tabled in this profile was based on repeated reference to them as "leaders", "innovators", "Great Men", "founders", etc., in historical material. The corroboration of these labels with meaningful evidence of contribution to the Renaissance activities was the criterion of inclusion. All persons had some active part in the period 1800-1914, and in certain instances continued to participate past the time of Independence.

There is considerable overlap in the activities of some individuals cited. In such instances a primary field of endeavour has been taken as the qualification for the category in which such a person appears. In the area of Politics, the representative sample includes Congress Leaders, some of whom were elected Presidents of the Congress. Extremists, though never elected as such to

the Presidency, have been treated as equally representative of leadership in a less established framework.

Data on many individuals of this period was scanty and contradictory. The selection of persons here depended on the availability of complete information for all categories of enquiry. This has perhaps created a selective bias, omitting noteworthy Renaissance figures, among minority cultural groups, as well as Hindus. The conclusions derived from this Appendix and discussed in Chapter 4 are therefore considered in the light of these possible omissions.

#### LEGEND

##### RELIGION

H = Hindu    M = Muslim    O = Other

##### CASTE

B = Brahmin    K = Kshatriya    V = Vaisya    S = Sudra

CLASS<sup>1</sup>    U = Upper    M = Middle    L = Lower

REGION: Place of birth and family residence.

Be = Bengal    Bo = Bombay    M = Madras    O = Other

##### EDUCATION<sup>2</sup>

W = Western    I = Indian

<sup>1</sup>Determination of class status is based on considerations of material affluence and social background.

<sup>2</sup>Western education may be either in England or India and is equivalent to at least some advanced training to university level. An acquaintance with English is not the prime determinant here as many (and most of those catalogued here) had at least a conversational knowledge in the language. Indian education is meant to signify a background of learning in Sanskritic, Arabic (if Muslim) or other indigenous tradition, which qualifies as competence in scriptures, language and lore.

The biographical data was collected from numerous sources provided by The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute collection, University of British Columbia; listed in the Bibliography.

EDUCATION

NAME	BORN & DIED	RELIGION		CASTE	CLASS		REGION		EDUCATION		PROFESSION	
		H	M		B	K	U	M	L	Be		Bo
Framji Banaji	1767-1851		+			+		+		+		reformer
K. Banerji	1813-1885	+		+		+		+		+		teacher
Dev. Tagore	1817-1905	+		+		+		+		+		reformer
N. Furdunji	1817-1885		+			+		+		+		reformer
I. Vidyasagar	1820-1891	+		+		+		+		+		educator
B.S. Divetia	1823-1886	+		+		+			+	+		reformer
G. Bannerjee	1844-1918	+		+		+		+		+		jurist
S.C. Das	1849-1917	+		+		+		+		+		teacher
G.P. Agarkar	1856-1895	+		+		+			+	+		educator
A. Chaudhuri	1860-1924	+		+		+		+		+		educator
Krupabai	1862-1894	+		+		+		+		+		educator
A. Mukherjee	1864-1924	+		+		+		+		+		jurist
Hydari Akbar	1869-1942		+			+			+	+		educator
Motibhai Amin	1873-1939	+		+		+			+	+		teacher
P.N. Banerji	1879-1960	+		+		+		+		+		jurist
N. Bhatt	1882-1861	+		+		+		+		+		educator
Gijubhai Badheka	1885-1939	+		+		+		+		+		jurist
Allama Mashriqi	1888-1963		+			+		+		+		educator

POLITICS

NAME	BORN & DIED	RELIGION		CASTE	CLASS					REGION			EDUCATION			PROFESSION		
		H	M		O	B	K	V	S	U	M	L	Be	Bo	M		O	W
<u>Moderates</u>																		
Dadabhai Naoroji	1825-1917																	jurist
T. Muthusami	1832-1895	+																jurist
Anand Charlu	1843-1908	+																jurist
W.C. Bannerji	1844-1906	+																jurist
Badruddin Tyabji	1844-1906																	jurist
Ferozshah Mehta	1845-1915																	jurist
R.B. Ghose	1845-1921																	jurist
A. Mohan Bose	1847-1906	+																jurist
R.C. Dutt	1848-1909	+																jurist
S.N. Bannerji	1848-1925	+																jurist
M.G. Ranade	1852-1904	+																jurist
N.G. Chandavarkar	1855- ?	+																jurist
M.M. Malviya	1861-1946	+																journalist
M.K. Gandhi	1869-1948	+																jurist
Ali Imam	1969-1932																	jurist
M. Shaikat Ali	1873- ?	+																civil ser.
Ali Muhammad Khan	1879-1931	+																jurist
M. Ali Jinnah	1876-1948	+																jurist
C.K. Gokhle	1886-1919	+																teacher
<u>Extremists</u>																		
Bal Gangadhar Tilak	1856-1920	+																educator
Lal Lajpat Rai	1856-1928	+																jurist
Amba Prashad	1858-1915	+																journalist
Bepin Chandra Pal	1858-1932	+																journalist
C.R. Das	1870-1925	+																jurist
Har Dayal	1870-1930?	+																scholar
Aurobindo Ghose	1872-1950	+																journalist
J. Bannerji	1877-1930	+																journalist
H. Chakraverti	1882-1963	+																politician
R.C. Acharya	1887-1965	+																teacher
K. Dutt	1888-1908	+																revolution-ary.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

NAME	BORN & DIED	RELIGION		CASTE			CLASS			REGION			EDUCATION			PROFESSION
		H	M	O	B	K	V	S	U	M	L	Be	Bo	M	O	
Ram Mohan Roy	1772-1833	+			+			+			+				+	movement leader
D. Tagore	1794-1846	+			+			+			+				+	merchant
Syed Ahmad Khan	1817-1898		+					+							+	scholar
Shiva Dyal	1818-1878	+				+		+							+	banker
Dayananda Saraswati	1824-1883	+			+			+							+	movement leader
Ramakrishna	1834-1886	+			+			+							+	priest
Chetram	1835-1894	+				+		+							+	mystic
M.G. Ahmad	1838-1908		+						+						+	mystic
Sivanarayana	1840-1909	+			+				+						+	priest
K.C. Sen	1843-1884	+			+										+	reformer
S. Shastri	1847- ?	+			+				+						+	reformer
Atma Dev	1850-1929	+			+				+						+	reformer
Sankar Mispal	1861-1907	+			+				+						+	civil ser.
Vivekananda	1862-1902	+				+									+	revivalist
R. Ravjibhai	1868-1900			+					+						+	jeweller (Jain)
A. Dharmapala	1865- ?			+											+	Buddhist reformer
Titu Miyan	18 ?- ?		+												+	revivalist
Pitambar Deb	1885-1962	+				+									+	religious leader

LITERATURE

NAME	BORN & DIED	RELIGION		CASTE			CLASS			REGION			EDUCATION		PROFESSION	
		H	M	O	B	K	V	S	U	M	L	Be	Bo	M		O
A.K. Datta	1820-1886	+			+			+					+		+	writer
Dalpatram	1820-1898	+			+			+					+		+	poet
R.T. Tarkalankar	1822-1886	+			+			+			+		+		+	professor
M.M. Datta	1824-1873	+			+			+					+		+	jurist
D. Mitra	1829-1873	+			+			+					+		+	postal ser.
M. Bose	1831-1912	+			+			+					+		+	journalist
K.R. Cama	1831-1909	+		+				+			+		+		+	business man
B. Chakravarty	1835-1894	+			+			+					+		+	poet
H. Barua	1835-1896	+			+			+					+		+	reformer
R.G. Bhandarkar	1837-1925	+			+			+					+		+	professor
H.C. Bannerji	1838-1902	+			+			+					+		+	civil ser.
B.C. Chatterji	1838-1894	+			+			+					+		+	writer
S. Tagore	1842-1923	+			+			+					+		+	civil ser.
K.N. Kabraji	1842-1904	+		+				+					+		+	journalist
H. Bandyopadh- yaya	1838-1903	+								+			+		+	jurist
B. Bhatt	1844-1914	+			+			+					+		+	journalist
B. Harischandra	1850-1885	+			+			+					+		+	writer
R. Tagore	1861-1941	+			+			+					+		+	poet
P. Banerji	1866-1923	+			+			+					+		+	journalist
Kumaran Asan	1873-1924	+			+			+					+		+	teacher
N. Bala	1875-1928	+			+			+					+		+	teacher
S. Naidu	1879-1949	+			+			+					+		+	poet
A. Bashir-Ud- Dun	1889-1965			+						+					+	reformer

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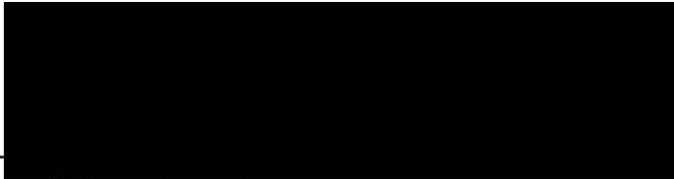
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RENAISSANCE

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April 29th, 1974

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(Date)