Addendum

Conclusion

Some reflections on this investigation into the "trajectories of the shaping up of the historical consciousness of the colonial Bengal" are now in order. I acknowledge at the outset of these concluding remarks, my debt to the experts on this field who kindly went through every line of this manuscript and offered their invaluable insights.

This was an attempt "to relate history writing to the broader content of the shaping up of Bengali intellectual consciousness under the impact of and interaction with colonial cultural premises". Thus, "the volume of original writing examined in the preceding pages had to be extremely varied and they cover a long chronological span". I had to show also how "Indological research came to be grounded on the growing technique of thorough scrutiny of a wide variety of primary source material". I "tried to situate my data within the context of the general problems raised by historiography" and the foregoing analysis had to, thus, link itself to a wide range of publications in this area". This was an attempt to understand "how history construction was undertaken as a response to colonial domination" and how the variations

* All the citations within quotation marks are taken from the reports of the examiners.
in responses "point to very fundamental differences among authors writing at different points of time" and how the craft of Indology developed with the introduction of "fresh approaches and concerns".

Ever since David Copf's work on Orientalism and Bengal Renaissance there was a need "to pursue intensive historical research/additional dimensions of the topic". Hence some critical reflections on the foregoing discussion have to take place in order to situate the examination of Bengali Indological historiography in a proper historical context.

First, it will be ahistorical to pass value judgements on Orientalism in terms of its influence on Bengali historical or national consciousness. Orientalism fostered an approach that was sometimes opposite the Occident, yet it provided an impetus also for an authentic search for historical truth. Had Orientalism been a purely colonialist project, it would not have induced great men such as Rajendralal Mitra or Haraprasad Shastri. The impact of Orientalism was thus dual. On one hand it encouraged the modern discipline of historiography and modern institutions for such discipline (as I have tried to show in Chapter X), on the other hand it moulded an authentic historical and nationalist consciousness. Beyond pointing out this dual impact of Orientalism on historiography, I wanted to suggest nothing more when introducing the question of Orientalism in the making of our historical consciousness (Chapter VI).
Secondly, like 'Orientalism', the expression "Indological historiography" is also necessarily ambivalent term. This thesis argues that Indology has been a body of knowledge which wanted to reconstruct the entire part of India at a particular time in a particular way. Therefore, this expression points to the study of certain particular writings/the great Indological researches with extraordinary precedence; certain other minor writings produced during the time have also been referred to here. These secondary references have helped us in understanding the structural formation of the historical consciousness of the time. But by Indology we clearly refer to the writings of our historians of the preceding generation to whom the past of our country could be reconstructed only with the help of the modern discipline of history writing, with appropriate institutions, with a comparable framework and comparable tools.

Thirdly, in this discussion we limited ourselves to Indological historiography in Bengali language only. This was not an investigation into the development of Indology per se, but an investigation into the way in which it related to and reflected the nationalist-historical consciousness of a particular people - in this case the people of Bengal. Thus, we had to limit ourselves primarily to the Bengali writings of the Bengali Indologists, who often wrote in English also. The stress on Bengali writings has been necessitated to show how Bengali language developed, public writings grew, Bengali
institutions proliferated and how the Bengali mind worked. However, we had to refer intermittently to the English writings of our historians also so that we could bring the agenda of research in a sharper focus. The content of these English writings of Bengali historians was sometimes concerned with the history of other parts of the country too. Therefore, the Dacca University volumes written by our Bengali historians, the English writings of Rajendralal Mitra on Orissa or such other writings of Haraprasad Shastri, Rakhaladas etc., have all been brought into discussion. There has been admittedly some arbitrariness in the way in which Indology and the historical consciousness of a particular linguistic group of people has been thus defined and its scope narrated. The problematic in this thesis demanded such a definition. The arbitrariness has been sought to be removed by the persistant theme of the integral link between Indological researches in Bengal and the nationalist consciousness of the Bengali people. For the idea of linking up the two and making it explicit throughout this dissertation (Chapter I, IV, VI, IX, X), I remain indebted to David Copf’s Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance.

Fourthly, this connection between Indology and the nationalist consciousness of a particular linguistic group of people can be understood even better if we situate this process in the context of similar processes in other parts of India. It may therefore be advantageous to compare the particular profile of the historiography of Bengal with historiographies
originating in similar contexts in other parts of the country. In other parts of the country also during the preceding and the present one the vernacular languages developed and with that local historiographies also grew in local languages. We can briefly mention Muhammad Latif's *History of the Punjab* (1881), the discussion in Assamese on the *Buraniyas* in the nineteenth century, Kaviraj Shyamal Das' five volume history of Mewar in Hindi *Vir Vinod* (1886), or the work of his worthy successor Couri Sankar Hira Chand Ojha. Around the same time when Indological historiography was developing in Bengal, Maratha historiography also flourished at the hands of historians like Kashinath Telang, Rajwade and Vasudeo Khare. Ramkrishna Bhandarkar authored important works like *Early History of Deccan* and *A Peep into the Early History of India* (1890). Bengali historiography has to be thus seen in the perspective of the works of political, institutional, nationalist, cultural as well as sub-regional historians in other parts of the country like G.S. Sardesai, Dada Bhai Naoroji, K. Nilakanta Shastri or K.V. Krishna Ayyar.

Fifthly, this brings us to another salient feature of the development of Indological historiography. As we see, such a development was not an isolated phenomenon in Bengal. It developed in almost all regional languages. Indological historiography thus exhibited the "problem of region-nation dichotomy". As we have shown (Chapter X, pp. 422-434), nationalist historiography on Indology provoked sub-regional history
writing too. Thus like the *History of Bengal* (2 vols.), we have Krishna Ayyar's *History of Kerala* and Telang's *Gleanings from Maratha Chronicles* (1900). Indological historiography was therefore not only macro history but micro history too. Nation implied not only the past of the whole country, but also that of the region and sub-region. As a result the popular element in Indology was strengthened.

Finally, we have to note two other dichotomies or the reciprocal, interactive relations. They are (a) the ambivalence regarding Hindu-Muslim divide in perceptions and periodisations of the past and (b) the relation between literary images and historical images.

We have noted the way in which nationalist writers from Bankim Chandra, Rajanikanta Gupta to Ramesh Chandra Majumdar had tried to grapple with the task of defining the nation's past in terms of their contemporary problem of Hindu Muslim divide. From this arose the problem of how to periodise the past and designate the periods, how to characterise the long Mughal epoch, how to portray the conquest of Nabadwip by a group of invading cavalrymen. Because of the contemporary problem of Hindu-Muslim divide that plagued the nation's present, these historians had great difficulty in approaching the nation's past with calmness and objectivity. Since, most of the great Bengali Indologists were caste Hindus, issues like the collapse of Hindu Bengal, the spread of Islam among the Bengali masses, the long reign of the Sultanate -
all these became disturbing questions in the historiographical agenda in nationalist times. It is hard to say, whether in the absence of that contemporary problem, these issues would have retained the same urgency and importance.

Another interesting relation apparent throughout the course of historiographical relations has been the one between historical and literary images. We have tried to show how great literary figures exercised their historiographical judgement, while great historical works in Bengali became important landmarks in the literary corpus. We have shown that Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath Tagore were the two principal figures whose literary creations cast their influence on historical works (Chaps. 1, 5). We have referred to writings like that of Sibnath Shastri also which was both literary and historical. The ideal of history contained, for example, in Tagore's essays and novels influenced Bengali social historians like Kshitimohan Sen and Probodh Chandra Sen. On the other hand as nationalist spirit grew, there appeared on the Bengali scene works like Akshay Kumar Maitra's Sirajuddaula which created Siraj as both literary as well as historical figure. Many of the biographical books of contemporary Bengali authors also fall into the same category. Even the great Rajendralal Mitra's popular essays in Vividartha Sangraha were based on an interplay between historical and literary images.
In short, this research into the Hundred Years of Indological Historiography in Bengali Language show that the relations between Indology, history and nationalism cannot be simplistically defined. Absolute value judgements have to be ruled out. It was a complex interplay of Orientalism, nationalism, the contemporary social problems and literary development that made the development of Indological historiography possible in Bengal. This development was a part of a broader development of similar nature taking place in other parts of the country. History and consciousness of the people were locked in an interacting relationship during the nationalist times.

Errata

Ramesh Chandra Dutta — R.C. Dutt
or, Ramesh Chandra Dutt
(In English works the author himself used either of both.)

H.C. Roy Choudhuri — H.C. Raychaudhuri,
(The spelling author himself used)

Bhandarakar — Bhandarkar,
(The spelling author himself used)