² See Carrithers et al (eds): 1985; and Ostor, Barnett et al:1992; and Marriot: 1976.

³ See Kapferer (1988: 10) for a discussion on the differences between the Indian and Sri Lankan models. Alternatively, Dirks (1987) makes the same case for India.

⁴ While there are no reliable published statistics on caste distributiion in Sri Lanka, the *goigama* perhaps account for roughly 55% of the Sinhala-speaking population. If the low-country castes of the *karava, durawa* and *salagama*, which acquired much economic prominence in the period of western colonialism were to comprise another 30%, this leaves only approximately 15% for all of the non-govi 'service' castes.

⁵ In particular the Crown Lands Ordinance No.12 of 1840, and the Waste Lands Ordinance No.1 of 1897, amended by No.1 of 1899, No.5 of 1900 and No.6 of 1903; and the Forest Ordinance No.16 of 1907.

⁶ That is, *nindagam* which were reserved for the nobility, *viharagam* which were for the Sangha, and *devalegam*, for the shrines of the deities, were aspects of the feudal system which demarcated land for state/ritual functionaries. Other than the category of *nindagam*, all other traditional categories of land still survive today; *nindagam* have been mostly absorbed by land reforms.

⁷ Regulation No. 9 of 1922, Ordinance No.6 of 1847, No. 13 of 1863, No.2 of 1895, No.19 of 1907, etc.

⁸ In contemporary Sinhala society, 'shame' is increasingly beginning to acquire individual connotations: the agent now is responsible for his/her own share.

⁹ *Machan* is a dimunitive of the more formal *massina*.

¹⁰ In everyday Sinhala usage, caste-based forms of address evidences itself in the way the second person pronoun is deployed; as in many other South Asian languages, Sinhala provides seven or eight different second-person pronouns. The tendency in the '80-'90s is towards the relatively neutral and (mostly) mutually reciprocal *oya* which perhaps corresponds most closely to the English 'you'.

Chapter 3

Understanding the Aryan Theory

Marisa Angell

> What we want here, as everywhere else, is the truth, and the whole truth.
>
> I can answer for myself and for those who have worked with me, that our translations are truthful, that we have suppressed nothing, that we have varnished nothing...
>
> — Max Muller, Preface to *The Upanishads*

> Whether a memory or funny hideous scandal, we will return to it an hour later and retell the story with additions and this time a few judgements thrown in. In this way history is organized.
>
> —Michael Ondaatje, *Running in the Family*

1. Introduction

Mention the Aryan theory to anyone, and the first mental connection that is made is between that complex area of scholarship — spanning two hundred years and disciplines which we today divide into philology,

anthropology, and, sometimes, political polemics — and the ideology of anti-Semitism refined by Hitler and the Third Reich in twentieth-century Germany. It was, in fact, Hitler who wrote, 'If we divide mankind into three categories — founders of culture, bearers of culture, and destroyers of culture — the Aryan alone can be considered as representing the first category.'[1] We are all familiar with the result of this ideology, as our century has witnessed atrocities great enough to cause Elie Wiesel, a little boy in Auschwitz in the 1940s, to declare God dead.

Understanding the Aryan theory is therefore important for the insight into a defining event in our century and into the process of manipulating a seemingly obscure and highly intricate philological argument into a political ideology. Understanding the history of the Aryan theory — from its genesis as a thesis about linguistic origins, to its metamorphosis into a racial theory — tells us about the way in which the separate streams of politics and scholarship can be made to intersect, and to sometimes become part of the same river. Most 'stories' about the Aryan theory interpret it as either a product of eighteenth-century universalism (the 'basic oneness of human nature' crosses all cultural boundaries) or the by-product of nineteenth-century racial philosophy, driven by anti-Semitism to create a new genealogy for humanity. This telling then jumps from nineteenth-century 'race-thinking (Hannnah Arendt's phrase) to Hitler's use of the theory in the twentieth century. In this paper, I argue that the place of the Aryan theory in the structure of empire has been overlooked, and that our understanding of the history of the theory must also include attention to its place as an edifice which supported the colonial structure. This paper therefore looks at the history of the Aryan theory in colonial Ceylon in the context of the British empire, the theory's inescapable political reality in the nineteenth century.

In the following section, I discuss the history of the Aryan theory from 1780 to 1880, its roots in late eighteenth-century European orientalist scholarship and its subsequent growth as an area of research and debate in colonial Ceylon. I make the distinction between the Aryan theory of languages, which posits that there is a 'common origin' — the Indo-European or Aryan language — from which the European and Indian languages descend, and the Aryan theory of races, which argues that there is additionally one common race from

which both civilizations descend. This is an important distinction because, while the earlier theory argues that Sinhalese was a linguistic descendent of the ancient Aryan language, the latter posited a Sinhalese 'race', descended from the Aryan 'race'.

After 1880 this distinction became especially important in that the later racial theory was the subject of heated and highly emotional debate in orientalist circles. The third section of my paper therefore discusses the way in which this debate was played out in the pages of the longest-running orientalist publication of the time: the *Journal of the RASCB*. I argue that the *Journal* — and, therefore, the Society itself — skewed the terms of debate by taking a clear stance in favour of the Aryan theories of language and race. Voices that did not agree with the linguistic or racial claims of the Aryan theory were either ignored (the *Journal* chose not to publish a single article arguing that Sinhalese belonged to the Dravidian language family), or were indignantly shouted down. My conclusion is that the Society's members, mostly English and Christian in the mid-1880s, conceived of the Sinhalese as distant relatives in the large Aryan family, and therefore chose to publish articles and support arguments that painted a flattering portrait of the Sinhalese 'race'.

Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism,* argues that the literature of nineteenth-century Europe 'participat [ed] in Europe's overseas empire' through the representation of its British colonies as a mute outlet for adventurers and treasure-chasers, the result of which was to 'support, elaborate, and consolidate the practice of empire'.[2] In a similar vein, I argue that the Aryan theory, while not produced solely *by* the ideology of empire, 'participated' in it by lending itself to British political aims of legitimation in Ceylon in the late nineteenth century. The final section of the paper analyses the ways in which three different branches of oriental scholarship — anthropology, historiography and archaeology — were linked to both the Aryan theory and the structure of empire, in order to better understand the Aryan theory within its dynamic of colonial knowledge-gathering, power, and issues of political legitimacy.

2. From the Aryan Theory of Languages to the Aryan Theory of Race: Ceylon and Abroad, 1780-1880

A civil service judge in Calcutta in the 1780s, Sir William Jones is considered to be the father of the Aryan theory of languages. At a 1788 meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (which he had founded in 1784), Jones stated his intent to 'demonstrate the connection or diversity between [the Indian, Chinese, Tartar, Arab and Persian races], and solve the great problem, whether they had any common origin, and whether that origin was the same...'[3] Now, this attempt to understand how it is that the different races developed was not uncommon — throughout the eighteenth century debate had raged as to whether all of mankind shared a common progenitor in Adam. Monogenesists argued that they did, and that any cultural differences were due to the environment, while polygenesists believed that the different civilizations had developed separately, and were thus as different from each other as various species of animals.[4]

What distinguished Jones in this debate was his methodical analysis of language in order to understand the extent to which different cultures had a common origin. Prior to Jones, an Italian traveller, Filipo Sassetti, had remarked in 1587 on the similarities between European and Asiatic words, and in 1767, a Jesuit, Pere Coeurdoux, had written a treatise on the affinities between Sanskrit on the one hand, and Greek and Latin on the other.[5] While Jones was probably aware of these vague suggestions, his discourse of 1788 made the case for a common origin through an in-depth analysis of the structural similarities between European and Indian languages:

> The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure, more perfect than the *Greek;* more copious than the *Latin,* and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from

some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists.[6]

The idea that the languages of the European and Indian civilizations shared a common origin gradually gained ground in Sri Lankan scholarship, where it was argued as early as 1821 — by B.C.Clough, the compiler of the first Sinhalese-English dictionary — that Sinhalese derived from Sanskrit, and was thus a direct descendent of this 'common source', the Indo-European, or Aryan, language.[7]

Thirty years later, in James de Alwis's introduction to his Sinhalese grammar, Sinhalese was defined as a combination of Pali, Sanskrit and Aryan, while Sir Emmerson Tennent argued that it had borrowed some terms from Pali and Sanskrit, but shared structural affinities with Tamil.[8] It is during this period, from the start to roughly the middle of the nineteenth century, that the Aryan theory of language was slowly refined by scholars working in philology: it was not until 1856, for example, that the term 'Dravidian' was used for the first time, by Robert Caldwell in his grammar of the South Indian languages.[9] Caldwell's theory, which argued that there was no real affinity between Sinhala and Tamil, acted as 'both a counter and a complement to the Aryan theory'.

Until roughly the middle of the nineteenth century, the level of debate and general interest in resolving the genealogy of the Sinhalese language in particular was quite mild.[10] While philology would become a central area of research for the RASCBB in later years, the opening address at the first meeting of the Society in 1845 makes no mention of this area of scholarship, stating only that the Society would focus its attention on the 'history, religion, literature, arts and social condition of the present and former inhabitants of this Island, with its geology and minerology, its climate and meteorology, its botany and zoology.'[11] In addition, a look at the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon branch), reveals that the first article published on the subject of language, by the Reverend Robert Spence Hardy, is both vague and equivocal. Hardy first states that Sinhalese is 'supposed to have nine-tenths of the vocables from the Sanskrit', but then declares it highly unlikely that Vijaya and his followers passed along a version of Sanskrit to the inhabitants of Sri Lanka.[12] Without

addressing the acknowledged similarities between Sanskrit and Sinhalese, Hardy takes a new path and declares Sinhalese to be a probable descendent of the aboriginal language of Sri Lanka.[13] Unlike later articles in the same journal, Hardy seems to be more interested in his missionizing agenda than in debating the origins of the Sinhalese language: he hopes the language will one day 'be consecrated to the noble purpose of teaching the sublimest lessons of Christianity...'[14]

Hardy's aim becomes clear if it is read alongside an earlier article in the same issue of the Journal. In a more blatant example of Christian apologetics, the Reverend J.G.MacVicar argues that Sinhalese should switch to using the roman alphabet, 'the alphabet of Christian civilization and discovery' since it 'cannot but diffuse itself in the same proportion as Christian civilization and discovery advance.' MacVicar even goes so far as to attach the Lord's Prayer in a romanized Sinhalese script.[15]

The importance of these two articles is twofold. It is apparent from this first issue of the *Journal* that the Aryan theory of languages had not yet become mainstream enough for scholars in Sri Lanka to say much about it. Also, it becomes clear that from very early days of British empire and of British scholarship in Sri Lanka, language was looked upon as a tool that could be manipulated to gain greater power.

A sort of turning point in the debate was reached in 1861, however, when Max Muller definitively declared the unimpeachability of the Aryan theory: in his *Lectures on the Science of Language,* he stated that he 'classif[ied] the idioms spoken in Iceland and Ceylon as cognate dialects of the Aryan family of languages'.[16] By 1866, James de Alwis had revised his earlier theory on Sinhalese; in an essay that according to Gunawardene 'reflects the new climate of opinion that had set in', de Alwis cited both Caldwell and Muller to argue that Sinhala belonged squarely to the Aryan family, while Tamil was Dravidian in origin.[17] This line demarcating the Sinhalese from the Tamil language would become thicker through the 1870s and 1880s, as classifications of language came to be tied up with classifications of race.

In 1808, nearly thirty years after Sir William Jones's famous discourse on the 'common origin' of the European and Indian languages, Friedrich Schlegel, a German Romantic philosopher, added a new ingredient to the Aryan theory of languages by 'deducing from the relationship of language a relationship of race'.[18] In his *Essay on the Language and Wisdom of the Indians,* Schlegel credited India with having founded empires that had succeeded in civilizing the West — by doing so, he turned the linguistic connection posited by Jones into a cultural and racial connection.

Although Schlegel's thesis was written at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was not incorporated into mainstream scholarship in Sri Lanka until Max Muller also began to conflate linguistic and racial affinities. In his writings of the 1870s Muller used the term 'Aryan race' often, and wrote that some of his research was guided by an attempt to find 'the cradle of our race'.[19] While it is easy to gloss over the substitution of the word 'race' for 'language', the equation of one with the other was strikingly important as it laid the groundwork for much of the race-based physical anthropology in Sri Lanka towards the end of the nineteenth century:Jones's thesis — with the aid of Muller and other (mainly British and German) scholars in nineteenth-century colonial Sri Lanka — was evolved from a rather obscure philological argument to a mainstream, racially divisive statement. It is because of Muller's involvement in the development of this idea that R.A.L.H.Gunawardene labelled the German scholar the Aryan racial theory's 'most effective propagandist':'his career spanned more than half a century, and his standing as one of the foremost scholars in Oriental languages added authority to his views.'[20] While Muller attempted to retract his stand on the issue in 1872, his statements 'passed almost unheeded', not only because the theory had taken on a life of its own, but also because Muller himself continued to refer to the 'Aryan race' in many of his writings and lectures.[21]

It was not solely Muller who had taken up the mantle of Schlegel's argument, however. By 1860 the division between Aryans and Semites in European thought had become widely accepted, 'a part of the intellectual baggage of all cultivated Europeans' to the extent that Darwin, in the *Descent of Man* (1871) had referred to the two as separate races, and the Anthropological Society of London had accepted the distinction.[22] The Aryan language family — made up of a variety of different languages that had evolved to an extent that their commonalities were barely visible — had given birth to the Aryan racial family, which would come to be defined as a discrete race with physically identifiable features.

3.   The Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon: a Voice for the Aryan Theory of Race, 1880-1895[23]

I have chosen to concentrate much of my attention on the Royal Asiatic Society and its Journal of the period for many reasons. Firstly, while other self-styled orientalist journals appeared sporadically, the Journal was the only outlet for scholarly discourse published almost uninterruptedly from 1845 through to the present day. Scholars chose to publish in the Journal with the knowledge that their reading audience would be substantially larger than with other journals. Secondly, the RASCB was involved in a wide variety of aspects of scholarship besides publishing a journal, such as providing for an Archaeology Exploration Fund (started in 1884), which evolved into the Department of Archaeology in 1890; and the opening of a museum in 1877 which still exists as the Colombo Museum. Because of this, the RASCB is the best place to look for an understanding of the ways in which British scholars related to Ceylon. Thirdly, the RASCB was considered 'the club of the intelligentsia'[24] the place where one could find the most informed scholarship of the nineteenth century. This important position was attested to by the Governor's historical position as Patron of the Society. While this may have blurred the lines between government research and private scholarship (a subject to which I return in Section.IV), I think that the high level of respect accorded

the Society makes it a critical source for anyone attempting to make sense of nineteenth-century scholarship in Sri Lanka.

However, it is clear from reading many of the articles, and the minutes of meetings at which the articles were discussed, that the RASCB did not take a neutral stance on what would become a debate over the Aryan theory — both in relation to language and to race. In the most partisan of the journals, volume IX of 1885-1886, all the articles that touch on language, race and culture in Ceylon argue that the Sinhalese are both linguistically and racially Aryan; that Tamils are Dravidian; and that the Sinhalese/Aryan race is superior both racially and (therefore) culturally. While these arguments — racially tinged and strongly apologetic — can be shrugged off as a sign of the times in European racial and anthropological thinking, they are more than just artifacts of a happily bygone era.The vehemence with which these articles are presented and defended from counter-attacks betrays a personal involvement in the Aryan issue that goes beyond neutral scholarship.

Nira Wickramasinghe, along with others who have studied British scholarship in Ceylon in the nineteenth century, has acknowledged the role of the burgeoning discipline of anthropology in abetting racial thinking:

> Developments in physical anthropology and linguistics at the turn of the twentieth century were responsible for the definition of essentially linguistic groups such as Tamil and Sinhalese in Ceylon in terms of physical characteristics which were supposed to be specific to those groups.[25]

Two articles, in particular, in the Journal (1885-86) lend credence to this statement, and highlight both the increasing importance of the newly-created discipline of physical anthropology, as well as the partisan uses to which that new 'science' could be applied.

The first article, by Drs C.F. and P.B.Sarasin, sets for itself the object of divining whether the anatomical differences between the Sinhalese, Tamils and Veddas were great enough to classify them as distinct races.[26] Using the 'scientific' procedures of their time, the

Sarasins wrote that the only way in which they could come to a clear conclusion on the subject was to 'collect as large a number of skulls as possible, and take measurements of numerous specimens of each race to compile averages.'[27] The Sinhalese, results showed, had the largest heads, 'and this fact is in accordance with the higher intellect of the latter', the former being the Tamil skulls that were measured.[28] The height of the face (measured from nose to chin) was the Sarasins' next group of data: the Veddas, they wrote, measure 105 mm, the Tamils 111 mm, and the Sinhalese 115 mm, and, they felt, 'this difference gives to the whole face a different appearance'.[29] The nose measurements taken also lent themselves as proof to the anthropologists that the Sinhalese were the more pleasing (?) race: the Vedda nose measured 40 mm, the Sinhalese was 'only' 39 mm, and the Tamil nose 38 mm.

While the methods used in researching this article were unquestionably not what we today would define as scientific, the importance of this article lies not in its shaky data collection, but in its partisanship. Although the differentials in nose measurements were slight, for example, and the Sinhalese nose did not have the smallest measurement, it was still made to seem the smallest through the Sarasins' record — it was 'only' 39 mm. They added, as if to compensate for their length, Sinhalese noses were 'well-formed and 'eagle-shaped'.[30] This piece of physical anthropology, like many others that the *Journal* would publish, is most interesting for the way in which it skews all 'data' returns in favour of the Sinhalese.

A second article in the same *Journal* is interesting for what it omits, rather than for what it includes. Professor Virchow, a German anthropologist, conducted a similar study on six skulls that were loaned to him by the Colombo Museum. Although his findings were not conclusive, Virchow confidently stated, after having inspected the skulls and compared them with each other, that 'the Sinhalese face is an importation from the Aryan province of the Indian continent.'[31] This was not a new argument; nor were his research methods. What is striking here, however, is that the Royal Asiatic Society in Ceylon went to the trouble of having this article translated from its original German by the Royal Academy of Science in Berlin (where, it is assumed, Virchow presented this article). This is especially intriguing

since it was the second such article by Virchow that was translated — the first was translated in Ceylon[32] — while the Society never chose to translate and publish articles arguing that Sinhalese was in fact a Dravidian language — an omission which could not have been due to a lack of knowledge, since Virchow himself refers to the Dravidian theories of Rask (1821), Lassen, and F.Muller (1879).[33]

Both articles beg the question: why did the articles published in 1885, specifically, by the Royal Asiatic Society in Ceylon display such a clear bias in favour of the Sinhalese 'race'? I do not here seek the reasons behind the arguments of the Drs Sarasin and Professor Virchow. I limit the question to why the Society chose to publish these particular articles rather than others. A small part of the answer, I think, is Bishop Copleston. As President of the Society from 1884 to 1892 he would have had a say in what the Society chose to print in its journal. Bishop of Colombo from 1876 to 1902, Copleston was considered a hardliner in his attitudes towards Buddhism. In reference to Rhys-Davids, Copleston had warned an Anglican Missionary Conference in England that the Church should oppose 'that false liberality, disloyal to our religion, by which Buddhism is flattered, its deadly character glossed over, and its supposed resemblances to Christianity monstrously exaggerated.'[34] By taking this position, and as a result of his later tracts attacking aspects of Buddhism, Copleston betrayed 'an inability to recognize an integrity within Buddhism apart from Christianity.'[35]

While Copleston's position on Buddhism may not shed light on why the Society seemed to be pro-Sinhalese during his reign as President, it does reveal his inability to accept a culture outside of his own European, Christian identity. In answer to the apparent inconsistency, it is important to keep in mind the connection that had been made in mainstream scholarship between the Aryan and Sinhalese 'races'. Both Copleston and others within the Society at that time conceived of the Sinhalese as distant Aryan cousins; by valuing Sinhalese culture, they were valuing their own, also of Aryan origin. Minutes of the meetings of the Society in 1885 reveal the extent to which members of the society identified with the Sinhalese.

At a general meeting of the RASCB on 22 September 1885, Mr S.M.Burrows, at that time the Assistant Government Agent in

Kandy, read an anonymous manuscript entitled 'Jottings from a Jungle Diary'.The thesis of the text was that the archaeological finds at Anuradhapura were produced by Tamil craftsmen and artists, a theory with which Burrows '[knew] that our President [would] not agree'.[36] The argument of 'Jottings', as Burrows interpreted it, was that the striking similarity between the ruins of Anuradhapura and ruins in Madras were proof that the cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa were 'more or less replicas of the Seven Pagodas and similar Indian shrines'.[37] While this thesis could have been disputed on the grounds that there was little proof — save one anonymous person's impressions — that the ancient cities were an artistic legacy of south Indian civilization, this was not the way in which the meeting unfolded. Burrows had already introduced the thesis with the slightly melancholy statement,

> Of course one would like to believe that these delicate
> and chaste designs were the spontaneous outcome of
> the artistic Aryan mind, and spread from the cities of the
> Aryan invaders in Ceylon to the dark Dravidian continent,
> its neighbour in the north.[38]

In the discussion which followed the reading of this paper, however, he would find that there were others present with more partisan feelings than he. When a Mr Cull challenged the thesis, Copleston stated that he was glad someone had objected, since 'they would all be very much disappointed if the credit of that great work should be lost to the Aryan family, to which most of them [the members of the RASCBB] had the honour to belong.'[39] Who were the members at that time? Copleston offered a different theory for the similarities between the architecture of South India and that of Ceylon: the shrines of south India were similar to the ancient cities of Ceylon because both of them were descendents of north Indian (Aryan) architecture. In any case, he finally stated, the thesis of 'Jottings' may be correct, but 'he thought they would find that our architecture and all that is beautiful in the country is of Aryan origin.'[41]

The controversy did not end there.When, three months later, the Annual General Meeting of the Society reviewed the work accomplished in the preceeding year, the 'Jottings' incident was also reported: Burrows, it stated, had challenged prevailing opinions by having 'diverged into ingenious speculations as to the origin of all that art and civilization, and shocked the Aryan sensibilities of some of us by suggesting in reality that it was Dravidian.'[42] Burrows had stepped into a hornet's nest by reading aloud someone else's thesis that the ancient cities of Ceylon had been built by Tamil craftsmen — and the resulting buzz sheds light on the Sinhalese bias in articles published by the RASCB during the 1880s.

In addition, an 1892 issue of the *Journal* betrays a continuing doctrinaire position on the racial issue. In 'The Ethnology of Ceylon', Nell criticized language analysis in Ceylon for overlooking the fact that, in many cases, the language spoken in an area told not of the inhabitants' race, but of previous settlements of people.[42] The fact that Sinhalese was spoken in Ceylon was not necessarily a clue to the racial makeup of the Sinhalese; just as the Scotch, Irish, Welsh and Cornwall Celts would not be considered descendents of the Anglo-Saxons simply because they spoke English.

The discussion that followed his paper was reminiscent of the Burrows incident. Various members attacked the theory, insisting that the Sinhalese were descendents of the ancient Aryans. Discussion had to be adjourned for the day due to the large number of responses.When the Society did gather again to discuss Nell's thesis, the President (Copleston) had to make a special point that though 'discussion' did not normally entail the presentation of new papers, he would make an exception at this meeting. He allowed members to read the written responses they had prepared. Although most of the responses centred around attempts to establish the fact that Vijaya had been Aryan, it is important to note the very emotional reaction engendered by Nell's argument. Never before had so many members of the society written papers refuting another's thesis.

The Burrows and the Nell incidents, clearly reveal that members of the Society identified racially with the Sinhalese, a result of the late-nineteenth century conflation of linguistic with racial

affinities. In addition, they also show that departure from this party line was an affront to members with 'Aryan sensibilities' and to be branded as either wild speculation or a great 'disappointment'.Clearly, then, the Society's original aims to 'institute and promote enquiries' into Ceylonese culture was not met in the articles published on the Aryan theory. Anthropological articles, such as the one written by the Sarasins, presented data in a way which claimed racial superiority for the Sinhalese, while the opposite view — represented in the papers presented by Burrows and Nell — was vehemently attacked. The stakes now were evidently much higher than when the scope of the Aryan theory did not extend beyond language.

4.   Understanding the Aryan Theory: Colonial Knowledge-Gathering and Political Legitimacy

The Aryan theory has been characterized as either a well-intentioned product of eighteenth-century universalist thinking -part of a larger attempt to prove the overarching unity of humankind, or as a creation of nineteenth century 'race-thinking' and its underlying anti-Semitism.[43] While both these readings of the Aryan theory are valid, it is also important to stress the fact that the theory was first introduced by the culture of colonialism, as a theory of language, and then at its **zenith, w**as a product of the culture of imperialism as a racial theory.

In this section, I first discuss the area of orientalist scholarship most closely associated with the structure of colonialism — anthropology.This area of study closely linked to the Aryan theory and was used by the British to increase their political power in Ceylon. I then look at British historiogrpahy in nineteenth-century Ceylon in order to assess the extent to which the Aryan theory of races influenced the writing of history during this time.Finally, with this understanding of the strong link between orientalist scholarship in Ceylon and colonial power, I turn specifically to the deeply entwined relationship between archaeology, the Aryan theory and political legitimation which secured the structure of empire for the British.

Anthropology, the Aryan Theory and Empire

Of all fields of research in which nineteenth-century British orientalists were engaged, anthropology and the related field of philology were probably most closely connected to the colonial state's attempt to secure political position in Ceylon. As such, Ceylon was no different to many other colonies. Edward Said has written that anthropology has historically had a close connection with colonialism:

> Of all the modern social sciences, anthropology is the one historically most closely tied to colonialism, since it was often the case that anthropologists and ethnologists advised colonial rulers on the manners and mores of the native people.[44]

In fact, it was Levi-Strauss who first referred to his field as 'the handmaiden of colonialism'.[45] This strong connection between scholarship and political power had been made explicitly clear at the fiftieth anniversary of the original Royal Asiatic Society, founded by Sri William Jones in Bengal, when W.C.Taylor applauded British success in opening up the cultural treasures of Hindustan to Europe: when he got around to appealing for more funds so that the Society could continue its research efforts, he unequivocally stated, 'Knowledge is power.'[46]   That is, donations would buy increased political power for the British in the form of knowledge about their subject population — a connection which Max Muller also made at this time in the preface to *The Upanishads:*

> Apart from the interest which the Sacred Books of all religions possess in the eyes of the theologian, and, more particularly, *of the missionary, to whom an accurate knowledge of them is as indispensable as a knowledge of the enemy's country is to a general,* these works have of late assumed a new importance.[47]

But scholars such as Max Muller and his colleagues in the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal were not the only ones to recognize

the importance of gaining some knowledge about 'the enemy's country'. In Ceylon in July of 1880, Governor James Longden forwarded two papers to the Secretary of the Colonies on 'the inhabitants of Ceylon, their race, character and language and on the history of Ceylon'.The documents were marked 'confidential' and sent straight to the Intelligence Department of the War Office, the reason for which soon becomes apparent.[48]

One document, written by the Assistant Colonial Secretary, begins with simple population numbers from the 1871 census, but has already moved onto its central point by page three: the Sinhalese, it is reported, 'as a rule are a very unwarlike race'. They are mainly landholders and 'it would be very difficult to induce them in any number to engage in military operations whether fighting or in transport.' The Tamils, the report states, are also 'unwarlike' but 'would assist in transporting stores for troops who sheltered them' since they are less wealthy and therefore less independent than the Sinhalese.[49] The Moors and Malays, finally, are listed as 'the most warlike of the Asiatics in Ceylon'[50]. In June of 1882 a confidential reply from the Secretary to the Governor, stated that the document had been 'of special interest to the War Department'.

With this in mind, the anthropological articles published in the *Journal of the RASCB* should be approached with caution, especially since the Society had close links with the state — its patron was always the Governor of Ceylon. It was responsible for beginning the Colombo Museum (opened 1877); and its archaeological exploration fund quickly became the state's Department of Archaeology (in 1890). Since knowledge was very clearly recognized as power at that time, and in those circles, one wonders about the relationship between the anthropological articles in the *Journal* and the state's far-reaching attempt to consolidate its political position in Ceylon, especially after reading the confidential cultural reports that passed between the Governor's office and the War Department in 1880.

Bernard Cohn, in studying colonial formsof knowledge about India in the nineteenth century, noted that the British attempt to learn and codify the Indian languages into grammars was 'a crucial component in their construction of the system of rule'.[52] Language study, closely related to (and at times subsumed by) anthropology,

was important to the structure of empire because it provided the British with the knowledge necessary to access local elites:

> Elites had to be found within Indian society who could be made to see that they had an interest in the maintenance of British rule. Political strategies and tactics had to be created and codified into diplomacy through which the country powers could be converted into allied dependencies.[52]

However, if one takes this idea a step further, would the most successful way to gaining the loyalty and support of local elites be to claim kinship with them? Rather than simply learning the language of the 'enemy country', would it not be more effective to emphasize common bloodliness with the population of that country? The difference is comparable to, on the one hand, a thief's assumption that if addressed in his language, the victim would readily part with his television set, and on the other, a sophisticated argument for a grandfather's estate, based on the claim of direct descent.

Nira Wickramasinghe has observed that the Aryan theory was used in India to provide legitimacy to upper castes, but did not feature more closely than that in the state's attempt to consolidate its political position. M.Banton, she notes, 'shows that in India, the Aryan theory pointed to common ties between the British and the native people, but British officialdom made almost no use of this theory to prove the providential nature of British rule in India.'[53] I, too, would not go so far as to say that British 'offialdom' in colonial Ceylon openly espoused the Aryan theory in order to gain political power. However, if one looks at the articles that touch upon the Aryan theory in the *Journal of the R.A.S.C.B.* and concurrent political goings-on in the 1880s, there is a marked confluence of identities — in orientalist scholarship, between Sinhalese Aryans and British Aryans; and in politics, between the Sinhalese Kandyan elite and the British. R.A.L.H.Gunawardene has noted that the Aryan theory in colonial Ceylon was embraced not only by British orientalists, but also by swathes of the Sinhalese community. The theory 'provided a section of the colonial peoples of South Asia with a prestigious "pedigree": it

elevated them to the rank of the kinsmen of their rulers, even though the relationship was a distant and tenuous one.'[54]

Simultaneously, K.M.de Silva wrote that, in the period between the 1880s and the attainment of independence in the twentieth century,

> the Kandyans mostly took satisfaction in a new role -- that of associates of the British and a counterweight to the reform and nationalist movements dominated by the emerging elite of the maritime districts. The leaders of Kandyan opinion seldom showed much sympathy for the political aspirations of these movements; when not positively hostile, they stood aloof and suspicious.[55]

Perhaps, then, it is no accident that during the very years that the *Journal of the RASCB.* put its full support behind the Aryan theory, the Kandyan elites became more closely linked to the British power structure — not necessarily because the *Journal* had that much sway over complicated questions of political and cultural identities, but because the *Journal* was both a creator of and, more importantly, *a reflection of* opinion in the nineteenth century.

Historiography, the Aryan Theory and Empire

Anthropology was not the only field of research closely tied to the structure of empire. The way in which history was written and understood was another area that at times served as a second 'handmaiden' to the colonial effort. In an 1886 RASCB report on the progress made in translating the *Mahavamsa,* we read that the text stands as proof that the Tamil 'invaders' had done nothing but plunder and ransack Ceylon throughout ancient history.[56] This report is also used as an opportunity to further criticize Burrows. The *Mahavamsa,* note 20, chapter 78, relates the building of a huge stupa by both Sinhalese and Tamil labourers. The report concludes that the fact that Tamil labour was noted shows that the event was 'an uncommon instance'.[57] Most striking of all, however, is the claim that ancient history displays the 'abhorrence shown to the too frequent Tamil invader' who 'desecrated the holy places and demolished the

shrines of the land'.[58] The Tamils had built nothing in Ceylon, but had destroyed what others had built — clear proof that Burrows's thesis was wrong.

The one main theme of this reading of history was that the Tamils were categorized as 'invaders' who plundered Ceylon. What is interesting is that the British, too, were invaders of Ceylon. First they fought the Dutch for control of the island to use it in the military defence of the Indian Empire, but later as a Crown Colony in 1802, it slowly became another exploitable commercial property. By the 1880s Ceylon's economy had been transformed into a plantation economy that was dominated by three products.[59] As one editorial in the *Edinburgh Review* stated, the colonies were

> the principal and the surest channels for commerce which we felt to be the lifeblood of the nation...We compelled them to trade with us exclusively, to take from us exclusively all the articles which we could suppply then, and to send us exclusively all the produce of their soil...our colonies were customers who could not escape us, and vendors who could sell to us alone.[60]

Material for comparison between Tamil and British 'invaders' existed therefore and in abundance. If Tamils were painted as plunderers, one would think that the British would be seen in the same dim light. English historians of the nineteenth century, however, would not be the ones to make this connection. Rather, in all the stories that they tell of the history of colonial Ceylon, there is one unifying theme — the British brought progress to the colony. Yasmine Gooneratne has noted that many of these histories presented the British in the role of 'deliverer and preserver.[61] In one history of Ceylon, written in 1887, we find chapters such as 'Legislative and General Improvements Under the Rule of Successive British Governors', and 'What the Plantation Industry has Done for Ceylon'.[62]

However, in Bishop Copleston's report on the research undertaken in 1885 by the RASCB we read that there is little hope that anything new will be found at ancient sites not yet opened, since the Tamils had so thoroughly 'ransacked' so many of the country's

treasures.[63] If the British version of Ceylon's history in which Tamils are characterized as 'plunderers' and the British as bringers of prosperity, is read with an understanding of the ways in which anthropology — a sister social science — and the Aryan theory had been put to work for the state, it can be interpreted as a complement to the aims of the Aryan argument. That is, the historian's portrayal of the Tamils as having 'ransacked' the ancient (Aryan) monuments serves to distance the invading British from the invading Tamils — the Tamils destroyed, while the British built and improved. This reading of ancient and modern history would have emphasized the difference between the two groups of 'interlopers', as Benedict Anderson terms the colonial powers. This simultaneously would stress yet again the commonalities between the British and the Sinhalese elites.

The Problem of Political Legitimacy: Archaeological Exploration and the Aryan Theory

Eric Hobsbawm, in an influential study of the growth of nationalism as a modern ideology, has argued that the period in European history between roughly 1830 and 1880 can be characterized as the Age of Revolutions. It is in this period that forms of government through elected representation took hold in Europe. Combined with the state's loss of a religious or secular-ideological hold over its people (for example, loyalty to a king), this led the state into a new and tenuous position,[64] which in turn led it to propound the ideology of nationalism:

> For rulers the problem was thus not simply that of acquiring a new legitimacy, though where states were new or novel this had also to be solved, and identification with a 'people' or 'nation', however defined, was a convenient and fashionable way of solving it, and in states which insisted on poplular sovereignty, by definition the only way. What else could legitimize the monarchies of states which had never previously existed as such, like Greece, Italy or Belgium, or whose existence broke with all historical precedents, like the German empire of 1871?[65]

This is not to say that governments simply stepped in and filled an ideological power vacuum with arbitrary definitions of a 'people' or 'nation.' Rather, Hobsbawm notes that states were most successful when they 'borrowed and fostered' sentiments that already existed.[66]

Britain did not experience the same wave of revolutions that swept through much of Europe during this period, but it did share a problem with the new European states in relation to its colonies: the legitimization of a new political order. While the idea behind the 'white man's burden', as Kipling phrased it — that Britain had a responsibility to bring progress to all corners of the globe — may have legitimized the empire for the general public at home, it was simply not good enough for the civil servants who actually lived and worked in the colonies.[67]

Benedict Anderson has noted the significance of this problem, and stated that, 'fully aware of their interloper status',European colonial powers 'attempted to legitimize the spread of their power by quasi-legal methods.' The most popular method was to claim inheritance from local leaders that had been either eliminated or subjected.[68] In addition to this political claim, however, Anderson has also argued persuasively for a direct relationship between the colonial state's support for archaeological exploration and political legitimacy:

> It is noticeable how heavily concentrated archaeological efforts were on the restoration of imposing monuments...No doubt this emphasis reflected general Orientalist fashions. But the substantial funds invested allow us to suspect that the state had its own, non-scientific reasons.[69]

Anderson gives three 'non-scientific reasons' for the colonial state's great interest in archaeology: firstly, archaeological restoration and state-sponsored publication of local literary texts were part of a conservative educational programme whose goal was to reinforce local culture; secondly, restoration 'always placed the builders of the monuments and the colonial natives in a certain hierarchy' — the builders, of course, held a higher cultural rank; and thirdly, the sites were researched and cared for so that 'their ancient prestige (which

if this had disappeared, as it often had, the state would attempt to revive) draped around the mappers'.[70] The state's willingness to fund archaeological exploration should therefore be understood as an attempt to create 'alternative legitimacies' for holding power in the colonies — they were 'repositioned as regalia for a *secular* colonial state'.[71]

One can see the same dynamic at work in the archaeological explorations in Ceylon during the late nineteenth century. In the discussion that followed H.C.P. Bell's 'Report on Sigiriya', published in the *Journal of the RASCB* in 1895, Mr Burrows and Mr Murray (the artist whose job it was to reproduce the frescos on paper) reported that they had thought to 'leave something in the shape of a momento' after having mapped the site.[72] The two men found a bottle, which they filled with some 'papers of the day' and some coins. As they were leaving, however, the men reported that a Buddhist and a Sivite priest asked if they could pray for the preservation of the bottle (here the minutes of the meeting report that laughter rang out amongst the members). Mr Murray notes that permission was given, and 'he and Mr Burrows, wondering what they could do in the way of dedication and sentiment, sang "God Save the Queen".'[73] Later, in the same meeting, as Bell complained of vandalism at the site, a Mr R.W.Levers admitted that, during a visit to the site, he had 'placed his obscure name' on the wall of Sigiriya, so that he was, 'alas! a vandal'.[74]

This incident shows that the attitude towards archaeological exploration in colonial Ceylon matched up with Anderson's characterization of the effort as an inescapably political one. I do not argue that all archaeological efforts in Ceylon were characterized by irreverance, but certainly issues of colonial power were tied up in what, like archaeology, should have been purely scholarly areas. The writing of Lever's name and the singing of the British anthem together with the flippant manner in which the incidents were related, speak of a proprietorial attitude — the British had researched and mapped this site, and therefore could claim it as their own.

The Aryan theory in Ceylon gave the British added legitimacy in claiming ancient archaeological sites as their own. Articles written on the the Aryan theory bear striking resemblances to Anderson's characterization of archaeological exploration at the time. Ancient sites, Anderson writes, were 'museumized' so that their ancient prestige

was 'draped around the mappers', and 'alternative legitimacies' were created for colonial rule. Proof of the argument is in the outrage which greeted Burrows's report of a thesis arguing that Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa had been built by Tamil craftsmen: the members of the Society wanted the considerable artistic credit to go to the 'Aryan family, to which most of them had the honour to belong', and it was later reported that the members' 'Aryan sensibilities' had been 'shocked' by Burrows's argument.[75] An acknowledgement that the site had in fact been built by a group not considered part of the Aryan fold would have questioned the British members' own claims to involvement with the site. If attributed to Aryan artistry, the British treatment of these sites as their own property was somewhat legitimized, in that they could conceive of themselves as the latest in a series of Aryan presences in Ceylon. While the ancient Aryans had painted the frescos that adorned Sigiriya, the British would leave bottles filled with 'papers of the day' and a signature on the wall as a symbol of this inheritance.

4. The After-Life of the Aryan Theory in Sri Lanka

Sections II and III of this paper have traced the history of the Aryan theory in Sri Lankan scholarship, both in its linguistic and racial forms, and discussed the ways in which the most influential outlet for rientalist scholarship in the late nineteenth century, the *Journal of the RASCB*, was a clear proponent and mouthpiece for the theory. The section contextualizes the Aryan theory in the inescapable political reality of which it was a part — the British effort in Ceylon.

As R.A.L.H.Gunawardana has noted, the Aryan theory took its place as part of Sri Lankan 'intellectual baggage' by the turn of the century. In December 1897, *The Buddhist* published an article on 'The Aryan Sinhalese'; in 1899 a booklet appeared listing Aryan Sinhalese names; in 1910 a journal titled *The Aryan* was founded; and in 1931 A.E.Blaze's *A History of Ceylon for Schools* was revised in order to make Vijaya the founder of the 'Aryan race' rather than the Sinhalese kingdom, as it had previously stated.[76]

However, K.M.de Silva, one of Sri Lanka's foremost historians, has written that 'We have at present no archaeological evidence with regard to the early Indo-Aryan settlers...In particular we have no archaeological finds that could be traced back to either the west or east coasts of Northern India.'[77]   The Aryan theory, then, still remains what it was at the end of the eighteenth century: an explanation for the linguistic similarities which were first definitively noted by Sir William Jones.

Notes

[1]   Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, quoted in Leon Poliakov. *The Aryan Myth.* p.2.

[2]   Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1993) p.14.

[3]   William Jones quoted in Garland Cannon, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). p.242.

[4]   See Richard H.Popkin, *Isaac la Peyrere, His Life, Work and Influence* (Leiden, New York, Kobenhavn and Koln: E.J.Brill, 1987).

[5]   Cannon, p.242.

[6]   Cannon, p.245.

[7]   R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, 'The People of the Lion', *Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities,* vol.V., nos.1 and 2, 1979, p.28.

[8]   In 1852 de Alwis claimed that Pali had lent Sinhalese terms connected with the 'national religion' of the Sinhalese, while Sanskrit had provided terms associated with the arts and sciences, and Aryan was responsible for 'native terms expressive of the common wants of mankind before the refined organization of society.' (James de Alwis, Introduction to *The Sidath Sangarawa* [Colombo: William Skeen, Government Printer of Ceylon, 1965], p.xlviii.]In 1859 Tennet agreed with de Alwis in regard to Pali and Sanskrit influences, but wrote of no Aryan influence (Gunawardana, p.29).

[9]   R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, p.29

[10]   As I discuss in the next section, many of the outlets for scholarly debate in areas such as philology — for example, the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch — concentrated their attention on Sinhalelse, rather than Tamil. The founding of *The Taprobanian* journal in 1885 attempted to redress this imbalance, but publication was stopped shortly after the first issues came out.

[11]   Address by Justice Stark at the first general meeting, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* vol.I, 1845, pp.1-5.

[12]   Prince Vijaya is commonly believed to have founded the Sinhalese race when he came from India with five hundred of his followers.

[13]   Reverend Robert Spence Hardy, 'On the Language and Literature of the Singhalese.' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch),* vol.I, 1845, pp.99, 101.

[14]   Hardy, p.104.

[15]   Reverend J.G.MacVicar, 'On the Elements of the Voice, Viewed in Reference to the Roman and Singhalese Alphabets, Commending the Writing of Singhalese in Roman Letters'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* vol.I, 1845, pp.38-58.

[16]   Muller, quoted in Gunawardana, p.29.

[17]   Gunawardana, p.29.

[18]   Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth,* p.190.

[19]   Muller, quoted in Gunawardene, p.27.

[20]   Gunawardana, p.27.

[21]   Poliakov, p.214. At the University for Strasbourg inaugural lecture in May 1872, Muller stated, 'How many misunderstandings and how many controversies are due to what is deducted by arguing from language to blood-relationship or from blood-relationship to language. Aryan and Semitic languages exist but it is antiscientific, unless one realizes the

degree of license one is employing, to speak of an Aryan race, Aryan blood, or Aryan skulls.'

22   Poliakov, p.255.

23   I have divided my discussion of the history of the Aryan theories in Ceylon into sections demarcated by dates. The writings that I encountered after 1880 display a familiarity with the terms of debate, a result of the gradual process of refinement of the theory's central ideas that took place during the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. In addition, the writings after 1880 betray a high degree of emotional involvement in the debate, which earlier had been comparatively dry and academic. A possible explanation is that the period of 1874 to 1914 represents 'the great imperial phase of British history', when the 'scramble for Africa' took place. It was in the middle of this period, during the years 1884 to 1890, that the British Empire gained 37 million square miles and acquired 57 million more people. While the relationship of these external events to contemporary orientalist scholarship in Ceylon is by no means evident, the political legitimacy that I argue the British attempted to gain through the Aryan racial theory may explain the curiously exact overlap in the dates of these two phenomena.

24   *Ceylon in Our Times, 1894 to 1969* (The Colombo Apothecaries Co., Ltd., 1969), p.14. In addition, Yasmine Gooneratne writes that the RASCB 'is an important part of the literary history of the period, for it gathered the outstanding talent of colonial society into its fold, and provided a forum for the exchange of ideas and a Journal for the publication of original research.' (Yasmine Gooneratne, *English Literature in Ceylon, 1815-1878* [Colombo: Tisara Prakasakayo, 1968], pp.59-60).

25   Nira Wickremasinghe, *Ethnic Politics in Colonial Sri Lanka*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishers, 1995. p.9. R.A.L.H. Gunawardana makes the same point in 'People', p.31.

26   Drs C.F. and S.B.Sarasin, 'Outline of Two Years' Scientific Researches in Ceylon', *Journal*, vol.IX, 1885-86, p.292.

27   Ibid., p.292. Besides the fact that their research methods show that they had made their conclusions prior to comparing the skulls (they already

refer to the specimens as representative of each 'race'), the method used also speaks of liberties taken in Ceylon that may not have been used in Europe — the Sarasins write that they dug up the skulls themselves, and therefore were 'sure that no confusion has arisen' (Ibid., p.292).

28   Ibid., p.293.

29   Ibid., p.293.

30   Ibid., p.294.

31   Professor R.Virchow, 'The Veddas of Ceylon, and their Relation to the Neighbouring Tribes', p.490.

32   See 'Professor Virchow's Ethnological Studies of the Sinhalese Race.' Translated by W.R.Kynsey and J.D.MacDonald, pp. 267-88.

33   Virchow, 'The Veddas', p.380. The only outlet for opinions that went against the RASCB grain was a journal titled *The Taprobanian,* which touted itself as 'a Dravidian Journal of Oriental Studies in and around Ceylon in Natural History, Archaeology, Philology, History, &c.' Unlike the *Journal* of the RASCB, *The Taprobanian* had an extremely short life, as it was only published between October 1885 and June 1888. Although it did accept articles, for the most part it acted as a mouthpiece for its editor, Hugh Nevill, a member of the Ceylon Civil Service for more than twenty years, the bulk of this time spent as the Assistant Government Agent in Trincomalee. The argument to which Nevill returned again and again in *The Taprobanian* was that the Sinhalese language was 'of Dravidian structure and an Aryan glossary'. While this theory would be picked up later and expanded upon by Ceylonese scholars, such as W.F. Gunawardhana in the 1920, Nevill's journal stood alone in the mid- to late- 1880s. (See Hugh Nevill, 'Notes and Queries'. *The Taprobanian,* April 1886, p.103.)

34   Copleston quoted in Elizabeth Harris, *Crisis, Competition and Conversion: The British Encounter with Buddhism in Nineteenth*

Century Sri Lanka, Ph.D.Dissertation, Post-Graduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, p.277.

[35]   Harris, p.317.

[36]   Proceedings of 1885, *Journal of the RASCBB* vol.IX, 1885-86, p.cxxxiii.

[37]   Ibid., p.cxxxiv.

[38]   Ibid., p.cxxxiii.

[39]   Ibid., p.cxxxv.

[40]   Ibid., p.cxxxvi.

[41]   Ibid., p.xcviii.

[42]   Louis Nell, 'The Ethnology of Ceylon', *Journal of the RASCB,* vol.XII, no.42, 1892, pp.242-50.

[43]   Strikingly, it is Hannah Arendt, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* who most unequivocally makes the case that the Aryan theory should be understood within the context of the universalizing instincts of the eighteenth century. In a long footnote, written into a chapter in which she discusses the origins of 'race-thinking', Arendt vehemently takes the blame for 'race-thinking' away from the shoulders of the philologists responsible for the Aryan theory: 'As for the philologists of the early nineteenth century, whose concept of "Aryanism" has seduced almost every student of racism to count them among the propagandists or even inventors of race-thinking, they are as innocent as innocent can be. When they overstepped the limits of pure research it was because they wanted to include in the same cultural brotherhood as many nations as possible. In the words of Ernest Seilliere... "There was a kind of intoxication: modern civilization believed it had recovered its pedigree...and an organism was born which embraced in one and the same fraternity all nations whose language showed some affinity with Sanskrit." In other words, these men were still in the humanistic tradition of the eighteenth century and shared its enthusiasm about strange people and exotic cultures.' (Hannah Arendt, *Imperialism.* Part II of *The Origins of Totalitarianism;* San Diego, New York and London:

Harcourt Brace and Co., 1968. p.40.) For an opposing interpretation of the Aryan theory which stresses its anti-Semitism, see Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth,* in which it is argued that the Romantics' obsession with India was due to 'a desire to discover in the ancient Orient a rival society to that of the Hebrew' (p.185). Poliakov points to late nineteenth-century philosophers, such as Ernest Renan, as responsible for the anti-Semitic slant that was given the theory once it came to include race. For example, he quotes Renan as having written, that the Aryans were the newly chosen people: 'Once this mission [monotheism] was accomplished, the Semitic race rapidly declined and left it to the Aryan race alone to lead the march of human destiny.' (Ernest Renan, *L'Avenir religieux des societes modernes,* 1860, quoted in Poliakov, p.207.) In addition, see Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* for the further argument that ancient Greek civilization was refashioined as 'Aryan' by nineteenth-century philologists in order to create a 'pure privileged genealogically useful past' free of Egyptian, Semitic and other cultural influences (Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* p.15).

[44]   Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* p.152.

[45]   Ibid., p.152.

[46]   Cohn, p.45

[47]   Max Muller, Preface to *The Upanishads,* p.xl. Italics mine.

[48]   C9: Lot 5/21 - 25 July 1880.

[49]   Ibid., p.4.

[50]   Ibid., p.5.

[51]   Cohn, p.21.

[52]   Cohn, p.21.

[53]   Wickramasinghe, pp.9-10. M.Banton, *The Idea of Race* (1982).

54   Gunawardana, p.30.

55   De Silva, p.317.

56   Proceedings of 1885 in Journal, p.cxxxiv

57   Ibid., p.cxxxiv.

58   Ibid., p.cxxxiii.

59   De Silva, p.292.

60   *Edinburgh Review* (1851) quoted in Eldridge, p.31

61   Gooneratne, p.75.

62   John Ferguson, *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year* (London: John Haddon and Co., 1887).

63   Proceedings, 1885, *Journal,* vol.IX, p.ixxxiv.

64   Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.80.

65   Ibid., p.84.

66   Ibid., p.92.

67   Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary between 1895 and 1903, summed up the attitude of the 'white man's burden' well: 'In carrying out this work of civilization we are fulfilling what I believe to be our national mission.' (Eldridge, p.194)

68   Ibid., p.174.

69   Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* p.180.

70   Ibid., pp.180-2.

71   Ibid., p.182.

72   H.C.P.Bell, 'Report on Sigiriya' in *Journal,* vol.XIV, 1895, p.57.

73   Ibid., p.57.

74   Ibid., p.58.

75   *Journal,* 1885, p.cxxxiii.

76   Gunawardana, p.31.

77   K.M.de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1891), p.9.