

## **Reflections on India: Locating Scottish Orientalism in the Memoirs of John Leyden and James Mackintosh**

**Subhashis Pan**

Ph.D Research Scholar

Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University

Purulia

Email: [subhashis.pan6@gmail.com](mailto:subhashis.pan6@gmail.com)

**Subhashis Pan** is currently pursuing Ph.D in the Dept. of English, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia, WB. He served as a Guest Lecturer in Bankura Christian College for almost three years. His area of research is Scottish Orientalism in the 19th century Indian subcontinent. Besides, he takes academic interests in areas like Victorian literature, Dalit literature, Indian English drama among many others.

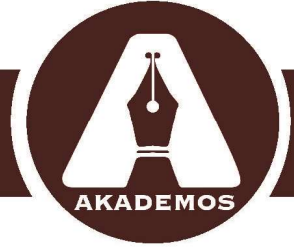
### Abstract

India became the site for colonial representation under the British rule in the nineteenth century. The pejorative terms applied to India as the uncivilised, uneducated and barbaric nation made India the 'other' in the colonial discourses. The East India Company played a vital role in structuring the nature of Indian cultural field as several administrators were recruited in India by the Company. The Scottish counterpart under the Company recruited administrators showed different attitude towards India and tried to represent India not through some conjectural means but by studying the richness of Indian culture and native society.

This paper tends to discuss the various approaches by two Scottish administrators– John Leyden (1775-1811) and James Mackintosh (1765-1832) – to represent India by studying the richness of India in the early nineteenth century. Though they came to India as British officials, they exerted a wholesome benevolent attitude towards India and offered a distinguished Scottish attitude to represent the colony. A study of the memoirs of these Scottish scholar-administrators reflects the nature of Scottish orientalism in India and also throws light upon the benevolent attitude of Scottish orientalism for the betterment of the native people in India.

**Key Words:** 'orientalism', 'hegemony', 'Scottish orientalism', 'cultural discourses', 'Scottish scholar-administrators'





## **Reflections on India: Locating Scottish Orientalism in the Memoirs of John Leyden and James Mackintosh**

**Subhashis Pan**

Ph.D Research Scholar

Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University

Purulia

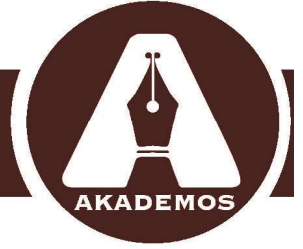
Email: [subhashis.pan6@gmail.com](mailto:subhashis.pan6@gmail.com)

### **1. Introduction:**

In the broad trajectory of South-Asian studies, orientalism is a field that remained significant in every aspect of the study. The study of the orient by the Europeans consequently constructed the orient in Western terms which are pejorative in nature. This paper aims to focus primarily on the question of orientalism and its historiography. What is designated as orientalism? Is it mere the popular Saidian definition where the superior Western lens is used to construct the orient as “other” situating it in the binary between the East and the West? Or, is it the study of the orient by the orientalist who learnt oriental languages and produced knowledge about India and represented it to the West? Next, the paper endeavours to focus on the term “Scottish orientalism” – whether it suits in the ambit of popular discourse of orientalism and the nature of “Scottish orientalism” – how it is distinguished in its approach towards the orient. The last part of this paper will be engaged in the examination of the memoirs of two Scottish scholar-administrators, namely John Leyden and James Mackintosh, who worked in the nineteenth century India and described their encounter with the native customs, laws and culture and potentially contributed to the advancement of the oriental field of language, literature, customs and laws.

Now, to address the first issue as what is designated as ‘orientalism’, the pluralistic view of the term should be taken for further comprehension which remains neither static nor timeless. The term has been problematised and even contested over the time. Before Edward Said’s polemic work *Orientalism* (1978), there existed another important critical work by David Kopf which is *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization* (1969) that was engaged in the examination of the orientalist era in India. Kopf in his book argued that the orientalist in the nineteenth century acculturated themselves with the native culture that helped them to revive the old customs and practices of the subject people.





The 'contact zone' (the term as used by Mary Louis Pratt in her *Imperial Eyes*) created a dynamic and mutual relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. Under the Governor-Generalship of Warren Hastings, a sympathetic attitude towards the subject culture was seen as Hastings patronised oriental learning by recruiting several officials well-versed in oriental languages. Thus the beginning of the orientalist era is seen through the orientalists like Nathaniel Halhed, the first writer of Bengali grammar; Charles Wilkins, the translator of the Bhagvat Gita into English; James Princep who deciphered Brahmi Script of ancient India and William Jones who founded the Asiatic Society in 1784; along with the establishment of the Bengali press and some educational institutions by some other orientalists. According to Kopf's suggestion, these orientalists were the product of European Enlightenment that instilled within them to adhere to classicism, cosmopolitanism and rationalism; rather than being progressive. Now, the question arises that why did the British colonizers feel to learn the oriental language and literature? The assumption obviously leads towards a political motif by the colonizers as they felt that to govern the orient, the officials should 'think and act like Asian' (Kopf 18). By agreeing to the native culture and customs they would come closer to the native society and thus a sense of dis-alienation would be promoted within the native society and their governance would be legitimised. Thomas Trautmann in his *Aryans and British India* (1997) argued in the same line with Kopf – that the orientalists represented India to the West through the oriental texts in Sanskrit and Persian. He agrees to the Saidian perspective of orientalism on the ground that the colonizers had no sympathy for the oriental learning, but out of some political necessity they learnt the oriental languages. Again, Trautmann finds problem in Saidian framework of orientalism because it incorporates anyone who describes the orient and its features. James Mill who validated the Western superiority relying upon some secondary sources and constructed the myth of Indian barbarism against the Western rationality also falls under the Saidian term of orientalist. Said blurred the distinction between orientalism in which knowledge about the orient is produced by the orientalists who knew oriental languages and the orientalism which represents the orient using some secondary sources. Ronald Inden also talked about the orientalist construction of India by several pejorative terms and Michael Dodson also pointed out the evolution of the practice of orientalism to find out useful knowledge in Sanskrit and other Indian vernacular languages. Again, Trautmann argues for another variant of orientalism in which the southern part of India is centered upon and he talks of the Madras School of Orientalism where Francis Whyte Ellis created the family tree of Dravidian languages as William Jones did in Indo-European languages in Calcutta.



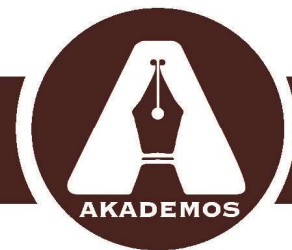


In the ambit of the discourse of orientalism, Scottish orientalism, its nature and attitude remain significant. As a result of the Union Act of 1707, Scotland also participated in the British imperial enterprise and the Scots showed distinctive attitude towards the colonized subject people which is pre-Saidian type of orientalism in nature. Jane Rendall in her noted article “Scottish Orientalism from Robertson to James Mill” (1982) talked of a generation of Scottish scholar-administrators who were working in the nineteenth century Indian subcontinent. The group of Scottish scholar-administrators included Thomas Munro, Alexander Hamilton, John Crawford, John Malcolm, John Leyden, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Vans Kennedy et al. While Munro, Malcolm, Elphinstone emphasized on the classical languages and approached towards native based governance, Hamilton, Mackintosh, Crawford, Leyden and Kennedy approached towards the philological study of India that helped them to understand the evolving history of India.

## **2. A short view of orientalism and the concept of Scottish orientalism:**

Edward Said explained orientalism in the polemic work *Orientalism*(1978) as a binary between the East and the West where the West dominates from a superior place by disseminating ideas about the East through writing and teaching, and thereby creating the West as ‘subject’ – the self and the orient as ‘object’ – the other. Whereas in ‘orientalism’ the ‘subject’ West finds contrasting image of it in the ‘object’–the other, at the same time it posits the European style of subverting, reconfiguring and having authoritative rule over the orient. Quite naturally, India as depicted by the West became a barbaric nation lacking proper education and civilisation. Michael Dodson in his *Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture: India 1770-1880* (2007) discussed that Saidian orientalism established a discourse that aimed at representing, speaking for, dominating and ruling the Orient.

But, the Scottish contribution to India and their approaches to the natives significantly differ from their British counterpart in many respects. Scottish Orientalism, hence, can be seen as a different form of orientalism than that of the notion that Edward Said explained. Scottish Orientalism, on the contrary, while defined India in its own terms, it also shunned the European superiority, though it worked under the British imperial rule. The Scottish approach to India can be termed as pre-Saidian Orientalism or ‘neo-orientalism’ or what Bayly called ‘constructive orientalism’ in his *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social communication in India 1780-1870* (1996). Since Scottish approaches towards India tried to present India in its own terms, it sought after the actual reality within the colonial Indian natives in order to get involved into the native culture. This approach of involvement with the native culture is



benevolent in nature as it becomes evident by the contributions of some Scottish scholar-administrators towards Indian culture and society. Again, this approach situates orientalism in a state where the native colony would be empowered and able to present themselves according to norms of native culture without Western cultural enforcement. They contributed to so many fields to bring reformation to the Indian native society.

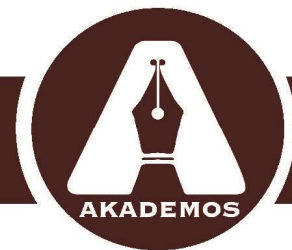
### **2.1. Influence of Scottish Enlightenment:**

The Scottish Orientalists sought a positive change in the socio-cultural, religious and literary fields in India that affected the social reality and ideology of the time. Scottish Orientalism transformed the socio-cultural fabric of Bengal by exchanging ideas which can be traced in the works of Bengal renaissance figures who worked with them. Scottish Orientalism made an impact primarily upon the religious thinking and education in Bengal renaissance society that brought the wave of change. Such Scottish approaches resulted from the influence of the eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment that inculcated ideas about the world within the Scots. The Scottish Enlightenment is rooted in the influence of the Scottish Reformation (1638) that sprouted democratic attitude within the Scottish culture with the help of Scottish Presbyterianism and providing school education to every parish. The educated and democratic nature of the Scots enlightened them to fight against social dogmas and infused them with the thirst to learn by acquiring knowledge continuously. It enabled them to make reason in everything and thus they were able to approach everything beyond constructed myths. The famous Scottish Enlightenment figure Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) put forward the philosophy of human nature with the innate ability to form judgement with the moral sense of human nature. Adam Smith, another influential Scottish Enlightenment figure, espoused the doctrine of fellow feeling in human nature that enables one to place him in another's position coming out of indifference. The Scottish orientalist in India were roused deeply by Scottish Enlightenment and they approached towards the native colonial society with benevolence and fellow feeling and thus the native progress was emphasized.

### **2.3. Influence of Scottish School System:**

The Scots unlike their British counterparts could assimilate themselves with the peripheries. This is because the Scots had a different pattern of schooling where rich and poor were imparted knowledge alike, which the British school system lacked. The Scottish educational system and the Scottish sense of civil society are derived from eighteenth century Scottish thought that remained important in defining a Scottish approach to empire for the social and





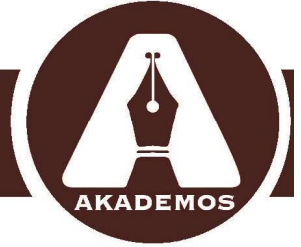
economic foundations of Scottish identity. The influence of Scottish schooling system formed the base of modern thinking in the nineteenth century modern educated Bengal Society and largely in India. The Scottish secondary school system prioritised philosophy at its core for an overall development of knowledge that was philosophical, scientific and humanist, unlike that of English system with classics at its core – as discussed in George Davie’s book *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and her universities in the Nineteenth Century* (1961). In the 2013 edition of Davie’s book Murdo Macdonald analysed that Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) “welcomed this scientific approach of teaching affirming that any aspect of knowledge, culture or society benefits from illumination of all other aspects” (Macdonald 77).

The difference in the use of language is very much present between England and Scotland. Scotland used Gaelic language that was used widely before the official formation of the Great Britain in the Union Act (1707). England believed in the hierarchical order of Protestant Christianity with Bishops and Archbishops while Scotland was non-hierarchical with Kirk Session (formed locally), Presbytery (formed regionally) and General Assembly (formed nationally). The poverty stricken Scotland was hit by famine in 1690s and the economic compulsions forced Scotland for a closer union with England. However Scotland did never shake off their political identity as evident by the Jacobite Risings of 1715 and 1745.

What made the Scots distinct from the English is the very Scottish school system that heralded the Scottish Enlightenment. Scotland had common parish schools in the Kirk Session where rich and poor students studied together unlike that of England where class system was perpetuated with different schools for the rich and the poor. This system of education in England was disadvantageous for the poor Englishmen who later joined the East India Company as cadets and copiers and could not rise in the administrative hierarchy, unlike the Scots. The idea that was envisaged by the Scottish school system that any talented boy could achieve distinction irrespective of their socio-economic background gave them a liberal world view which made them look upon the less privileged fellow human beings with compassion and thus they developed an egalitarian outlook that enabled them to view India through different optics than Englishmen and the colonial state.

### **3. An Assessment of the Memoirs of John Leyden and James Mackintosh:**

A critical study of the memoirs of the two Scottish scholar administrators– John Leyden (1775-1811) and James Mackintosh (1765-1832) explores their encounter with the natives in India and their contribution towards Indian socio-cultural fields in the nineteenth century. Both



of them endeavoured to study the richness of Indian philology and culture with the influence of Scottish Enlightenment. They were influenced much by the Scottish polymath Dugald Stewart in the University of Edinburgh who disseminated philosophical and philological ideas to the students and taught them to go against 'conjectural history'. However, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, both Leyden and Mackintosh arrived in India as the Company officials; but out of their thirst for knowledge they studied the richness of India and contributed to the field of oriental knowledge.

### **3.1. An Assessment of Leyden's Indian Life and Contribution:**

Leyden boarded the ship *Hugh Inglis* on the seventh of April, 1803 and proceeded to Madras. The ship arrived at Madras on 19<sup>th</sup> August of the same year. Scott commented that Leyden was "the first British traveller that ever sought India, moved neither by the love of wealth or of power ..." (Scott *Edinburgh Annual Register* lviii). At Madras Leyden found his employment as physician in the General Hospital of Madras under the superintendence of Dr James Anderson (1738-1809). Leyden worked there nearly four months and utilised the opportunity of staying there by studying local languages. His chief intention of coming to India was that he wanted to establish his name as a reputed oriental scholar, as evident from his letter to a friend in which he said "I may die in the attempt, but if I die without surpassing Sir William Jones a hundred fold in oriental learning, let never a tear for me prophane the eye of a borderer" (Scott *Edinburgh Annual Register* lxvii). Later he realised that his ambition was too high to achieve and admitted in a letter to his friend Mr Heber that the "fame of that Orientalist is absolutely discouraging: for who can adventure to rival him in either extent or accuracy of information" (*Heber Letters* 146), but he kept believing that he could make progress in his pursuit of oriental researches because he believed that Jones had shown them how much there was yet to be done. However, the earlier impression of Leyden as he landed on Madras was not quite different from the commonly acknowledged superior European knowledge of India. He found himself amidst black skinned native Indians behaving beggarly before the newly arrived *shaheb* (emphasis added, meaning white skinned European). But, the acute description of India- its people and their dress, means of transport using palanquins and carts, game of jugglery, trees, animals-that Leyden described in details showed that he deeply observed everything Indian and it helped him to acquire more knowledge about the orient.

### **3.2. Leyden's Journey in India, Various Appointments and His Development as Oriental Scholar and Linguist:**



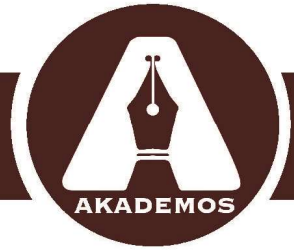


In 1804, at the recommendation of the Governor, Lord William Bentinck, Leyden was promoted to the post of Surgeon and Naturalist to the Commissioners under Major Mackenzie to survey the provinces in the Mysore which was acquired by the British from Tippoo Sultan at that time. Though he was in ill health, he took the journey through Bangalore and Seringapatam to Soonda near Goa and then towards south by the range called the Ghauts to the point of Peninsula, opposite to the island of Ceylon. He undertook this journey as it offered him an opportunity to study the languages of the south and “of observing their mineral indications – to the diseases, medicines, and remedies of the natives of Mysore, and the peculiarities of their habits and constitution, by which they might be exposed to disease – to the different crops cultivated in Mysore and their rotation – and, to the languages of Mysore, and their respective relations” (Morton, xxxv). Leyden had to leave in the middle of the survey as his health condition deteriorated and he returned to Seringapatam to have treatment for long illness and liver problem. This stay at Seringapatam was fruitful for Leyden as he made considerable progress in Sanskrit language and translated stories from Persic and Hindostani. During this time he met with Sir John Malcolm (1769-1833) hailed from the same part of Scotland as himself, who came from Bengal to resume his station of Resident at the Court of Mysore. They developed intimate friendship and Leyden was taken to the house of Sir Malcolm to re-establish his health and they exchanged verses on various occasions.

In May, 1805 when he was permitted to visit the sea-coast for the improvement of his ill health, he went down to Malabar through the district of Coorg, Chericul and Cotiote. This journey made Leyden to look upon the beautiful aspects of the Indian mountain districts which reminded him of Scottish Highlands and he had a change of view of his early impression of India and the native people of the country. When he arrived at Cananore he was detained for the rough winds in the sea. His stay continued in Malabar for four months and he visited Calicut and Paulgaut-cherry where he was attacked by illness and stayed for six weeks. After recovery he journeyed through Trichoor, Cochin and other places of Travancore. The entire journey helped Leyden to visit the temples, the ancient buildings and to study the ancient inscriptions at every place he visited which provided him much information to describe the history, rituals and religious belief of the native people. He learnt the languages of the natives and provided deep insights into the native art by deciphering and translating them from some obsolete dialects.

In September, 1805 Leyden headed for Puloo Penang from Quilon and reached there in October. His health was considerably recovered by the delightful atmosphere of Puloo Penang and he stayed there for several months in the household of Stamford Raffles who was Assistant

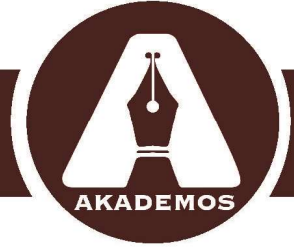




Secretary to the Government of Penang and his wife Olivia who nursed Leyden till recovery. Leyden's interest now rested on the Malay race and with eager attention he studied their language, manners and religion which are recorded in his *Dissertation on the Languages and Literature of the Indo-Chinese Nations* which was brought out in the tenth volume of the *Asiatic Researches*. In the work he did a comparative study to trace the affinity of the languages and customs of the people of Malayan Peninsula and Islands. He also assisted Raffles in learning Malay language that helped the latter to secure him a higher post in the administration. Leyden developed intimate friendship with Mr Raffles with whom he had many epistolary correspondences later and his wife Olivia, to whom Leyden addressed his poem *The Dirge of the Departed Year (The Poetical Remains 170-73)*.

From Penang, Leyden came to Calcutta in February, 1806. After one year of staying there he presented a memoir of nearly two hundred pages on the Indo-Persian, Indo-Chinese, and Dekkani languages to the Secretary of Government that procured him high praise for his studies and was recommended as a professor of Hindostani in the College of Fort William and his entry to the Asiatic Society as Deputy Secretary. Soon he gave up the professorship officiated in the post of Judge of the Twenty Four Pargunnahs, at the recommendation of Governor-General Lord Minto who patronised Leyden later and was a very good friend of him. Leyden spent two years in that office of Judge and then in January, 1809 he got the appointment of one of the Commissioners of the Court of Requests in Calcutta. Leyden could secure this office as he could speak in several Eastern languages which was required for the post.

Leyden was employed in that office of Court of Request in Calcutta for nearly two years and then at the end of 1810, he was raised to the position of Assay Master by Lord Minto who required him in the expedition against Java to help him in settling the country when conquered. They set in their journey in March, 1811 and after staying for few days in Madras, they proceeded to the route of Penang, Malacca and other places. Leyden in that expedition was employed in translating letters in various languages received from various neighbourhood heads and he sent them instructions in their languages such as Malay, Javanese, Bugis and Bali. However, Java was captured by the British troops without much resistance and Leyden in that leisure time with his usual eagerness went to research the literature of the newly conquered land. He was informed of an old library that was said to contain some oriental manuscripts and Leyden, without precaution, spent time in that long-closed ill-aired library and after his return he suffered from shivering illness. This time Leyden was not recovered and after three days he died there on 28<sup>th</sup> August in 1811, aged thirty six.



It is very difficult to assess Leyden's career as an Oriental scholar. He had wide range of his interests, which embraced not only the principal languages of India, but also Malay and other Southeast Asian languages. Again, his publication in India is too tiny to judge him by them. Apart from the already mentioned works by Leyden, some others by his name are- "On the Rosheniah Sect, and its Founder Bayezid Ansari", published in Calcutta in 1810 in volume XI of *Asiatic Researches ; or ; Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal*. Another posthumously published book is *Memoirs of Zehir-ed-Din Muhammed Baber, Emperor of Hindustan , Written by Himself in the Jaghatai Turki* (London, 1826), which was translated partly by him, and partly by his friend William Erskine, and Leyden's translation of the *Malay Annals* (1821) . Erskine in the Dedicatory leaf to the *Memoirs* of Baber commented that, "the full extent of [Leyden's] powers cannot be justly estimated from anything that he has published".

Reith in his *Memoir* examines the language scholarship of Leyden by providing evidence of his acquisition of these languages and by establishing the opportunities Leyden had of learning them. He lists the seventeen languages in the group mentioned by the *New Scots Magazine* (1829) as Latin, Greek, Italian, Spanish, French, German, Hebrew, Portuguese, Syriac or Aramaic, Arabic, Ethiopie, Gaelic, German, Low German or Dutch, Anglo-Saxon, Danish - Norwegian, Swedish or Icelandic, and Persian. Of the Oriental languages which Leyden claimed to have acquired by 1805, Reith concludes that these were Sanskrit, Hindustani, Marathi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kanarese, Telegu, Armenian and Maldivian, the last having been learned during his voyage to Penang. Leyden also gives a somewhat similar list in a letter to the Scottish printer and bookseller James Ballantyne with the addition of Arabic, Persian and Malay (quoted in Scott's *Biographical Memoir* lxii).

Yet, Leyden's linguistic scholarship is broad enough to situate himself as an oriental scholar in linguistic and philology. While he left London for India, he was already acquainted with seventeen languages. Alexander Murray who was his friend and fellow oriental scholar in the University of Edinburgh stated Leyden had the knowledge of Arabic, Persic and Hebrew long before he had left college (mentioned in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott* 74). Again, in 1805 he offered to Madras Government to provide grammar and a dictionary in two volumes in four languages- Tamul, Malayalam, Talinga or Canara. To the Calcutta Corresponding Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society he delivered the translation of Gospels in Pushtu or Afgan, Baluchi, Macassar and Bugis. He also prepared a *Pushtu Vocabulary* published in Calcutta in 1806 with the assistance of Mohummed Peshaweri. He learnt Hindustani language within two years and became professor of that language in Fort William College, Calcutta. While he was in



Penang he learnt the Malay languages and later translated the *Malay Annals* (1821) published posthumously by Mr Raffles with introductory notes.

With his experience and acquisition of new languages in the Malay region, he also wrote a book, on the recommendation of the Council of Fort William College, *A Comparative Vocabulary of the Barma, Malayu and Thai Languages*, which was printed at the Serampur Mission Press in 1810. The work, as the title explains, is an extensive study on the provincial languages and dialects of India with a comparative vocabulary of all these languages that offer an illustration on the history of the Eastern natives that also indicates his understanding of India. Leyden took much of the materials of this book from his earlier comparative language study *On the Languages and Literatures of the Indo-Chinese Nations*, published in the tenth volume of the *Asiatic Researches* in 1808. For this book, he collected materials during his stay in Penang in 1805. His main objective in this study, as he put, was to “introduce order and arrangement into a subject at once so extensive and intricate, and to disentangle it from a degree of confusion which seemed almost inextricable, may not be altogether without its use; but may, even where I have failed, serve to point out the proper method of investigation” (*On the Languages and Literatures of the Indo-Chinese Nations* 159). By investigating into different languages, he classified the languages and stages of civilisation on the basis of religious beliefs which were determinants of the languages and of civilisation. William Marsden, with all respect to Leyden’s industry and knowledge commented in his *Miscellaneous Works* (1834) that “he assiduously studied the languages within his reach, and through the medium of interpreters obtained information from the traders and others who frequented the places of his residence. This period, however, was not sufficient to give him a competent knowledge, and accordingly the Malayan part at least of his *Comparative Vocabulary of Barma, Malayu, and Thai* (Siamese) languages is very erroneous” (Marsden 12).

Leyden’s scholarship on Eastern cultures and civilisations is based on his extensive study of history and textual analysis. Some of his publications on Eastern histories depict his approach towards Eastern cultures and civilisations and also his methods of working upon the history. In a paper titled “The Rosheniah Sect”, included in the eleventh volume of the *Asiatic Researches* in 1810, Leyden made distinction between the Sunni and Shia of Indian Islam with the aid of different languages, laws and customs prevailed in the Islam society. The ‘Rosheniah’ sect, as Leyden described, was the illuminated sect of Islam that was Afgan in origin and was founded in the sixteenth century before Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) ascended the throne of India. The sect, with some minor alternative practices, was Ismaili in nature and the sect gave rise to religious

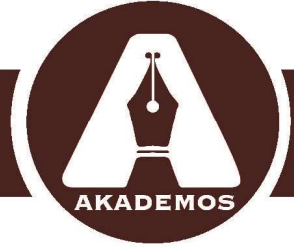




extremism with their heretic beliefs. Leyden used in his study the compilation of different texts in Pashtu and Persian and gathered information from native sources that elucidated the history of his subject. This approach of study by collecting materials from local authorities is the continuation of his approach that he had developed while gathering materials from Scottish Borders and traditions. He believed the local authorities to be the living witnesses of the older traditions and cultures that aptly described the civilisations.

Another important writing by Leyden is “Commentaries of Baber” that remained unfinished due to his death and was completed by William Erskine and published in the *Asiatic Researches* in 1826. Leyden’s approach to the great Moghul emperor Babar was not because that the life of Babar was important for the East India Company, but for his native educated audience in Scotland who were engaged in their minds to the mystic East. Leyden’s target audience was the people of eighteenth century in literary taste who knew something of Hebrew, Persian and Sanskrit, as it was customary in the University of Edinburgh during Leyden’s time. The fall of the great Moghul dynasty from the greatness of Emperor Babar was a subject of romanticism for his target audience who prioritised their imagination and hence their love for the *Arabian Nights*, as Leyden himself also took immense pains to acquire the book. However, the general fascination to this historical figure was true to the sense of the contemporary audience whose literary taste was pleased by imagination.

In India, though Leyden’s compositions of poems are few in number, yet they manifest the poet’s understanding of different aspects of Indian life and civilisation. Leyden composed his poems in India at different places since he had to travel for his work, and thus various aspects of Indian life and civilisation are reflected in his poems. In his poem “Song of a Telinga Dancing Girl” (1803) which was addressed to a European gentleman in the company of some European ladies, Leyden narrated that the Telinga dancing girl Radha burns for the young gentleman whose features captivate the girl’s emotion of love for him, but Radha is pained to see the fairer rivals round her and hence she ‘yields to sad despair’ (*Poetical Remains* 155). The poem “The Battle of Assaye” (1803) celebrates and commemorates the victory of the British troop over the Mahratta against tremendous odds. His “Ode on Leaving Vellore” (1804) is a specimen of his love for natural surroundings of the Southern Indian city Vellore and depicts the tradition and religious history of the town. Leyden compared the natural scenery of Vellore with the early scenes of his life in Scotland. His most famous Indian poem “Ode to an Indian Gold Coin” (1804-05?) offers a critique on the British imperial enterprise and British materialism. The British toiled in India for making fortune and Leyden called the gold coin ‘vile yellow slave’ (*Ibid* 163)



which will have no significance after they meet the 'dark and untimely grave' (Ibid 164). Again, in the poem "Dirge of the Departed Year" (1806) written in Penang, Leyden recalled the rapturous beauty of Travancore and Malabar along with some beautiful experiences of Southern India. He also lamented at the end the year for his separation with Olivia, wife of Mr Stamford Raffles, who took great care of him during his illness in Penang and befriended him. Over all, Leyden's Indian poems display his true poetic utterance in his short span of Indian career.

Leyden had the faculty of learning language so quickly that the Baptist Missionary William Carey who was professor of Bengali, Sanskrit and Marathi in Fort William College commented about Leyden that he had "a faculty of acquiring languages exceeding that of any other person with whom I am acquainted" (Kopf 79). William Erskine also provided high eulogium on Leyden's acquisition of languages, that "he seized the grand features of the Oriental languages, and classed them with an accuracy altogether unequalled... the humble, though useful, task of explaining the principles and structure of each separate tongue" (Tulloch "Eulogium" cxvii). Leyden's focus on learning so many languages was to develop a comparative philology of the Indian languages and to order them in relation to each other which would provide more about the cultures and civilisations they represented.

### **3.3. Mackintosh's Indian Life and Contribution:**

Since Mackintosh was adept in the fields of medicine and law, chances occurred for him to pursue professional career in either the East or the West Indies. In 1803, Mackintosh arrived in Bombay to join the post of the Recorder of Bombay which became vacant at the death of Sir William Syer. Mackintosh joined the post in India with the focus that the work in India would provide him leisure time to pursue his interest in some philosophical and literary projects that were in his mind.

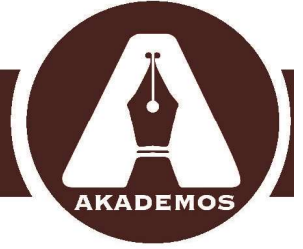
The British governing system in India when Mackintosh arrived was not at par with the progress of the colonized people. The British ran the colony without policy for the natives after the period of Warren Hastings. With his impeachment from the Governor-Generalship of Bengal and Lord Cornwallis filling up his place, the British governance system had been operated through direct involvement of the English parliament. The previous necessary custom of living among the natives according to their norms had been waived off and there was a clear demarcation of dominant class and dominated class in the society that was ruled by the English principles and morality. The old spark of benevolence to the natives was still within few members of the community but they were not regarded with friendly feelings rather they were



seen with suspicion of corruption. Mackintosh had not the scope to show revolutionary zeal from such governance to form a change in the native society. But Mackintosh, being a man of genius was expected by his friends to apply his knowledge to bring some revolutionary changes in the existing colonial government of India. On the eve of his departure from London to India, he received a letter (dated 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1803; qtd in *Memoirs I* 200-202) from his friend Mr. R. Hall who expressed his opinion about the opportunity that Mackintosh would have in India to contemplate on a society and trace the nature and effects of moral and religious institutions by unearthing the antiquities of India. Mr. Hall also wished that Mackintosh would tread in the path shown by Sir William Jones to contribute to the cause of the colonial natives. He founded the Literary Society of Bombay in 1804 to disseminate and exchange liberal and useful ideas. The society published its discussions and proceedings in the *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*.

The orientalist approach of Mackintosh towards India is very much evident by his engagements in the public welfare beyond his official responsibilities. He wished to hit at the very foundation of knowledge that everyone should pursue. With the establishment of the Literary Society, Mackintosh started to influence people about the philosophical nature of acquiring knowledge. He advocated for the three basic inquiries within people about learning—what to learn, why to learn and how to learn. For Mackintosh felt that it was far more necessary to approach the natives with philosophy rather than with an orientalist outlook. The very inception of the plan to establish a society in the territory of his influence had been very much present within Mackintosh before he arrived in India. His zeal to for promoting the progress of knowledge in the public sphere prompted him to establish the Bombay Literary Society. He was interested to investigate the philosophy, sciences, arts, literatures, geography and history of India. He understood that in order to gather a whole knowledge of a society it is important to know the past of the society in every possible detail. This approach by Mackintosh is like his fellow Scottish orientalists and again it separates him from the earlier approaches by James Mill and John Ruskin who conjectured the Indian art and culture and represented the colony devoid of substantial antiquity. However, very few people were interested in the plan of Mackintosh. The reason behind this was because the people engaged in the Company's civil and military services in the Presidency had mere basic scientific and classical learning that was required for entering into the service and they had little time and interest for such historical and literary investigation. They did not develop the insight to familiarise the new and unknown country and the manners to the outside world. Though few of them were in the habit of writing but those writings were for mere official purposes. They did not delve into the philosophical and literary





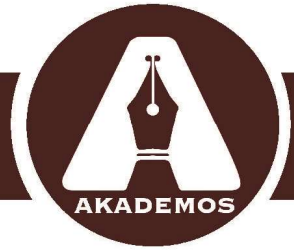
resources of the country. Mackintosh, who was in the habit of getting indulged in every field of knowledge, brought together few men who were in the same pursuit and established the Literary Society of Bombay.

The aim of the society to look into the various spheres of Indian culture and antiquity is evident by the incorporation of the members in it. The wide variety of knowledge of the members in different fields contributed to the aim of the society. Governor Duncan was efficient in Persian language and knew the manners and customs of the natives; Major Edward Moor explored the unknown interior geography of India and threw lights on the habit of the natives; Dr. Robert Drummond contributed to the grammar in the language of Malabar; Major David Price was engaged in Oriental subjects and became adept in Persian literature and studied the history of the Mohammedan; Colonel Boden was a Sanskrit scholar and made progress in learning of Mahratta; Major-General Sir Jasper Nicolls studied the climate of the island and Dr. Helenus Scott as a physician made several chemical speculations. The purpose was to engage people more effectively to the fulfilment of the aim of the society. But the plan did not work and he was disappointed to find the lack of submission except his own.

Soon afterwards Mackintosh developed in his mind the thought for preparing a comparative vocabulary of Indian languages. His philosophic vision conceived such a plan that would be more effective in establishing the connection of various nations in the East which had hitherto not been found in the historical records. Accordingly, he published his plan after reading it in the society and circulated widely among the different governments of India. His purpose was to gather all the varieties of languages used in different provinces by every section of the native society. However, he received very few returns which were not enough to execute the original plan. Consequently, John Leyden, another fellow Scottish orientalist, who was working on the same design in India at that time and was better qualified in that field than any other European scholar was communicated and the collected copies were handed over to him.

Mackintosh also initiated a plan to convey the literary richness of India to the European readers through translations. He accordingly wrote a proposal letter as the President of Bombay Literary Society to the President of Asiatic Society to contribute a fund for the publication of the translations of the Sanskrit works into English. The fund would also make some recompense to the labour of the translators. Though at first the committee of the Asiatic Society faced some difficulties to pursue such initiative, but later on it agreed to publish the translated works in different volumes of *Asiatic Researches* from time to time along with some other translations from the oriental languages. The plan was further extended to assist the field of knowledge and





later on the Oriental Translation Fund was created that continued to publish the translated works from the Eastern countries.

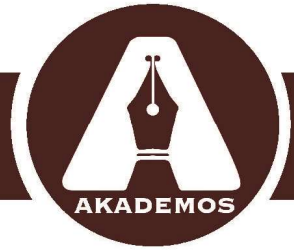
### **3.4. Reflections upon Restructuring the Judicial System:**

Before Mackintosh joined in the judiciary system of India as the Recorder of Bombay which was newly formed, the administration of justice had been delivered through local bodies as the Mayor's Court– constituted with a mayor and an alderman who were selected by the local government from the civil servants or from the influential merchants. These people who were to administer justice had little formal legal education and were ignorant of the principles of justice. As a consequence, it was quite impossible to deliver impartial justice because the judges were involved in trades and official business and the Governor also exercised power of the Government upon them for benefit and commercial interests. The attorneys who practised as counsels were also without the training of the court of justice. The most important defect of that justice system was that there was no place for common man to take part in the system. The language English in which the system ran was not understood by the natives whose causes were tried.

Understanding the constitution of the Indian courts, Mackintosh developed a plan to lessen the defects of the court system. In a letter (dated 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1807, qtd. in *Memoirs I 272-73*) to his lawyer friend Mr. George Wilson, Mackintosh advocated some reforms for the practical problems of the court system. He recommended that not more or less than two judges were to be deployed in every Indian court– a judge at Calcutta Presidency and another at Madras Presidency and a supreme court at Bombay. Cross-appeals would be granted among the three courts and it would reduce the expense of the court. He pointed out that the judgement of the second court would deem to be final and criminal proceedings against the Europeans should have the provision of changing venues to another Presidency. Thus, it would reduce both delay and expense of the court and at the same time the cross-appeals would render uniform legal decisions. The change of venue would cut off the ties of the influential people to be tried from their local connections which hindered the public justice and again as Mackintosh pointed out that “it would prevent those vexatious animosities which are the price that small communities must pay for the conviction of a powerful delinquent” (*Memoirs I 273*). However, though not immediately but seeming the prospects of such reflections, they were adopted by the Legislature in the Courts of India, especially in Bombay.



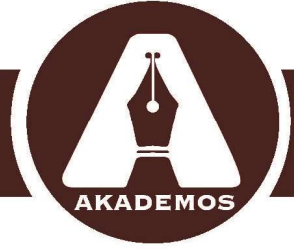




### **3.5. Influence towards orientalist cause:**

Though Mackintosh himself lacked oriental learning, his influence and encouragement filled others with enthusiasm to approach the rich field of oriental studies. As already stated earlier that a group of Europeans working there in different fields took interest in the field of oriental studies and they contributed to the representation of India as they came to know it. While Mark Wilks was working on his *Report of the government of Mysoor* (submitted in 1799, published in 1805), he commented on the 'panchayat' system of jury which was imitated after the jury system of England. But while England ran the system with learned and experienced expert body of judges, the system that Wilks experienced in Mysore was the mockery of the judicial system performed by the panchayats. There was no conviction in the charges made against the accused as the witness was not confident for the testimony. There was no oath taking in the panchayat jury system, which was another cause for the failure of the system. But Wilks realized that his observations about India were the result of the British prejudices against the Indians and he took up a plan by the suggestion of Mackintosh to study India in a more vigorous way and he started working on his *Historical Sketches of the South of India* (1810), also popular as *The History of Mysoor*. He acknowledged the fact that the *Report* was the result of not knowing India really and to know India it required one to be someone among the Indians. This very approach put Wilks in the tradition of the Scottish orientalists which aimed to discover the historical traditions of India and sought to revive Indian antiquity. The influence of Mackintosh upon such revelation of Wilks cannot be ignored as it was Mackintosh who suggested him to throw lights upon the subject of his interest. However, Mackintosh after reading the first volume in 1810 praised Wilks for opening a new era of literature but was critical of Wilks's view on Indian law and character. Mackintosh argued that there was much to learn from Indian society and there was also no need to apply the comparison of English law to India.

Mackintosh also suggested John Briggs to take up the translation of a history of Muslim India from the Persian and Briggs published his *History of the rise of the Mahomedan power in India, till the year A.D. 1612* ( 4 vols. London, 1829). John Malcolm also acknowledged that he could have completed his writings of *Sketches of the political history of India* (London, 1811) and his *History of Persia* (2 vols, London, 1815) because Mackintosh had contemplated the advantages of these accounts (qtd. in *Literary Transactions of Bombay* 357). Mackintosh also persuaded Mounstuart Elphinstone to publish his account on Afganistan after he had completed his mission there, and Elphinstone published his *An account of the kingdom of Cabul* (London,



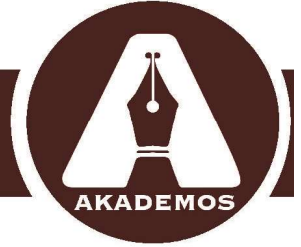
1815). He also contributed several papers to *The Literary Transactions of Bombay* which were published posthumously.

### **3.6. Discourse at the opening of the Literary Society of Bombay:**

The establishment of the Literary Society of Bombay (1804) was another step taken by Mackintosh to ameliorate the pursuit of oriental studies. The society was established in the model of Jones's the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. The intention was to take an 'extensive programme of inquiry into the physical and moral sciences' (Rendall *Scottish Orientalism* 49) of India. Mackintosh who had little knowledge about India was equipped with the philosophical intentions to know India that again separates him from the fellow British administrators and it supports the nature of Scottish Orientalism in India by the Scottish counterpart engaged in the British imperial design. On the opening of the Literary Society of Bombay, Mackintosh being president of the society, put forward the aims of the society to the members present in the assembly through his discourse on the opening of the society (read at Parel on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1804). He advocated for the knowledge that would contribute to the progress and illuminate the humane nature of man. His approach for the revelation of 'the ancient and present state' (*Transactions Vol. I. xi*) of India would illustrate the existing knowledge of India. He drew the example of Sir William Jones in his attempt to the unparalleled pursuit of knowledge and tried to put enthusiasm upon the members of the society to take part in the pains of excavating Indian knowledge. Through such pursuits Mackintosh believed to achieve "the good government of India, as well as to promote the interest of science" (Ibid xv).

Mackintosh also observed that the members would take their liberty according to their desires to pursue their inquiries in India. He felt the importance of Sanskrit study to explore the richness of Indian past and criticized the declamation of Sanskrit study by the English youth before Jones and commented that Sanskrit study "will mark an epoch in the history of learning" (Ibid xv). However, as the objective of the society was to gain human knowledge, he approached for the study of the Physical Sciences and Moral Science of the country. By the term Physical Sciences, Mackintosh meant "the useful arts, and in their higher forms they so much delight our imagination, and flatter our pride by the display of the authority of man over nature, that there can be no need of arguments to prove their utility, and no want of powerful and obvious motives to dispose men to their cultivation" (Ibid xvi). The Physical Sciences include the 'science of natural history' which is the source of all physical knowledge; the 'science of mineralogy' which contributes to the scientific adventures and explorations; the study of 'botany' that explores the structures, functions and habits of vegetation; the study of 'weather and climate' for the effect





produced upon vegetation and animals; the study of the 'science of medicine' with the history of opinions and modes of practice for several diseases. He espoused the notion that a 'philosophical physician' (Ibid xix) would develop human knowledge in the field of medicine.

#### **4. Conclusion:**

The vast domain of the study of India by the Scottish orientalists is significant because it contributed to the representation of India in its own terms. These two Scottish orientalists approached India with non-speculative and non-conjectured method that required a close study of Indian culture and society. Consequently, the long established notion of India as uncivilised, rude and barbaric nation by the superior European hands – like James Mill, Thomas Macaulay, John Ruskin – was challenged and the Scottish orientalists tried to reconfigure the established notion of India by observing and studying the richness of Indian culture and society. This distinguished Scottish approach was founded on acquiring true knowledge of India and thereby contributing to its cause by engaging themselves in a cultural exchange with the native society.

#### **Works Cited:**

Anderson, Robert.(ed.), *Poems and Ballads by Dr. John Leyden: with a Memoir of the Author by Sir Walter Scott, Bart., and Supplementary Memoir* [by the Revd. W.W. Tulloch], Kelso, 1875

Anderson, Robert.(ed.), *Scenes of Infancy, and Other Poems, by the Late Dr. John Leyden. With a Memoir of the Author*, Jedburgh, 1844

Anderson, Robert. (ed.), "Memorials of Dr John Leyden", "Anecdotes of Dr Leyden, &c.", *The New Scots Magazine*, Edinburgh, 1828–29, vol. I, Jan1829, pp. 73–8, 111–20; vol. II, Aug 1829, pp. 98–104

Bayly, Christopher A. *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social communication in India 1780-1870*. U of Cambridge P, Cambridge, 1996.

Brown, Thomas. *The Poetical Works of John Leyden. With Memoir by Thomas Brown* London, Edinburgh, 1875





Chambers, Robert. "Leyden, John", *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen* Glasgow, 1835, Vol. III, pp. 417-37

Cholmondeley, R.H.(ed.), *The Heber Letters 1783–1832*, London, 1950

Constable, Thomas. *Archibald Constable and His Literary Correspondents: A Memorial by His Son*, Edinburgh, 1873, 3 Vols.

Dasgupta, Subrata. *Awakening: The Story of Bengal Renaissance*. Random House, Noida, 2011.

Davie, George. *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and her universities in the Nineteenth Century*. 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., Edinburgh U P, Edinburgh, 2013.

Dodson, Michael. *Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture: India 1770-1880*. Palgrave-Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2007.

Dutta, Abhijit. *Nineteenth Century Bengal Society And The Christian Missionaries*, Minerva, India, 1991, pp. 150-151.

Dutt, Soshee Chandra. "Young Bengal or The Hopes of India". *Essays on Miscellaneous Subjects*, 1948, p. 3.

Fry, Michael. *The Scottish Empire*. Tuckwell/Berlinn, Edinburgh, 2001.

Grant, Charles. "Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, 1792". *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company*, 16 August 1832.

Grant, Sir Alexander. *The Story of the University of Edinburgh during its first Three Hundred Years*, London, 1884, 2 vols.

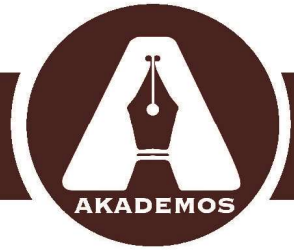
Grierson, H.J.C. (ed.) *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott 1811-1814*, London, 1932

Herman, Arthur. *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots' Invention of the Modern World*. Harper Collins, London, 2001, p. 73.

Inden, Ronald. *Imagining India*, Oxford, 1990, pp.36-54

*Indian Gazette*, Correspondence, October, 1831.





Kaye, J. W. *The Life and Correspondence of Sir John Malcolm*. Smith: Elder and co., London, 1856.

Keay, John. *India Discovered*. Collins, Glasgow, 1988.

Kopf, David. *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance :The Dynamics of Indian Modernization 1773–1835*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1969

Leyden, John. *A Comparative Vocabulary of the Barma, Malayu and Thai Languages*, Serampur Mission Press, 1810

Leyden, John. *A Historical & Philosophical Sketch of the Discoveries & Settlements of the Europeans in Northern & Western Africa, at the Close of the Eighteenth Century*, Edinburgh, 1799

Leyden, John. (transl.), *Malay Annals: Translated from the Malay Language,...with an Introduction by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, F.R.S. &c. &c.*, London, 1821

Leyden, John. “On the Languages and Literature of the Indo-Chinese Nations”, *Asiatic Researches; or, Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal*, Vol. X, London, 1811, pp. 158–289

Leyden, John. “On the Rosheniah Sect, and its Founder Bayezid Ansari”, *Asiatic Researches; or, Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal*, Vol. XI, London, 1812, pp. 363–428

Leyden, John (ed.), *Scottish Descriptive Poems; with some Illustrations of Scottish Literary Antiquities*, Edinburgh, 1803

Leyden, John (ed.), *The Complaynt of Scotland. Written in 1548. With a Preliminary Dissertation and Glossary*, Edinburgh, 1801

Macdonald, Murdo. “Patrick Geddes and the Tradition of Scottish Generalism”. *Journal of Scottish Thought*, Vol. 5, Special issue on Patrick Geddes, Aberdeen U P, Aberdeen, 2012, pp. 73–87.

Mackintosh, Robert James. (ed.). *Memoirs of the life of the Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh*, 2vols. London, 1835

Marsden, William. *Miscellaneous Works*, London, 1834





Mill, James. *The History of British India*. Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, London, 1817.

Mitra, Kishori Chand. "The Presidency College". *Bengal Magazine*, Vol. II, pp. 132-133.

Mitra, Peary Chand. *A Biographical Sketch of David Hare*. W. Newman & Co., Dalhousie Square, Calcutta, 1877, pp. 31-38.

Mitter, Partha. *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977.

Morton, Rev. James. *The Poetical Remains of the Late Dr. John Leyden, with Memoirs of His Life*, London, 1819

Mukherjee, Fraser, and Amrit Sen, editors. *Scottish Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Continuum of Ideas*. Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, 2017.

Powell, Avril A. *Scottish Orientalists and India: The Muir Brothers, Religion, Education and Empire*. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2010.

Rao, Parimala V. "Promiscuous Crowd of English Smatterers: The Poor in the Colonial and Nationalist Discourse on Education". *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2013, pp. 227-232.

Reith, John. *Life of Dr. John Leyden, Poet and Linguist*, Galashiels, 1910

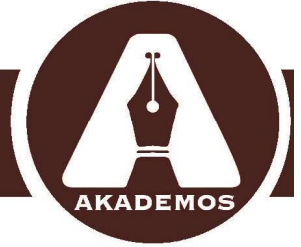
Rendall, Jane. "Scottish Orientalism: From Robertson to James Mill". *The Historical Journal*, U of Cambridge P, Mar 1982, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 43-69. Web. 29 Apr 2016.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2638806>

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1978. First Published in India by Penguin Books India, 2001.

Scott, Sir Walter. "Biographical Memoir of John Leyden, M.D", *Edinburgh Annual Register, for 1811*, Edinburgh, 1813, vol. IV, no. 2, pp. xli-lxviii





Scott, Sir Walter, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border: consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads, collected in the Southern Counties of Scotland; with a few of Modern Date, founded upon Local Tradition*, Kelso, Edinburgh, 1802–3, 3 vols.

Sharp, H, comp. and editor. *Selections from Educational Records Part I 1781-1839*. Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta, 1920.

*Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*, 3Vols. London, 1819

Trautmann, Thomas.R. *Aryans and British India*, U of California P, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 1997

Tulloch, Revd. W.W. *Scenes of Infancy, Descriptive of Teviotdale... With a Biographical Sketch of the Author by the Rev.W.W.Tulloch*, Kelso, 1875

White, Robert. *Poems and Ballads by Dr. John Leyden: With a Memoir of the Author by Sir Walter Scott, Bart., and Supplement by Robert White*, Kelso, 1858