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**Contributor** This is a version of a longer paper so I'm just going to apologise for having to skip and improvise a bit. Before looking at the documents I thought I'd begin with some reflections on traces just to, really to think about the significance of the trace.

When we look at the sometimes feint yet highly suggestible signs, tracks and markings left by migratory crossings of Indians through Oxford what are we in fact looking at. What are we looking for? What are the forces of chance and contingency that left these stray and disparate marks in the first place.

To ask such questions implies considering not only what it is to trace networks as the display and the workshop today are doing but also what is involved when we network traces. What connections might we impose that may not be there in the record at all.

So to network traces then implies thinking about the degree of reading into the record of elaboration and interpretation that these traces either invite or permit. Trace, Derrida reminds us is within language the shadow of something meaningful that remains after the word has overwhelmed the thing. Trace then is suggestible, it is on the edge of things, it is equivocal. Through the traces, the feint tracks, the marks and the margins left by Indian students and Indian texts on their way through Oxford. These traces are obviously not of the same order of meaning as Derrida's trace yet there is perhaps a link that comes from that connotation of equivocation and indeterminacy.

Moreover, both these Indian traces and Derrida's trace connote what remains.

As we've heard from our first speaker who opened today's workshop Amitav Ghosh has also suggestively pondered the significance of traces in his work. Most particularly perhaps in his travelogue 'In an Antique Land' that Anshuman Mondal has already mentioned. And 'In an Antique Land' is animated throughout by an interesting piecing together the distant past from mere traces. Less concerned with the traces and effective language, more concerned with the traces the residue of history, a feint mark of the human on the torn and fragmentary page 'In an Antique Land' is also at pains to point out the inadvertency, the chanciness, the contingency not only in the processes through which historical traces are left behind but also the contingency that is involved in their discovery or rediscovery as today. And also in their interpretation.

I've just pulled out a few quotes just most of them one lines from an 'In an Antique Land' to capture this inadvertency, this contingency of trace. The passage such as it is provides little enough to go on. 'If I hesitate to call it love it is only because the documents offer no certain proof. The names are puzzling.' And then a longer quote 'That is all, no more than a name and a greeting in the record. But the reference comes just from a moment in time when the only people for whom we can even behind to imagine properly human individual existences are the literate and the consequential. The Waseers and the Sultans, the Chroniclers and the Priests. The people who had the power to inscribe themselves physically upon time. But the slave of [[Kalef's 0:04:01]] letter was not that, was not of that company. In his instance it was a mere accident that those barely discernable traces that ordinary people le-, happen to leave upon the world, happen to have been preserved. It is nothing less than a miracle that anything is known about him at all.'

So coming to these two takes on traces that I've begun with that of Derrida on the one hand, that of Amitav Ghosh on the other, different as they are in many respects is a recognition of the suggestibility as well as the ambiguity of the trace. Here we find the seeming marks of conversations and exchanges that in some cases may not have happened or they may have happened differently to what the record now suggests.

As that last quotation from 'In an Antique Land' suggested, another important point is that the more ordinary the person the more sporadic and faint the trace and the more contingent. Indeed it is a testimony to the influence and power by contrast of many of the figures whose trace is upon time we are looking at today that their archival remains, their tracks and traces on papers appear to read quite clearly.

Following on from the apparent readability of what remains, which is animated by the suggestibility of the trace, of any trace, it is of course the more seductive to construe connections and to make links. To insinuate stories and to the gaps between the traces which is partly what 'In an Antique Land' does. And yet to quote again from that book, there is little enough to go on.

The incompleteness of traces means that our reading of them necessarily depends on improvisation and intuition, making good guesses, drawing analogies that link from the better known and move towards the less known. Provocative and compelling as what remains may be all such reconstruction remains provisional and ad hoc always already in misreading. So this is all by way of qualifier to some of my remarks on the traces that follow.

Indeed the way in which traces may suggest a misreading or invite us to construe a story of contact that may not in fact have taken place is well illustrated by the sample of traces that I'll come on to second. And that is the letter from Tagore to his great friend Charlie Andrews, C F Andrews. Though this, these letters now stand as a record of an importance Indian/British friendship held within the Oxford Libraries, theirs was a contact it's important to say that never took place in Oxford. Though both Andrews and Tagore visited Oxford at different points in their lives. So there we have as it were the trace of a contact held now within Oxford and yet not officially an Oxford trace.

One more provisional and/or a prefatory remark. We might in networking traces think also in terms of the disparate strange attractions then that work between and across the traces or a frameworks of ideas that drew the traces together. For example of that quote "Vast and sincere regard for Hinduism." That Professor Max Muller shared with his Indian correspondents in the case of the Max Muller letters that we'll look at in a moment.

So what I mean here is that we might think of diverse, now coinciding, now divergent energies and preoccupations, political, cultural, religious that drew Indian and British scholars and students together in this very early period of exchange Oxford/India. And that produced these records of conversations held or wished for or both. So we might think then of ideas and common shared structures of feeling that pull these traces together into some sort of warp and weft into a texture of exchange.

My first sample text comes from a book of letters to Friedrich Max Muller the Professor of Comparative Philology from Indian friends and contacts in India in the 1880s. These letters were collected by him as letters from Indian friends so themed because of their Indianness and they offer a good case in point of what I'm trying to suggest of a framework of ideas that links disparate traces together. Could you possibly hold up the book – it's... One sees that there're many letters by different hands bound together, folded together in this book. All of them letters to – thanks – to Max Muller.

Significantly none of the letters are concerned though they're written in the 1880s heyday of former Imperialism, none of the letters are concerned with Colonialism or anti colonial issues for that matter. Though they are profoundly powerfully motivated by ideas of communion between India and Britain. And importantly by notion of oneness, the oneness, the religious one, the spiritual oneness that potentially might bind India and Britain together. The oneness that underlies all religious belief.

The sense of oneness had been most actively promoted across the 19th Century by the Brahmo Samaj an organisation in which several of Max Muller's correspondents in this collection of letters were concerned. Especially the great Brahmo figure K C Sen, Keshub Chunder Sen who of – four of whose letters are in that collection of letters.

[[Viez Mitra 0:10:39]] in letter seven for example speaks of Max Muller's sympathy with the natives of this land in every matter connected with their welfare. Speaks of the, again the oneness, the spiritual oneness motivating Max Muller in his openness to Indians and also inspiring his letter back to Muller to express admiration for his work.

So just a moment then of background on these figures, these names that I've been citing. Some of you will have background on Max Muller if you went on the walking tour earlier but for those who didn't... Friedrich Max Muller was the Professor of Comparative Philology here at Oxford in the late 19th Century, a great sanskritist. He held various positions in the university from 1851. Despite the huge disappointment of losing out in the election of Boden Professor of Sanskrit to his great rival Monier Monier-Williams and there are portraits of both figures in the display cases. Despite that disappointment, Max Muller continued to pursue his studies in Sanskrit and the Vedas at Oxford as I was saying Professor of Comparative Philology at All Souls. And he was widely known about and respected in India as these sample letters show.

As German born and liberal Lutheran in his religious thinking, Max Muller had been deemed by congregation here at Oxford to stand too far outside the British Establishment to be elected to the Boden Chair. Across his career Max Muller cultivated a number of friendships with Indians through correspondence and invited many Indian visitors to Oxford and in particular he became close to Keshub Chunder Sen.

A quick word then on his arch rival Monier Monier-Williams. Bombay born interestingly. He was elected Oxford's Boden Professor of Sanskrit in 1860 and his major achievement in terms

of India British relations here and the University which we really can't fail to mention today was the foundation of the Indian Institute across the road in 1884 with its weathervane elephant which is on our poster.

In 1875 Monier-Williams first put the idea to congregation to found an institute to provide a place of study for ICS Probationers and Indian students combining a library, reading room and museum. And this really became the hub of India/Britain interaction in the later 19th Century here in the university.

The foundation stone of the Indian Institute was laid by the Prince of Wales interestingly the Prince of Wales in 1883 and opened by the Vice Chancellor, Benjamin Jowett who we'll hear more about later today from Richard [[Siroji 0:13:38]] on the 14th of October 1884.

As Keshub Chunder Sen the proselytiser of Brahmo Samaj from the time that he joined the organisation in 1857 his work throughout was driven by an interesting finding points of synthesis between the different religions of the world as was the work of Max Muller. So this brought them together. I should also say which I had omitted to mention that Max Muller is the great translator of the Rig Veda. And it was in admiration of this translation, this work of his that so many Indian Sears and scholars wrote to him over the years asking his opinion too on questions of philology, questions of religious interpretation.

So the heterogeneous appearance and form of Max Muller's letters bound together in rough chronological order as we saw there is symptomatic of the kind of incomplete network I'm trying to draw out of the truncated contingent connectivity in which the letter writers were engaged. And also of their binding interests in common despite disparate locations and concerns.

Again and again there's an emphasised placed on "The union of the East and the West." A union that was part fostered by Max Muller's work in translation, also by the theism to which several of the letter writers subscribed and subsequently by the further contacts and exchanges being acted out on these pages. And here I've selected I mean there are any number of very interesting letters in this bundle but I've selected a letter from another prominent member of Brahmo Samaj, Debendranath Tagore the father of the great poet who I'll come back to in a moment. There's his signature.

And now I'd just like to move back a few pages in the letter to where Debendranath Tagore refers explicitly to union of East and West and of course does so in the somewhat clichéd terms of the time of the west as advanced technology and the east as a repository somewhat, a somewhat static now of religious knowledge and understanding. And he writes here "By the publication of the Rig Veda and the Upanishads you have brought within easy reach of European scholars the thoughts and aspirations of our ancient riches hitherto hidden in inaccessible manuscripts. And it is to be hoped that the dissemination of the knowledge of our ancient literature will help to cement the bonds of union between the two people who brought up under a common roof, parted from each other and scattered over distant quarters of the globe, again to be brought together under the mysterious decree of an all ruling providence." 'Of an all ruling providence' there at the bottom of the page.

And the sense of communion which, I mean here a kind of arian community to, you know, to – not to beat about the bush, the sense of communion between Max Muller and India was acted out in a very real way within Oxford as all eminent men of letters as well as Sears and Gurus and scholars and students and passers by really also when they visited Oxford in the later decades of the 19th Century made sure to visit Max Muller. He was a figure on the landscape.

Norum Gardens where he lived was well known to be a thoroughfare for Indian students plying back and forth to join – to enjoy his hospitality. Cornelia Sorabji met with him on many occasions when she was a student. Viva [[Kanunda 0:17:43]] visited in 1896 and K C Sen recorded a hellish day exchanging ideas of the Christian framework behind Brahmo Samaj arguably. He recalled talking about this with Max Muller when they met in 1870.

I'm just going to skip a bit more on K C Sen and Max Muller in the interests of time. I just want to end with – just by drawing your attention to the letter written in 1881 from India, from Calcutta by Keshub Chunder Sen to his dear friend Max Muller recalling that day back in 1870 when they had spoken. They're talking about a controversy in the Brahmo Samaj which had broken around the marriage of K C Sen's daughter.

"In writing to me you need not conceal your real feelings. Discriminating criticism cannot pain me even the reprimands of a true friend are acceptable and must prove beneficial. I've read your letters with the deepest interest and I only wish I could sit with you under one of those shady trees in Oxford which I saw during my short visit there and talk over the many important subjects referred to therein for hours together. My heart is full."

Well with full hearts in mind and with ideas of Christian theism also in mind as one of the structures of feeling that might draw some of these traces together, I'd now like very, very quickly to finish up by looking at the Rhodes House documents, the Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, son of Debendranath Tagore and Charlie Andrews' correspondence.

C F Andrews and Rabindranath Tagore first came into contact around Tagore's influential trip to the West in 1912 to promote the English translations of his poems collected as *Gitanjali*. C F Andrews was present at the famous 7th of July soiree in London when Tagore was introduced to many of those who'd become his promoters, his fans, his readers and his help mates.

In subsequent years they were regularly in contact. Andrews visited Santiniketan in its very early years and travelled with Tagore to Japan in 1915. Discussed with him closely his ideas concerning the capitalist exploitation of the East. He has perhaps a note in common with Iqbal. So discussed with him his ideas concerning capitalist exploitation aided and abetted by nationalism. And later Tagore put some of these ideas to paper in his famous essay on nationalism.

Andrews acted often as Tagore's intermediary in literary as well as financial affairs and in for example 1920 Andrews twice wrote to Tagore's British publisher Macmillan on his behalf concerning questions of the translation of his work. Indeed Andrews held the copyright of Tagore's work in English.

Tagore visited Oxford amongst other visits in 1913 in May when he was widely feted following the award of the Nobel Prize. He lectured at Manchester College in 1920 also. The dinner which the Indian [[Margulies 0:21:42]] at Oxford Indian Society gave him at the Randolph is vividly evoked in an essay by Shaheed [[Shiriwadi 0:21:47]]. From the garlanding with a misprepared funeral wreath at the station because Oxford florists weren't used to, you know, a celebratory loose wreaths being loaded on VIPs visited from India. So they pulled out this stiff funeral wreath at the station.

The dinner at the Randolph where Tagore was observed eating very modestly. The statuesque figure of Tagore as he was observed being punted along the Charwell. His walk through the streets of Oxford and being mistaken by passing children for Father Christmas with his great

beard. And finally one of the last fixtures in his visit to Oxford there was lunch at the home of Robert Bridges where as Shriwadi put it East and West physically met the eastern grace of Tagore being offset by the unexotic poet laureate, Robert Bridges.

Okay so these are the broad strokes of background to the ongoing conversation based on a sympathy, self consciously participated in transcending national divides between political divides also. Between Tagore and C F Andrews. And here I just wanted to draw your attention to this preoccupation with ideas of religious interaction, a hoped for union which are rooted through interestingly as with the Max Muller letters, through ideas of Christian love. And in some cases an abject figuration of Christ but also an intensely human figuration of Christ. And there's something about that conjection of Christian love and the human. And communion between nations that certainly was inspiring to people like Max Muller and K C Sen but also here are at least interesting to, worth entertaining, to Rabindranath Tagore. For those of you sitting at the back I'll read it from the screen.

"I have read your book on Christ. It made me think. The mode of self expression in a Christian life is in love which works. In that of a Hindu it is in love which contemplates and enjoys the spiritual emotion as an end in itself.

The attitude of mind that realises a super human in a human setting has rendered a great service to civilisation just as its perversion..." By which he means political hypocrisy "...has been the cause of an awful and widespread mischief."

And then finally I want to end on...in one of the letters in this collection of five or six. Tagore writing from Santiniketan is asking Andrews – this is now in the 1930s – to, if he can publish some of his work in 'The Spectator'.

Sorry Lucy it's actually the typed one, yes, thank you. It isn't a poem to recommend Tagore's work to us qua you know poetry, par inspiring poetry. But what he's talking about is ways in which in the polarised political climate of the 1930s, you know the name of Christ is being invoked by different parties and is being perverted, Christian ideas are being perverted. And I'll just, I'll end just by reading half of this rather strange poem which I don't think was ever published by 'The Spectator'.

"From his eternal seat Christ comes down to this earth where ages ago in the bitter cup of death he poured his deathless life for those who came to the call and those who remained away.

He looks about him and sees the weapons of evil that wounded his own age. The arrogant spikes and spears, the slim sly knives, the scimitar in diplomatic sheaf crooked and cruel are hissing and raining sparks as they are sharpened on monster wheels. But the most fearful of them all at the hands of the slaughterers are those whereon has been engraved his own name. That are fashioned from the texts of his own words, fused in the fire of hatred and hammered by hypocritical greed.

He presses his hand upon his heart. My heart is full."

Thank you very much.

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