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Reclaiming Sanskrit as an Indigenous Knowledge Tradition: A Postcolonial Perspective

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Abstract

Colonialism in India transformed not only political institutions and economic structures but also the epistemological foundations through which knowledge was produced, transmitted, and legitimized. Among its most enduring legacies was the institutional privileging of European intellectual traditions and the corresponding marginalization of indigenous systems of knowledge. Sanskrit, historically the language of philosophy, jurisprudence, linguistics, aesthetics, and scientific inquiry in South Asia, gradually lost its status as a living intellectual tradition under colonial educational policies. Rather than functioning as a dynamic medium of knowledge production, it was increasingly represented as a relic of an ancient civilization. This paper examines Sanskrit within the framework of postcolonial and decolonial theory to argue that its decline was fundamentally epistemic rather than merely linguistic. Drawing upon the works of Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Ashis Nandy, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Walter Dignolo, and Sheldon Pollock, the study explores how colonial discourse reconfigured Indian intellectual consciousness by establishing hierarchies of knowledge that continue to shape educational institutions and academic practices. It further argues that reclaiming Sanskrit should not be understood as a nostalgic return to an idealized past or as an instrument of cultural nationalism. Instead, it should be viewed as a critical engagement with an alternative epistemological tradition capable of enriching contemporary debates on knowledge, identity, and intellectual plurality. Ultimately, the paper contends that genuine decolonization requires dismantling inherited colonial hierarchies while fostering a pluralistic intellectual order in which multiple traditions of knowledge coexist and engage one another on equal terms.

Keywords: Sanskrit; Decolonization; Colonial Epistemology; Postcolonial Theory; Indigenous Knowledge Systems; Orientalism; Epistemic Justice; Intellectual History.

INTRODUCTION

Colonialism has conventionally been understood as a system of territorial conquest, economic exploitation, and political domination. However, postcolonial scholarship has increasingly demonstrated that imperialism was equally an epistemic project that transformed the production, circulation, and legitimacy of knowledge. Colonial administrations exercised authority not only through military and administrative institutions but also by determining which languages, disciplines, and intellectual traditions deserved recognition as rational, scientific, and modern. Consequently, colonialism established enduring hierarchies of knowledge that privileged European intellectual traditions while systematically marginalizing indigenous systems of learning. Political independence, therefore, did not automatically dismantle these epistemological structures; many continue to shape educational institutions, academic disciplines, and cultural consciousness in postcolonial societies.

The Indian experience illustrates this epistemic dimension of colonialism with remarkable clarity. Prior to British rule, intellectual life flourished through diverse networks of gurukulas, pathshalas, monastic institutions, and scholarly communities in which Sanskrit functioned as a sophisticated medium for philosophical inquiry, jurisprudence, literary criticism, linguistics, aesthetics, astronomy, and political thought. Its importance extended far beyond its religious associations, serving as the language through which generations of scholars debated questions of knowledge, ethics, interpretation, and social order. Yet the colonial educational reforms of the nineteenth century fundamentally altered this intellectual landscape by institutionalizing English education and privileging Western epistemological frameworks as universal standards of knowledge. As a consequence, Sanskrit gradually lost its institutional authority and came to be regarded primarily as an object

of historical preservation rather than as a living tradition of intellectual inquiry.

Colonial Education and the Making of Epistemic Hierarchies

The transformation of India's intellectual landscape under British colonial rule cannot be understood without examining the central role of education in the imperial project. Colonial education was never intended merely to disseminate knowledge; rather, it functioned as an instrument for reshaping cultural consciousness and establishing new standards of intellectual legitimacy. By privileging English language education and European systems of knowledge, the colonial state gradually displaced indigenous traditions from positions of authority. The consequences of this epistemic restructuring extended far beyond the colonial period and continue to influence contemporary educational institutions in postcolonial India.

The ideological foundations of British educational policy were articulated most explicitly in Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education* (1835). Rejecting traditional systems of learning, Macaulay argued that European literature and science were inherently superior to Indian intellectual traditions and recommended that English should become the principal medium of higher education. His objective was not simply to introduce a new language but to cultivate a class of intermediaries who would facilitate colonial administration while internalizing British cultural values. His well-known aspiration to create individuals who were "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" illustrates the deeper cultural ambitions of colonial education. Education thus became a means of producing intellectual conformity rather than merely transmitting information.

The implementation of this policy transformed the relationship between language and social mobility. Proficiency in English increasingly became a prerequisite for

employment, administrative service, and access to higher education. Traditional centres of learning, including gurukulas and Sanskrit pathshalas, gradually lost institutional patronage and public prestige. Although these institutions had historically cultivated rigorous scholarship in philosophy, grammar, jurisprudence, astronomy, medicine, and literary criticism, they were increasingly portrayed as inadequate for the requirements of modern society. Consequently, the authority of Sanskrit as a language of intellectual inquiry declined, not because its knowledge systems lacked sophistication, but because colonial institutions redefined the criteria through which knowledge itself was evaluated.

Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony provides an illuminating framework for understanding this transformation. Gramsci argues that domination is sustained not only through political power but also through the creation of cultural norms that appear natural and universally valid. In colonial India, European systems of knowledge acquired the status of objective and universal truth, while indigenous traditions were reduced to the domains of religion, mythology, or local custom. This hierarchy was gradually internalized by sections of the educated Indian elite, many of whom came to associate modernity with Westernization and regarded indigenous intellectual traditions as obstacles to progress. The success of colonial education therefore lay not merely in institutional reform but in its capacity to reshape intellectual aspirations and cultural self-perception.

Ashis Nandy extends this argument by suggesting that colonialism achieved its most enduring victory through psychological and cultural transformation rather than political domination alone. In the *Intimate Enemy*, Nandy argues that colonial rule encouraged the colonized to evaluate themselves according to standards established by the colonizer. Such internalization generated forms of intellectual dependency that persisted even after political

independence. Within this framework, Sanskrit gradually ceased to be perceived as a source of theoretical knowledge and was increasingly confined to the study of ancient religion or classical literature. This shift represented not the natural decline of a language but the success of a colonial epistemology that privileged one tradition of knowledge while marginalizing another.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o similarly emphasizes that language is inseparable from culture, memory, and identity. In *Decolonising the Mind*, he argues that the displacement of indigenous languages constitutes one of the most effective mechanisms of cultural domination because language carries a community's history, values, and worldview. Although Ngũgĩ's arguments emerge from the African context, they resonate strongly with colonial India. The marginalization of Sanskrit represented not only the decline of a linguistic medium but also the weakening of intellectual traditions through which generations had debated questions of ethics, aesthetics, law, and philosophy. Colonial education therefore transformed the very conditions under which knowledge could be produced and recognized.

The colonial restructuring of education also introduced a hierarchical distinction between universal and particular knowledge. European philosophy, science, and history were presented as universally applicable, whereas Indian intellectual traditions were classified as culturally specific or historically obsolete. Postcolonial scholars have challenged this binary by demonstrating that all systems of knowledge emerge within particular historical and cultural contexts. The claim to universality often concealed the cultural specificity of European intellectual traditions while simultaneously denying legitimacy to alternative epistemological frameworks. Recognizing this asymmetry is essential for understanding why the decolonization of knowledge requires more than political independence; it demands a critical re-

examination of the intellectual hierarchies inherited from colonial rule.

Rather than rejecting Western scholarship altogether, a decolonial perspective seeks to expose the unequal relations through which certain traditions became universal while others were marginalized. The objective is not to replace one orthodoxy with another but to create a more inclusive intellectual landscape in which diverse traditions of knowledge are evaluated on their own conceptual terms. Reconsidering the history of colonial education in India therefore reveals that the struggle for decolonization is fundamentally a struggle over epistemic authority, cultural memory, and the legitimacy of indigenous ways of knowing.

Sanskrit as an Indigenous Knowledge Tradition

The marginalization of Sanskrit during the colonial period cannot be understood merely as the decline of an ancient language. More significantly, it represented the displacement of an intellectual tradition that had shaped philosophical, literary, linguistic, legal, and scientific inquiry in South Asia for over two millennia. Colonial discourse frequently reduced Sanskrit to the status of a sacred or ceremonial language, thereby obscuring its historical function as a dynamic medium of knowledge production. Such representations continue to influence contemporary perceptions, where Sanskrit is often viewed as an object of cultural heritage rather than as a source of theoretical reflection. A postcolonial reassessment therefore requires recognizing Sanskrit not simply as a language of the past but as an indigenous epistemological tradition whose intellectual contributions remain relevant to contemporary scholarship.

Prior to colonial intervention, Sanskrit occupied a distinctive position within the intellectual history of the Indian subcontinent. It served as the principal medium through which scholars debated questions of metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, aesthetics, political

philosophy, jurisprudence, grammar, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and logic. Unlike the colonial assumption that associated Sanskrit primarily with religion, historical evidence demonstrates that it functioned as a language of systematic reasoning across multiple disciplines. The richness of Sanskrit intellectual culture lay not merely in the preservation of canonical texts but in the continuous production of commentaries, debates, and reinterpretations through which knowledge evolved across successive generations.

One of the most remarkable features of Sanskrit intellectual traditions is their sophisticated engagement with epistemology. Schools such as Nyāya developed elaborate theories concerning the nature, sources, and validity of knowledge. Concepts such as *pramāṇa* (means of valid knowledge), *anumāna* (inference), *pratyakṣa* (perception), and *śabda* (verbal testimony) reveal a highly systematic approach to philosophical reasoning that addressed questions still central to contemporary epistemology. Rather than relying exclusively on revelation or faith, these traditions emphasized logical argumentation, debate, and critical examination. Such philosophical developments challenge colonial assumptions that rational inquiry emerged exclusively within the European Enlightenment.

Equally significant is the contribution of Sanskrit to linguistic thought. Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* remains one of the most sophisticated grammatical treatises ever produced. Through an extraordinarily precise system of rules governing phonetics, morphology, and syntax, Pāṇini demonstrated an analytical approach to language that continues to attract the attention of linguists and cognitive scientists. Modern scholars have frequently observed that the structural precision of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* anticipates several principles associated with contemporary linguistic theory. While such comparisons should not be used to establish civilizational superiority, they

nevertheless illustrate the depth and originality of Sanskrit intellectual traditions.

The tradition of Sanskrit literary criticism further demonstrates the diversity of indigenous knowledge systems. Thinkers such as Bharata, Ānandavardhana, Mammaṭa, and Abhinavagupta developed sophisticated theories concerning aesthetics, poetic language, interpretation, and emotional experience. The concept of *rasa*, for instance, represents one of the world's most influential theories of aesthetic response, offering a nuanced account of how literature generates emotional and intellectual engagement. Likewise, the theory of *dhvani* expanded literary criticism by emphasizing suggestion, symbolism, and layers of meaning beyond literal expression. These traditions reveal that literary theory in India developed independently through rigorous philosophical reflection rather than as a derivative response to Western criticism.

Another defining characteristic of Sanskrit intellectual culture was its commitment to dialogue and commentary. Unlike modern assumptions that privilege originality over interpretation, Sanskrit scholarship regarded commentary as a creative and intellectually productive activity. Successive generations of scholars engaged earlier texts through critique, refinement, and reinterpretation, thereby ensuring that knowledge remained dynamic rather than static. This extensive commentarial tradition challenges the colonial stereotype of Indian civilization as intellectually stagnant. Instead, it reveals a scholarly culture sustained by debate, disagreement, and continuous intellectual renewal.

The colonial restructuring of education disrupted these networks of learning by replacing indigenous institutions with educational models grounded in European disciplinary classifications. As Sanskrit gradually disappeared from mainstream academic curricula, many of its intellectual traditions became inaccessible to later

generations. Consequently, contemporary students often encounter Sanskrit primarily through religious studies or classical literature while remaining unaware of its contributions to philosophy, linguistics, jurisprudence, aesthetics, and theories of knowledge. This separation between classical texts and contemporary academic inquiry represents one of the most enduring consequences of colonial epistemology.

Recovering Sanskrit within postcolonial scholarship, however, should not be confused with romantic nostalgia or cultural essentialism. The objective is neither to idealize the past nor to claim that Sanskrit contains solutions to every modern intellectual problem. Rather, the purpose is to recognize that multiple civilizations have generated sophisticated traditions of theoretical reflection and that these traditions deserve equal participation in contemporary academic discourse. A genuinely decolonial approach neither rejects Western knowledge nor elevates indigenous traditions uncritically; instead, it seeks an intellectual environment in which diverse epistemological traditions engage one another through dialogue, comparison, and mutual critique.

Sanskrit represents far more than a classical language. It embodies a complex intellectual archive that preserves alternative ways of conceptualizing language, reason, ethics, aesthetics, and knowledge itself. Re-engaging with this archive enables scholars to question inherited assumptions concerning the geography of theory and to challenge the colonial distinction between those societies that produce knowledge and those that merely preserve culture. Such recognition forms an essential step toward the broader project of epistemic decolonization that seeks to establish a genuinely pluralistic understanding of global intellectual history.

Orientalism and the Politics of Representation

The colonial engagement with Sanskrit reveals one of the most complex dimensions of

imperial knowledge production. Unlike many indigenous traditions that were dismissed outright, Sanskrit occupied an ambiguous position within colonial discourse. European Orientalists acknowledged its linguistic sophistication, literary richness, and historical significance while simultaneously restricting it to the realm of antiquity. Consequently, Sanskrit was celebrated as evidence of India's glorious past but denied recognition as a living intellectual tradition capable of contributing to modern knowledge. This paradox demonstrates that colonialism functioned not only through political domination but also through the control of cultural representation and epistemic authority.

Edward Said's theory of Orientalism provides a useful framework for understanding this contradiction. Said argues that the Orient was not simply discovered by Europe but was intellectually constructed through systems of representation that served colonial interests. These representations classified and interpreted non-Western societies according to assumptions that reinforced European cultural superiority. Knowledge, therefore, became inseparable from power. Colonial scholarship did not merely describe India; it produced an image of India that justified imperial intervention while simultaneously determining how Indian civilization would be understood both in Europe and within the colony itself.

The colonial study of Sanskrit emerged within this broader intellectual context. Scholars such as Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, and Max Müller played an important role in collecting, translating, and preserving Sanskrit manuscripts. Their work contributed significantly to comparative philology and introduced Indian intellectual traditions to European academia. Yet this scholarly engagement also transformed Sanskrit into an object of European interpretation. Increasingly, the authority to explain Sanskrit texts shifted from indigenous scholarly communities to colonial academic institutions. In this process,

interpretation itself became a form of intellectual power.

The paradox of Orientalist scholarship lies in its simultaneous admiration and marginalization of Sanskrit. William Jones famously praised Sanskrit as possessing remarkable grammatical refinement and literary elegance. Nevertheless, Orientalist discourse frequently represented India as a civilization whose intellectual achievements belonged exclusively to the distant past. Ancient texts were celebrated, whereas contemporary Indian society was portrayed as stagnant and incapable of intellectual innovation. Such narratives enabled colonial administrators to present British rule as a civilizing mission that would restore progress to an otherwise declining civilization.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept of epistemic violence deepens this critique by demonstrating how colonialism transforms indigenous knowledge through acts of representation. According to Spivak, colonial discourse often translates non-Western traditions into conceptual categories established by European thought, thereby silencing alternative epistemologies rather than engaging them on their own terms. Sanskrit philosophy, aesthetics, and hermeneutics were frequently interpreted through Western philosophical frameworks that overlooked their conceptual distinctiveness. As a result, indigenous theories were acknowledged only after being reshaped according to colonial intellectual assumptions.

Dipesh Chakrabarty further challenges the universalization of European intellectual history by arguing that modern academic disciplines continue to privilege European experiences as the normative model for understanding history and society. This tendency positions Europe as the producer of theory while non-European cultures become sources of empirical data. Sanskrit illustrates this asymmetry clearly. Although it contains sophisticated traditions of philosophy,

linguistics, literary criticism, and political thought, it has rarely been treated as a source of theoretical concepts within mainstream academic discourse. Instead, it is more commonly approached as historical evidence rather than as an active participant in contemporary intellectual debates.

Sheldon Pollock offers a more nuanced perspective by demonstrating that Sanskrit historically functioned as a cosmopolitan language whose influence extended across vast regions of South and Southeast Asia. His work challenges simplistic colonial assumptions that reduce Sanskrit to a purely religious language while simultaneously cautioning against nationalist attempts to romanticize its past. Pollock's analysis suggests that Sanskrit should be understood historically as a dynamic intellectual medium whose significance emerged through changing political and cultural contexts rather than through timeless civilizational claims.

A decolonial engagement with Sanskrit therefore requires moving beyond two equally limiting positions. On the one hand, colonial discourse reduced Sanskrit to an obsolete relic with little relevance to modern scholarship. On the other hand, certain nationalist narratives respond by portraying Sanskrit as the source of all scientific and philosophical knowledge. Both positions oversimplify history and restrict meaningful intellectual engagement. A more balanced approach recognizes Sanskrit as a historically situated yet intellectually sophisticated tradition that deserves critical dialogue rather than unquestioning celebration or dismissal.

Reconsidering Orientalist representations ultimately reveals that the colonial legacy persists not only in institutions but also in the categories through which knowledge is evaluated. Recovering Sanskrit within postcolonial scholarship is therefore not an attempt to reverse intellectual hierarchies but to dismantle them. By recognizing indigenous

traditions as legitimate sites of theoretical reflection, decolonization seeks to create a more inclusive global intellectual landscape in which multiple epistemologies contribute to the production of knowledge.

Reclaiming Sanskrit Beyond Cultural Nationalism

The contemporary recovery of Sanskrit occupies a complex position within debates on decolonization, identity, and cultural politics. While the colonial period marginalized Sanskrit by reducing it to a relic of the past, recent attempts to revive it have often been accompanied by nationalist narratives that portray it as the exclusive foundation of Indian civilization. Both positions, however, oversimplify the historical role of Sanskrit. The former dismisses its intellectual significance, while the latter frequently idealizes it without sufficient critical engagement. A genuinely decolonial approach must move beyond both colonial prejudice and cultural triumphalism. Decolonization is not synonymous with the restoration of a precolonial order. Rather, it seeks to question the epistemological hierarchies through which certain traditions came to be regarded as universal while others were relegated to the margins. Within this framework, reclaiming Sanskrit does not imply replacing Western knowledge with indigenous knowledge or constructing an alternative hierarchy of intellectual superiority. Instead, it involves recognizing Sanskrit as one among several important traditions that have contributed to humanity's understanding of language, philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, and social thought. This distinction is crucial because the value of Sanskrit lies not in claims of civilizational exceptionalism but in its capacity to expand contemporary intellectual discourse. Its philosophical traditions challenge dominant assumptions concerning reason and knowledge; its grammatical analyses continue to inform linguistic inquiry; and its theories of aesthetics offer perspectives that complement rather than compete with modern literary

criticism. Such contributions demonstrate that theoretical reflection has emerged from multiple cultural locations, thereby questioning the Eurocentric geography of knowledge inherited from colonial modernity.

At the same time, any contemporary engagement with Sanskrit must remain attentive to the historical complexities surrounding its transmission. Access to Sanskrit learning was shaped by social institutions that were themselves marked by hierarchies of caste, gender, and privilege. Ignoring these realities risks transforming decolonization into an exercise in nostalgia rather than critical scholarship. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak reminds us that recovering marginalized traditions must also involve questioning the structures of exclusion embedded within those traditions. A decolonial project therefore requires both recovery and critique, affirmation and self-reflection.

Furthermore, Sanskrit should not be viewed in isolation from India's broader multilingual and multicultural heritage. Throughout history it existed in continuous dialogue with Prakrit, Pali, Tamil, Persian, Arabic, and numerous regional languages that collectively shaped South Asian intellectual life. Recognizing these interactions prevents the reduction of Sanskrit to a singular symbol of national identity and instead highlights its place within a diverse and interconnected cultural landscape. Such an understanding reflects the plurality that lies at the heart of postcolonial thought.

Ultimately, reclaiming Sanskrit is not an attempt to return to the past but to broaden the intellectual possibilities of the present. Decolonization succeeds not by replacing one dominant narrative with another but by creating conditions in which diverse knowledge traditions engage one another through dialogue, critical inquiry, and mutual respect. In this sense, Sanskrit becomes less a symbol of cultural

nostalgia than a resource for imagining a more inclusive and intellectually plural future.

Challenges in Decolonizing Knowledge

The project of decolonizing knowledge extends beyond recovering marginalized intellectual traditions; it also requires confronting the institutional and conceptual legacies of colonialism that continue to shape contemporary academia. Although political independence ended colonial rule, many educational systems, research methodologies, and disciplinary frameworks still privilege Eurocentric models of knowledge production. Consequently, indigenous traditions such as Sanskrit often remain peripheral within mainstream academic discourse despite growing interest in decolonial studies.

One of the principal challenges lies in the persistence of epistemic hierarchies established during the colonial period. European theories continue to function as the primary conceptual frameworks through which literature, history, philosophy, and culture are interpreted, while non-Western traditions are frequently treated as regional or historical subjects rather than as sources of theoretical innovation. This asymmetry limits intellectual diversity and reinforces the assumption that universal knowledge originates exclusively within Western academic traditions.

A second challenge concerns the tendency to reduce decolonization to symbolic cultural revival. While recovering classical languages and indigenous traditions is an important intellectual task, such efforts lose their scholarly significance if they merely celebrate the past without engaging in critical analysis. Decolonization should therefore encourage rigorous research, comparative inquiry, and interdisciplinary dialogue rather than uncritical glorification. A meaningful engagement with Sanskrit requires acknowledging both its intellectual achievements and the historical limitations

associated with its transmission and accessibility.

Translation presents another important dimension of epistemic decolonization. A substantial portion of Sanskrit philosophical, literary, and scientific texts remains inaccessible to wider academic audiences because of linguistic barriers. High-quality translations, accompanied by historically informed interpretation, are essential for integrating these traditions into global scholarly conversations. However, translation should not become an act of intellectual assimilation that forces Sanskrit concepts into categories derived exclusively from Western philosophy. Preserving conceptual specificity is crucial if indigenous traditions are to contribute genuinely new perspectives to contemporary debates.

The growing interest in comparative philosophy, global intellectual history, and indigenous knowledge systems nevertheless offers promising possibilities for epistemic plurality. Increasingly, scholars argue that theoretical knowledge is not the exclusive product of any single civilization but emerges through multiple historical and cultural traditions. This shift creates opportunities to reconsider Sanskrit not as a relic of the past but as an active participant in interdisciplinary discussions concerning ethics, aesthetics, language, ecology, political thought, and philosophy.

Ultimately, the decolonization of knowledge is not a project of intellectual replacement but of intellectual expansion. Its objective is neither to reject Western scholarship nor to privilege indigenous traditions uncritically, but to establish a more inclusive academic environment in which diverse epistemological traditions engage one another through critical dialogue. Such an approach promotes a genuinely plural understanding of knowledge while challenging the hierarchical assumptions inherited from colonial modernity.

CONCLUSION

The decolonization of knowledge requires more than the political rejection of colonial rule; it demands a critical reassessment of the epistemological structures that continue to shape contemporary intellectual life. Colonial education in India did not merely introduce new administrative systems or linguistic preferences; it fundamentally reconfigured the criteria through which knowledge was produced, validated, and institutionalized. In this process, Sanskrit, despite its long-standing role as a medium of philosophical, literary, scientific, and legal inquiry, was gradually displaced from the centre of intellectual discourse and redefined as a relic of the past rather than a living tradition of knowledge.

Drawing upon the insights of Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Ashis Nandy, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Walter Dignolo, and Sheldon Pollock, this study has argued that the marginalization of Sanskrit was not simply linguistic but profoundly epistemic. Colonialism established enduring hierarchies that privileged European intellectual traditions while limiting the visibility of indigenous systems of thought. These hierarchies continue to influence academic institutions, disciplinary frameworks, and the global circulation of knowledge.

At the same time, reclaiming Sanskrit should not be understood as an attempt to restore an idealized past or to construct new forms of cultural exclusivism. Rather, it represents an opportunity to foster epistemic plurality by recognizing that significant traditions of philosophical and theoretical inquiry have emerged from diverse historical and cultural contexts. A meaningful decolonial project therefore combines critical recovery with scholarly self-reflection, allowing different intellectual traditions to engage one another without hierarchical assumptions.

Ultimately, the future of decolonization lies not in replacing one intellectual centre with another but in creating a genuinely plural

academic landscape where multiple epistemologies coexist, interact, and enrich global scholarship. Repositioning Sanskrit as an active participant in this dialogue is not merely an act of cultural preservation; it is an important step toward achieving greater epistemic justice and a more inclusive understanding of the world's intellectual heritage.

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