

European Ideologies: Imperial Domination and Social Reforms in India, 1773-1857

Firoj High Sarwar

Research Scholar, Dept. History, AMU, Aligarh

Abstract- The paper describes a distinctive style of colonial state-building that has tended to lie buried under later notions of the British civilization mission. In the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century, theories of empire often justified British Rule in India by reference to enlightenment ideas about stage of civilization. An attempt of critical study is being made here to expose how the European ideas like Laissez-faire, Orientalism, Evangelicalism, Utilitarianism, and Humanism were simultaneously manipulated for both the notions of imperial colony-construction and social reform mission towards India. It compares and contrasts discourses of 'progress' and 'development' as employed in different contexts of charitable and philanthropic activities done by East India Company officials in the decades after 1773 to 1857, when colonial power was institutionalized and consolidated. Colonial officials portrayed Company's philanthropy as "works of public utility" and they were set in opposition to supposedly superstitious and wasteful Indian social tradition. When the East India Company began to grasp its responsibilities as a ruling power on the Indian subcontinent, it donned the mantle of a reforming mission which incorporated numerous social issues such as Sati, Kulinism, Widowhood, Infanticide, Child marriage, Slavery and so on. In a nutshell, the Imperial Western Ideologies were represented as a symbol of improvement, progress and modernity which ultimately led to enhance the legitimacy of the Raj in Indian Territory.

Index Terms- About four key words or phrases in alphabetical order, separated by commas. Keywords are used to retrieve documents in an information system such as an online journal or a search engine. (Mention 4-5 keywords)

I. INTRODUCTION

Anthropologists often refer to the 'body of ideas' that people share as ideology, (broadly classified into three least sections as beliefs, values and ideals) which basically influence the human behaviour. An ideology is a set of ideas that constitutes one's goals, expectations, and actions. An ideology can be thought of as a comprehensive vision, as a way of looking at things, as in common sense and several philosophical tendencies or a set of ideas proposed by the dominant class of a society to all members of this society (a "received consciousness"). The main purpose behind an ideology is to offer either change in society, or adherence to a set of ideals where conformity already exists, through a normative thought process. During the period in 17th- and 18th-century Europe known as the Age of Enlightenment, science and logic became new sources of

belief for many people living in civilized societies, which drove the development of European capitalism and then colonialism, influences people's beliefs, values, and ideals in many present-day, large, civilized societies. The emergence of ideas about universalizing principles that sprang from the "enlightened and generous age" was nourished by Knowledge from the expanding colonial context. As according to Professor Irfan Habib 'what is overlooked is simply that many of the fundamental ideas that came to us from the west in the footsteps of colonialism'.¹ The British Empire in colonial India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was one of the testaments of imperial achievement during an age of world-wide 'European Intellectualism cum Imperialism', which indicates "the creation and maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural, and territorial relationship, usually between states and often in the form of an empire, based on domination and subordination,"² caused for "ideological as well as financial reasons" said by Robert Young.³

The process of ideological rearmament that accompanied both colonial state-formation and social reforms in India during the reign of East India Company is a critical substance. To sum up the actuality of the topic, here I tried to scrutinized the more logical theme of 'imperial control' and 'improvement' implemented by the imperial Britain towards colonized India. This panel hence seeks to expand our understanding of 'the expansion of British colonialism in India which was coincided social civilizing endeavours' under the aegis of different consecutive European philosophical ideologies.

The emergence of English East India Company as a political power in India in the mid 18th century, hastens the process of transformation from feudalism to the next higher stage in social development. Marx has explained it as "the annihilation of Asiatic society, and the laying of the Material foundation of western society in Asia", and created in its place modern Bourgeois society through the rise and expansion of capitalism.⁴ In retrospect the year 1765, that came to be seen as the dividing line between Mughal and British India and company gradually become fully effective throughout India. Now Indian society experienced a qualitative structural transformation during British rule under the influences of contemporary European political-economical and philosophical ideas carried away through

¹Habib, Irfan. 'What makes the world change: the long view', Social Scientist, vol-31/ Nos 7-8 July-Aug, 2003

² Johnston, Ronald John. 'The Dictionary of Human Geography' (4th ed.), Wiley-Blackwell. 2000, p. 375.

³ Gilmartin, Mary. Gallaher, 'Key Concepts in Political Geography', Sage Publications Ltd., 2008. pg.116

⁴ Marx, Karl, "The Future Results of the British Rule in India", New York Daily Tribune, August 8, 1853, (London, Friday, July 22, 1853)

colonial network, led it on a new and different path of development. British rule initiated some of the basic changes in social physiognomy of Indian society, though to sub serve its own interest. As Marx said that the ruling class of Great Britain has had an accidental, transitory and exceptional interest in the progress of India. He defined that British Rule had fulfil a double mission in India: one obstructive (intended), the other generating (unintended).⁵ The two roles were not performed in any distinct sequential stages; the creative was rooted in the destructive, and, therefore, apparently secondary and less visible.

In Europe, a great period of creative discoveries started during Renaissance and later on armed with the gift of reason and science, the powerful and adventure loving nations were now daring to establish Empires in different parts of the world. As B. B. Gupta said 'the development in exploring new geographical boundaries disseminated new knowledge which encouraged the men of genius, both in East and West to bring out their best in different fields of human endeavour along with fresh confidence.'⁶ As scientific discoveries revealed nature and its secrets, there was greater confidence in human spirit. Rational explanation rather than blind faith would hence forth guide the material and spiritual life in west. Science had made men looked forward to future with rational vision. The winds of change began to blow all direction. When an idea has matured, its vibrations are unstoppable. Suddenly a fresh new wave began blowing all over the world. The new spirit of reflection and the inquiry demolished old ideas and developed new ones. The process let loose by science triggered a chain of development in generating wealth for a better life. In India, these currents brought in with the colonial setup in the second half of the 18th century. In simple the Nationalist term "revitalization" or "awakening" appeared with the advent of British ideologue, dealt a fatal blow to the peculiar feudal framework which provided the matrix for the Indian society for a millennium. It produced forces which directly or indirectly gave a mortal blow to the very root of the peculiar social system, numerous social obscurantism and created basis for the emergence of new rational social surface, modernity and cross-cultural mentality.⁷

The British Empire inspired new philosophies of mind (the white man's burden), new theories of economics (free trade versus protection), new methods of administration (the direct versus indirect rule), new social doctrines (racial superiority), new historical ideas (evangelical & utilitarian), new humanitarianism (the uplifting of the black races), new religion (the gospel of progress and civilization), even new dreams (Rhodes and his empire of the world). Since the conquest of Ireland in the sixteenth century, the English gradually emerged as the "New Romans", charged with civilizing backward peoples across the world.⁸ In a post-Enlightenment intellectual environment, the British also started defining themselves as modern or civilised vis-a-vis the Orientals and this rationalised

their imperial vision in the 19th century, which witnessed the so called "age of reform".

Imperial dogmatism and self-assuredness were only strengthened by certain ideas and pseudo-scientific theories. The first of these was the idea of race superiority. James Joll believed that the white races (European) are superior to the black or yellow, was a basic assumption of the confident imperialism of the 19th century.⁹ But Later on the imperialist argument based on the White man's special right to rule was given a moral and humanitarian cover. Ethical Imperialism emphasised the humanitarian task of bringing about good government, education, material improvement and morale elevation of the colonial peoples under the White man's care,¹⁰ a premise taken from Rudyard Kipling' famous poem, 'The White Man's Burden' (1899), shows that it is morale duty or you can say a burden of white Englishmen to civilised the Backward people like Indian. In this context Sumit Sarkar recognised the British in India were quite conscious of being a master race.¹¹ As the British defined their own identity as a nation in opposition to the World outside, so too more generally, did they as Europeans, under the influence of the ideals of Enlightenment, announce their own pre-eminence as a 'modern' and 'civilised' people. The 'east' was always described through the forms of western iconography.¹²

Britain's relations with India from 1765 to 1857 must be understood in terms of this contrast between a vigorously changing, traditional order, besides the clash and conflict found in the relations of Britain and India, a peaceful, often mutually advantageous contact occurred between the two countries. So, British power in India emerged as a system of 'negotiated empire', a phrase recently used to describe the empires of the early modern Atlantic world.¹³ Between the early seventeenth century and the middle of the nineteenth century, Britain rose to power from a position of relative weakness, not only in Europe, but compared too many empires in the East,¹⁴ and starts to spread its network of political domination throughout world. In India that network first connected through a commercial agency (EIC). The so called 'age of revolutions'¹⁵ started with the arrival of British East India Company in India marked as capital domination. Academic histories of this period of revolutions have been mainly structured around explanations of British 'expansion' or imperialism*. They have tended to focus on key moments of war and conquest.¹⁶ But the philosophic minded

⁹ Joll, James, 'Europe Since 1870', London, Pelican, 1983, p.104

¹⁰ Shreedharan, E., 'Textbook of Historiography: 500 B.C. to A. D. 2000', Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 2004 p.410

¹¹ Sarkar, Sumit, 'Modern India, 1885-1947', Macmillan India Limited, New Delhi, 1983, p.22

¹² Metcalf, T. R., op. cit., p. 4-5

¹³ See for details: C. Daniels and M. V. Kennedy 'Negotiated Empires. Centres and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820', Rutledge, 2002,

¹⁴ Frank, Andre Gunder, 'Re-Orient: Global Economy in the Asian Age', University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998, see in particular, p.52-130.

¹⁵ An early used of the term 'Revolution' was William Watts' pamphlet, 'Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal', London, 1760, ripier. Calcutta 1988.

¹⁶ Travers, Robert, 'Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth century India – the British in Bengal', Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p.31 (Also See: Travers, Robert, 'Ideology and Expansion In Bengal,

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Gupta, B. B., 'India Through the Ages', Niyogi Books, New Delhi, 2006, p.247

⁷ Dasgupta, Subrata, 'The Bengal Renaissance: Identity and Creativity from Rammohun Roy to Rabindrnath Tagore', Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2007, p.4-6

⁸ Metcalf, T. R., 'Ideologies of the Raj; The new Cambridge history of India', vol.3.4, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p.3

scholars looked upon the so called 'Bengal Revolution' in terms of intellectual forces along with imperial expansion, which has produced the illumination of real social set up.

The nature of Indian Empire, as it was put together by the conquests of the East India Company during the late eighteenth and early eighteenth, was for the British unprecedented in its extent and character. As Thomas Macaulay explained in wonder in his Speech on the renewal of the company's charter in 1833, the Indian Empire, 'the strangest of all political anomalies,' was a state that 'resembled no other in history'.¹⁷ Hence, as the British set out to make space for themselves as the rulers of India, they had to devise novel, and exceptional, theories of governance which actually structured around the prevailing ideas of Europe. The very process of empire, as C. A. Bayly has suggested, was responsible for absorbing the "indigenous peoples" of the British Isles themselves, beginning in the last half of the 18th century.¹⁸ A multiplicity of motives underlay the British penetration into India: commerce, security, and a purported moral uplift of the people. The "expansive force" of private and company trade eventually led to the conquest or annexation of territories. The British could not avow a preference for 'despotism', for a commitment to the 'rule of law', in their view, defined them as a civilised nation, and so alone could give legitimacy to their raj.¹⁹

The political aggrandisement of the company coincided with the building up of political unity, that in turn laid the foundation of a pavement for a throughout political, economical and social reform mission in India. It entailed the establishment of a strong central government: the embodiment of all law into a set of scientific code; a total reorganization and expansion of the judicial system; a complete overhaul and reshaping of the administrative service; the survey and registration of land holding; and elevating of several social obscurantism.²⁰ Expansionism and increased involvement in the company's domestic politics engaged in the manufacture of political theory and governmental policy.²¹ Basically India was used as a laboratory for imperialistic rule, international economics, and colonial administration.

Though Seeley has commented 'the Indian acquisition of Britain may have been made 'Blindly', 'Unintentionally', and 'Accidentally',²² and not the result of any fixed or connected plan

1757-1772', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 33, 2005, pp. 7-27

¹⁷ Metcalf, Thomas R., op. cit., p.ix

¹⁸ Bayly, C. A., "the British and indigenous peoples, 1760 – 1860: power, perception, and identity", In *Empire and others: British Encounter with indigenous peoples, 1600-1850*, ed. Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern Philadelphia: University Press, 1999, p.20

¹⁹ Purthi, R. K., 'History of Modern India: Colonial Society and Economy', vol-3, A. P. H. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, 2004, p.2-3

²⁰ Edward, Micheal, 'British India, 1772-1947; A survey of the nature and effects of alien rule', Sedgwick & Jackson Publisher, London, 1967, p.60

²¹ Harlow, Barbara & Carter, Mia, (ed.) 'Imperialism & Orientalism; A Documentary source Book', Blackwell Publisher, Malden, Oxford, 1999, p.5

²² Seeley, J. R., 'Expansion of England: Two Courses in Lectures', London, Macmillan and Company, 1904, p.192-193

or policy,²³ yet it is obvious to have an imprint on Indian Society. As Marx pointed out that 'the Arabs, Tartars, Turks, Muguls, who had successively overrun India, soon become Hinduized, but the British were the first conquerors superiors, and therefore, inaccessible to Hindu civilization. They destroyed it by breaking up the native communities by uprooting the native industry, and by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society and carried out constructive works for modernization.²⁴ As a justification it was believed to complacently that Indians were unfit for self government, that British rule was the best for them and that they were happy under that rule. In this context Vincent Smith took pains to prove that endemic political chaos was the normal political condition of India. The inability of the Indians to unite and rule themselves made the permanence of British rule absolutely necessary.²⁵ Most controversial of all is the justification of imperialism done on scientific grounds. J. A. Hobson identifies this justification: "It is desirable that the earth should be peopled, governed, and developed, as far as possible, by the races which can do this work best, i.e. by the races of highest 'social efficiency'."²⁶ This is clearly the racial argument, which pays heed to other ideas such as the "White Man's Burden" prevalent at the turn of the twentieth century.

European perceptions of India and those of the British especially, shifted from unequivocal appreciation to sweeping condemnation of India's past achievements and customs. Imbued with an ethnocentric sense of superiority, British intellectuals, including Christian missionaries, spearheaded a movement that sought to bring Western intellectual and technological innovations to Indians. Interpretations of the causes of India's cultural and spiritual "backwardness" varied, as did the solutions. Many argued that it was Europe's mission to civilize India and hold it as a trust until Indians proved themselves competent for self-rule. The immediate consequence of this sense of superiority was to open India to more aggressive missionary activity under the patronage of William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward remained unequalled and has provided inspiration for future generations of their successors. The missionaries translated the Bible into the vernaculars, taught company officials local languages, and, after 1813, gained permission to proselytize in the company's territories. It was his avowed object to found the British Empire in India on its own ancient laws and institutions; as Benjamin Jowett once remarked, England cannot govern a people without understanding it, and an understanding can only be gained through a thorough knowledge of its language, its literature, its customs, its poetry and its mythology.²⁷

²³ The ascendancy of the English in Hindostan is in the number of those events which are distinguished by a series of fortunate and unforeseen occurrences., Wheeler, J. Talboys, 'The early records of British India; a history of the English settlement in India, Vishal Publisher, Delhi, 2nd edition, 1972, p359. Also see: Fisher, H. A. L., 'A History of Europe from the beginning of the 18th century to 1935', vol -II, Surjeet Publication, Delhi, 2008, p.111

²⁴ Marx, Karl, "The Future Results of the British Rule in India", New York Daily Tribune, August 8, 1853 (London, 22 July, Friday, 1853

²⁵ Sreedharan, E., op. cit., p.427

²⁶ Hobson, J. A. "Imperialism: a study." *Cosimo, Inc.*, 2005. pg. 154

²⁷ Rawlinson, H. G. 'The British achievement in India', *Radha Publication, New Delhi, 1948, p.29*

British Attitude towards India:

British imperial ideology for India was the result of contemporary intellectual and political crosscurrents at home. Sometimes, “sub-imperialism”²⁸ of the men on the spot regarded by some as the “real founders of empire”,²⁹ and pressure from the rule-in sort, the crisis in the periphery-led to adjustments and mutations in the functioning of that ideology. As such, the East India Company’s involvement in India after 1757, and the construction of a British Indian dominion were closely tied to the scholarly research and intellectual debate of those Britons there, and laid the groundwork for the Company’s expansive Indian empire (jewel in the Crown) in the 19th century.

British attitudes towards India were never static and they differed both in times and in place and they certainly differed from individual to individual. As British sought to terms with the existence of their new dominion, British drew upon a range of ideas that had for a long time shaped their views of themselves and, more generally, of the world outside island home. As products at once of British’s own history of overseas expansion and its participation in the larger intellectual currents of Europe, these ideas included settled expectations of how a proper society ought to be organised, and the values, above all those of the right to property and the rule of law, that for the English defined a ‘civilised’ people. As they extended their conquest to India, the British had always to determine the extent to which that land was a fundamentally different, “Oriental” society, and to what extent it possessed institutions similar to those of Europe; how far its peoples ought to be transformed in Europe’s image, and how they should be expected to live according to the standards of their own culture.

The expansion of the Company into Indian politics brought company’s servants into contact with a range of Indian ‘informers’ and texts that would, in a form that was highly mediated by British translations and interpretations, shape the course of British Indian thought.³⁰ They were from all ranks and intellectual levels- soldiers, officials, political leaders, merchants, missionaries, historians, poets and philosophers etc. They were confronted with a strange and distant land, whose people and social conditions, political economic practices, art, religions, and learning were quite different from anything in Britain.³¹ Several schools of imperial historiography are integral to understanding the political nature of the empire itself but these historiography changed as the empire changed and in many ways there was a symbolic relation between the Britain and India. Perhaps, it is not at all ironic that the writer who noted that “who control the past controls the present, who controls the present, who controls the future, was British India born.”³² This study of British attitudes

towards India in 1765 – 1858, is a study of complex body of thoughts and opinions relating to India and derived from individuals, groups, and the British public at large. It is a study of various intellectual tendencies, Mercantilism, Orientalism, Evangelicalism, Conservatism, Utilitarianism, Liberalism, Romanticism and Rationalism as these affected British views of India. It reveals the quality of British thought and opinion about India, the degree of ignorance, self interest and knowledge that appeared in Britain’s understanding.

It has been suggested that ‘British Policy moved within an orbit of ideas primarily determined in Europe’; thus ‘the transformation of the Englishman in India from Nabob to sahib was fundamentally an English transformation not Indian.’³³ Ever since the famous ‘Namierite Revolution’ in historical scholarship it has become fashionable among a group of scholars to neglect the role of ideas in history*. It has been suggested that the ideas have no validity of their own. They are merely a rationalization of human activities which are motivated by the thirst for power.³⁴ But it is certainly true that ideas and ideals played a significant part in the history of modern India. Men went to India for a variety of reasons, to make money, for adventure, and as a help up the social ladder in Britain, but the majority of men also had a definite missionary zeal to shape the future of the country. Moreover, men in political power in India were open to intellectual influences from Europe. The political activities of such men as Philip Francis, Cornwallis, Macaulay and Bentinck were moulded according to their ideological convictions. The transformation of the rural life in Bengal took place owing to many other deep-rooted social and economic causes, but the ideas, which set politicians in motion to reform the administrative system, left a definite mark upon Indian Society.³⁵ The various schools of thoughts are now being discussed here;

Mercantilism & Laissez-faire:

Enlightenment thinkers, such as David Hume and Adam Smith, comes to determine the rationale of the East India Company in its political expansion in late 18th century and early 19th century India. Adam Smith’s advocacy of retaining the conquests of the East India Company, what he calls “territorial acquisitions,”³⁶ has largely been left fallow by intellectual historians working on Smith, as well as historians of modern India, all of whom have been concerned with general theoretical reflections on Empire, as well as the latter’s institutional expressions. The term mercantilism would only be anachronistic to try and describe its meaning for seventeenth and eighteenth-

²⁸ For a detail discussion on this concept, See: Gallagher, J., and R. Robinson, *Africa and the Victorians: the Official Mind of Imperialism*. London, Macmillan, 1961,

²⁹ Stokes, E. 1978, *The peasant and the raj*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.26

³⁰ Travers, R., op. cit., p.43

³¹ Bearce, George D. *British attitudes towards India – 1784-1858*, Oxford University Press, London, 1961, P.3

³² Cohn, Bernard S., *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: the British in India*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, p.3

³³ Stokes, E., op. cit., pp. xii-xiii

* By the mid-18th century, the emergence of Ideas about universalizing principles that sprang from the ‘enlightened and generous age’ was nourished by knowledge from the expanding colonial context. Understanding a newly reconstructing past involved a radical reorganization of the context of historical time, as well as new ways of categorising ideas.

³⁴ Lewis, Namier, *The Structure of politics at the accession of George III*, London, 1961, p.2

³⁵ Mukherjee, S. N., *Sir William Jones: A study in Eighteenth-Century British Attitude to India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1968, p. 1-2

³⁶ For detail See: Smith A., in A. S. Skinner (ed.), *The Wealth Of Nations*, Books IV-V, London, 1999, first edition 1776.

century commentators on the science of wealth. Adam Smith's 'the wealth of nations' has been seen as the founding text for the free trade principles of "laissez-faire", replacing the narrow minded economic nationalism of mercantilist doctrine,³⁷ and opened a path for communicating a variety of Englishmen with Indian, that in helped in transmitting rational ideas among the dogmatic people. Proponents of 'laissez-faire' and 'corporate welfare' principles however continued to agree on the importance of empire and trading supremacy to the health of the economy. At one level, of course, this is simply a justification for the question of colonies in which raw materials are shipped to the mother country in exchange for the 'gift of civilization'.³⁸ James Stuart's 'Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy' criticised mercantile theory and said 'it is better idea to make free network for the purpose of avoiding social ills'.³⁹

Two recent studies that do take note of A. Smith's argument are able to do so only by distorting it beyond recognition. Jennifer Pitts in *Turn to Empire*, argues "Smith did not categorically reject European rule over non-European territory, arguing, for instance, against the East India Company's exclusive territorial claim, that the 'territorial acquisitions of the East India Company are the undoubted right of the Crown, that is of the state and the people of Great Britain'.⁴⁰ On the other hand Sudipta Sen in 'Empire of Free Trade' also cites the same lines of Smith, to argue that, "In specific reference to India, Smith believed that the pernicious monopoly should be abolished in favour of free trade. Yet, in view of the economic competition with other European nations, the Company should retain not only its territories in India but also its revenues as the 'undoubted right of the crown that is the State and the people of Great Britain'.⁴¹

In later period Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher argued that it is 'the imperialism of free trade', in which the economic forces formed the imperial policy.* This ideology of empire quickly turned global progress into the moral obligation of the empire. Their improvements of the world become a duty to the rest of humanity and they saw the world through the lenses of their own progress.⁴² The free traders firmly believed that the industrial revolution which was investing Britain with the commercial leadership of the world resulted from a superior civilization and the passing on its benefits was not only good business but a heaven ordain duty. The only way this could be carried out was by spreading English institutions and English education. One of the results was that law commission was appointed to codify according to Western principles. Another was that, in 1835, it was decided that English education in the English language should receive the principal support of the government of India. Essentially this denoted a mission civilization rather than a philosophy of conquerors. As Macaulay

said 'to trade with civilized men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages'.⁴³

Orientalism:

The first school of thought that emerged in the writing of empire is perhaps best described as British Orientalist. The Orientalist scholars proved most dominant during the early modern contact between India and the Great Britain. They were dominant in this intellectual realm from the late 16th century until the early 1800s. By virtue of the fact that Orientalist was the first scholars to record early interactions between Europe and Asia, they were very important to these two fields of history and established many of the early terms of reference between the two cultural groups. Arnold Toynbee, among others, helped universalised the notion of Intelligentsia by assigning to it the function of mediator between cultures. The intelligentsia arises, says Toynbee, "in any community that is attempting to solve the problem of adapting its life to the rhythm of an exotic civilization to which it has been forcibly annexed or freely converted.⁴⁴ Indeed, some contemporary scholars have argued that Orientalist is also embedded how western civilization looks at eastern culture that much of what is thought about the East is untrue and is actually an insidious way of creating the false dichotomy of 'us' (representing civilization and progress) versus 'them' (representing civilized people).⁴⁵

The oriental is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.⁴⁶ Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident."⁴⁷ Some scholars like Eugene Irschick have argued that contrary to the supposition of Edward Said (1978) that Orientalism was a knowledge thrust from above through the power of the Europeans; it was produced through a process of dialogue in which the colonial officials, Indian commentators and native informants participated in a collaborative intellectual exercise.⁴⁸ The relationship between

⁴³ Edward, Michael, op. cit, 1967, p. 56-57.

⁴⁴ Toynbee, Arnold, *The Disintegration of Civilization: A Study of History*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1962, V, P. 154-158

⁴⁵ Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Knopf, 1993, p.22. See also Edward Said, "Orientalism reconsidered" race and class 27, No.2, 1985, p.6.

* Indology is the academic study of the languages and literature, history and cultures of the Indian subcontinent, Indology may also be known as Indic studies or Indian studies, or South Asian studies, although scholars and university administrators sometimes have only partially overlapping interpretations of these terms.

⁴⁶ Said, Edward W., *Orientalism- The western conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1978, p.2

⁴⁷ Said, Edward W., *ibid.*, p.2

⁴⁸ Irschick, Eugene F., *Dialogue and History: constructing south India 1795-1895*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press., 1994, p. 6-13, 191-204 and passim

* Challengers to eastern culture condemned their tendency toward "oriental despotism", and ascribed their susceptibility to conquest to an inherent failure to advance beyond the "Asiatic mode of production". The debates over the different forms of proper of

³⁷ Neill, Anna, *ibid.*, p.19

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.21

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.20

⁴⁰ Pitts, Jennifer, *Turn To Empire Princeton*: Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2005.p. 56.

⁴¹ Sen, Sudipta, *Empire of Free Trade*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998. p.125.

⁴² Gallagher, John & Robinson, *The Imperialism of Free Trade*, Journal of Economic History 1, No.5, 1953, p.4

Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony, and is quite accurately indicated in the title of K. M. Panikkar's classic 'Asia and Western Dominance'.^{*} In short Orientalism is an ideology of western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.

Within the umbrella of Western hegemony over the orient during the period from the end of the 18th century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the Museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe.⁴⁹ In India under the patronage of W. Hastings, orientalist Sir William Jones, and his associates William Carey, William Robertson and others, then further T. Prinsep, Max Muller promoted by company's Governors^{*} has started exploration of Indian past heritage and culture 'Golden Age',^{*} and founded a research institution namely 'Asiatic Society of Bengal'.⁵⁰ Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffused collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" imperialist plot to hold down the Oriental world. Orientalism in practice in its early phase could be seen in the policies of the company's government under Warren Hastings. The fundamental principle of this tradition was that the conquered people were to be ruled by their own laws-British rule had to "legitimize itself in an Indian idiom".⁵¹ It therefore needed to produce knowledge about Indian Society, a process which Gauri Viswanathan would call "reverse acculturation".⁵² It informed the European rulers of the customs and laws of the land for the purpose of assimilating them into the subject society for more efficient administration. Warren Hasting wanted to reconcile British Rule with the Indian Institutions. As Gleig aptly points out that "in cultural policy, Hasting aimed not only at producing an acculturated class of English Civil Servants, but at improving the means by which Indians might revitalize their own culture."⁵³ This inevitably meant more intensive investigation into the manners and customs

government and governability between East and West, between Europe and the "orient", provided grounds for the continuing contest over power and suzerainty and the very question of just how – and less and less whether – British should rule India. (Barbara Harlow & Mia Carter, 1999, op. cit., p.24).

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.7

^{*}See in Detail for the orientalist afford in search of Golden age of India, Kopf, David's 'British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance' 1969, p. 23-40, also see my Fourth Chapter.

^{*}The recognition of Indian Cultural heritage, coming with these scholars and officials, was vitally important to British Attitudes. India's cultural greatness, to the extent British prejudices admitted its merit, justify the preservation of the Indian constitution and profoundly supported the conservative view of India.

⁵⁰ See For Detail: Mukherjee, S. N., op. cit., 1968, p.75-90.

⁵¹Majeed, Javed, 'Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's 'The History of British India and Orientalism', Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, p.22.

⁵²Viswanathan, Gauri. 'Makes of Conquest: literary study and British rule in India', New York, Colombia University Press, 1989, p.28

⁵³ ⁵³ Kopf, David, 'British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance; The Dynamics of Indian Modernization 1773-1835', Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1969, p.21.

of the country and an in-depth analysis of the literature and laws of the Indians. It was this political vision that Orientalist Training Centre 'Fort William College' at Calcutta was established in 1800 to train civil servants in Indian languages and tradition.⁵⁴

British were superior to Indians both in arms, institutions and character. To Warren Hasting "the Indians were weak in body and timid in spirit. Their civilization was full of grave defects, vice, crime, superstition, injustice and anarchy", and they needed British protection against Indians and Europeans alike. Having asserted the superiority of the British and the inferiority of the Indians, than imperial spokesmen could arrive at the obvious conclusion. Under British rule Indians were not only happy, but in a progressive state of happiness. It had recognised the British responsibilities in India, had transferred Britain's best qualities there in the form of men and principles, and were now governing the country for the benefit of its people.⁵⁵ Imperial sentiment, at its most enthusiastic, involved the conviction that Britain was now showering on India the blessing British liberty, British character, and the British constitution.

In the 18th century Oriental scholars existed within the world of the prominent but increasingly challenged Christian intellectual hegemony, by fighting and winning the battle of Plessey in 1757. Orientalist knowledge had been given a new forum in which it could flourish and become an epistemological means of exploring India, and caused a virtual flood of opinion on subjects ranging from discourses on local law, music, literature, botany, and perhaps most importantly, the geography and languages of India.⁵⁶

Alexander Dow, the writer of "History of Hindustan"(London, 1770), himself found implicit justification for Britain's own authoritarian rule over the subcontinent when he wrote, 'when a people have long been subjected to arbitrary power, their return to liberty as arduous and almost impossible'.⁵⁷ By interpreting and absorbing the intellectual ideas and traditions of the subcontinent, these Scholars wrote India into an epistemological, racial and ideological space in the relation to Europe. As British begun to put together their raj in the latter half of the 18th century, the British had to devise a vision at once of India's past and of its future. Without such a vision there was no way they could justify their rule to themselves, much less shape a coherent administrative system. The British as Indian rulers, not only sought to create 'public virtue' in their subjects, but willingly accepted the responsibilities its supposed non-existence imposed upon them.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Minute on the foundation of a college at Fort William, July 10, 1800, reprinted in The Dispatches, Minutes and Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley, K. G.; during his administration In India, ed. M. Martin, London, W. H. Allen, 1837, II, p.346.

⁵⁵ 'The fifth report from the select committee of the House of the commons on the affairs of the East India Company', ed. W. K. Firminger, vols.3., Calcutta, 1917, i., 139-140.

⁵⁶ Cohn, Bernard, op.cit., p.5

⁵⁷ Metcalf, Thomas R., (1995), op. cit., p.8

⁵⁸ Metcalf, Thomas R., op. cit., p.6-8

Evangelicalism:

The eighteenth century was the age of reason, of Enlightenment. Late in the century, the belief that the west had discovered the secret of progress through the employment of reason put India in the category of static or semi-barbaric cultures. Based on this conviction two views were formed as to how Indian society was to be redeemed and reclaimed for civilization. John Shore, who was governor general after Lord Cornwallis, and Charles Grant, his friend, represented the evangelical* viewpoint expressed in the latter's "observation on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain. Grant* argued in the observations, the application of Christianity and Western education to change what he thought was a 'hideous state of Indian society'.⁵⁹ Evangelicalism started its crusade against Indian barbarism and advocated the permanence of British rule with a mission to change the very "nature of Hindostan". William Warburton, bishop of Gloucester, in a sermon preached in 1766, urged caution on the missionary enthusiasts. No lasting conversion of Indians could be expected until "these barbarians" have been "taught the civil arts of life".⁶⁰ In India the spokespersons of this idea were the missionaries located at Srirampur near Calcutta: but at home its chief exponent was Charles Grant. The principal problem of India, he argued in 1792, was the religious ideas that perpetuated the ignorance of Indian people. This could be effectively changed through the disseminations of Christian light, and in this lay the noble mission of British rule in India. To convince his critics, Grant could also a complement relationship between the civilizing process and material prosperity, without any accompanying danger of dissent or desire for English liberty. His ideas were given greater publicity by William Wilberforce in the parliament before the passage of the Charter Act of 1813, which allows Christian missionaries to enter India without restrictions.⁶¹ The evangelicals believed that the future prosperity of the British connexion and the future happiness of the Indians themselves depended upon complete Anglicization of Indian Society. ('Let us endeavour to strike our roots into the soil', and Wilberforce, 'by the gradual introduction and establishment of our own principles and opinions; of our laws, institutions, and manners; above all as the source of every other improvement, of our religion, and consequently of our morals.'⁶²

The feeling of racial superiority was a vital ingredient of imperialism. The racial arrogance was not limited to the functionaries of imperialism. It ran in the English blood and laughed all political difference to scorn. Englishman tried to justify through explaining their superiority of race, first on Religion and then science, were popular in the 19th century Britain, and both were pressed into service. The contemporary command decided that Britain must rule the waves, the sands and the plains because the English race was the elect of all according to scientific principles. But the spiritual energy of the English race, partially suppressed by the 18th century emphasis on

reason.⁶³ European perceptions of India and those of the British especially, shifted from unequivocal appreciation to sweeping condemnation of India's past achievements and customs. Imbued with an ethnocentric sense of superiority, British intellectuals, including Christian missionaries, spearheaded a movement that sought to bring Western intellectual and technological innovations to Indians. Interpretations of the causes of India's cultural and spiritual "backwardness" varied, as did the solutions. Many argued that it was Europe's mission to civilize India and hold it as a trust until Indians proved themselves competent for self-rule. The immediate consequence of this sense of superiority was to open India to more aggressive missionary and proselytizing activity in Bengal. Initially British in India were conscious that any attempt to convert Indians to Christianity promised to subvert the very foundations of civil peace by offending the most deeply entrenched religious prejudices.⁶⁴ Therefore company's administration had endeavoured to maintain a sense of continuity with the past. However Hastings's Oriental Policy was abandoned by Lord Cornwallis, who went for greater Anglicisation of the administration and the imposition of the Whig principles of the British government. Lord Wellesley supported these moves, the aim of which was to limit government interference by abandoning the supposedly despotic aspects of Indian political tradition and ensuring the separation of powers between the judiciary and executive.⁶⁵

The Angelical believed that the state's role would only be the protection of Individual rights and private property. The policy came from a consistent disdain for "Oriental despotism", from which Indian needed to be emancipated. Despotism was something that distinguished the oriental state from its European counterparts; but ironically, it was it was the same logic that provided an "implicit justification" for the "paternalism of the Raj".⁶⁶ Evangelical opinion coincided with that of the free traders. By then, the evangelicals had witnessed some years of attempted improvement and social reforms in India through the British English Education. Paradoxical thought it may appear, evangelicals and the liberal s such as Macaulay still wished to restrict government interference in the everyday life of the people of India. They believed that it was the government's duty to create a climate of change – but not to bully people into changing. They also believed, that the government should be unmistakably British, demonstrating that its superiority stemmed from its civilization. Indeed, the general movement towards Anglicization was aimed as much at government of India as at Indian society. While legislation could be used to change the government's attitude, Indian society expected to transform itself as knowledge of western civilization as diffused by English civilization. Grant and his friends, who included William Wilberforce were dismissed not only the religious of India as 'one grand abomination', but also by implication every aspect of Indian society from its arts to its institutions. The evangelicals believed that society could not be reformed by legislation, but only by a change in individual morality. They intended a campaign to free the Indian mind from the tyranny of evil

⁵⁹ Shreedharan, E., op. cit., p.401

⁶⁰ Marshall, P.J., *The making and unmaking of Empires*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005, p.192

⁶¹ Kopf, David, op. cit., p.142 148

⁶² Edward, Michael, op. cit., p.54

⁶³ ⁶³ Ibid., p.35-38

⁶⁴ Edward, Michael, op. cit., p.54

⁶⁵ Bandyopadhyay, Shekar, op. cit., p.68

⁶⁶ Metcalf, Thomas R., op. cit., p.8

superstition, sort of Indian counterpart of the European Reformation. Their instrument was to be education, for only through access to God's revealed word could the Indians be raised out of their darkness and idolatry.⁶⁷

The diffusion of the message of a superior civilization was the heart of imperialism. Christianity was the source and life of this civilization. So the propagation of the Christian message had to go hand with the extension of empire. It was the duty of the English race to convey the benefits of its civilization to those who did not possess them. By the middle half of the 19th century, it was openly preached by many that Christianity demanded an empire and that the cause of the one was the cause of the other. The authority of the British crown is at this moment the most powerful instrument, under providence, of maintaining peace and order in many extensive regions of the earth, and thereby assists in diffusing amongst millions of the human race, the blessing of Christianity and civilization.⁶⁸

Utilitarianism & Liberalism:

Liberal and humanitarian attitudes towards India first appeared in the social intellectual movement of the late 18th century, at the same time when conservatism* and imperialism* were the primary British reactions to India. The Liberal and humanitarian attitudes were the result of deep-seated changes occurring in the ideals, social habits, and institutions of a western nation.⁶⁹ Begging in the late 18th century classical liberalism becomes a major ideology in European intellectual surface; a lay philosophy most clearly identified with civil liberalism, free market and representative government, coincided with the transformative effects of the industrial revolution in Britain.⁷⁰ This ideology followed by the EIC's personals till 1857 in their administration.

David Ricardo's contribution to Economics especially his doctrine of rent helped to give Utilitarianism a great vogue in England in the first half of the 19th century. Advocators of the 'Laissez-faire' maintained that the unrestricted functioning of a free economy would guarantee the greatest good for the greatest number of people.⁷¹ Utilitarian thought swept through all disciplines in the first half of the 19th century and history was no exception. As a result a new historiographical school of thought grew from the political and philosophical ideas of utilitarianism, which itself grew to prominence in the mid nineteenth century, and that was based in the philosophical and scientific enquiries of the British Enlightenment.

The imperial ideas and philosophies of utilitarian thinkers* had, at their foundation, the ultimate goal of making the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. Utilitarian admitted that the Public Opinion and education were important in affecting men's views and conduct in pursuit of happiness.⁷² This overarching principle guided their thinking, writing and

ideology. Utilitarian Knowledge however, was premised upon the assumptions that the discoveries made in the studies of the political economy, science, religion and philosophical enquiry had to ultimate result in the final goal of human civilization becoming a liberal Christian state, not rule by capricious or whimsical superstitions but rather liberal Christian values of reasons, law and scientific rationality. English Utilitarian judged other societies such as India as dangerously backward, despotic and devoid of knowledge necessary to create a progressive state.⁷³

The men like James Mill, James Stuart Mill were admitted into the executive government of the company were intimately connected with Indian affairs on utilitarian line from 1819. James Mill was at the very centre of power and in a position to carry into practice the principle of Utility as he had expounded it in his "History of British India". Mill accepted a British company's responsibility to continue governing India but not any political institution for it.* What India needed for improvement, he argued in a Benthamite line, was an effective schoolmaster, i.e., a wise government promulgating good legislation. It was largely due to his efforts an Indian Penal Code* under Lord Macaulay drew up in 1835 on the Benthamite model,⁷⁴ which paved the way for a uniform social life in India for future. Some of the early despatches on education, which had drafted, preached the world of utility, but for the main part of his career his duties were confined to handling the political relation with the Indian states. Edward Starchy and M. Elphinstone, both the officials discussed the applicability Bentham's theory of law to Indian Circumstances.⁷⁵

Along with utilitarian, Thomas Macaulay's* liberal vision that the British administrators' task was to civilized rather than conquers; set a liberal agenda for the emancipation of India through active governance. "Trained by us to happiness and independence, and endowed with our learning and political institution, India will remain the proudest monument of British benevolence", visualised C. E. Trevalyan, another liberal, in 1838.⁷⁶ It was in this atmosphere of British liberalism that Utilitarianism, with all its distinctive authoritarian tendencies, was born. Jeremy Bentham preached that the ideal of human civilization was to achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Good laws, efficient and enlightened administration, had argued, were the most effective agents of change; and the idea of

⁷³ ⁷³ Woolf, D. R., op. cit., p.459

* To Mill the stage of civilization, and the moral and political situation in which the people of India are placed, render the establishment of legislative assemblies impracticable. (The Edinburgh Review, xx. (Nov. 1812), p. 489

⁷⁴ Majeed, Javed, 'Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's *The history of British India and Orientalism*'. Oxford: Clarendon Press, , 1992, p.163 & 193

⁷⁵ Stocks, E., op. cit., p.49-50

* Macaulay rejected the utilitarian belief that society could be changed by the exercise of a universally applicable theory. He believed that free enterprise and voluntary action were the springs of progress, and he was therefore strongly opposed to the authoritarian elements in the utilitarian ideal. To Macaulay, reform of the law was a rational and immediate objective, a matter of efficiency rather than of social engineering in the interest of fundamental movement in Indian character and society. (Edward, Michael, op. cit., p.66)

⁷⁶ ⁷⁶ Ibid., p.47

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.53

⁶⁸ Aziz, K. K., op. cit., p.38-39

⁶⁹ Bearce, G. D., op. cit., p.65

⁷⁰ Joshi, Vandana, (ed.) '*Social Movements and Cultural Currents, 1789-1945*'; *A Model of evolutionary change: the case of British liberalism* by Brain W. Refford, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2010, p. 175

⁷¹ ⁷¹ Ibid., p. 174

⁷² Stoke, E., op. cit., p.55

rule of law was a necessary precondition for improvement. However during the first half of the nineteenth century along with racial arrogance, there was also a liberal optimism, as expressed in Lord Macaulay's ambition to transform the indolent Indian into a brown sahib, European in test and intellect-but not quite a European; he would be "more brown than sahib", to use Ashis Nandy's cryptic expression.⁷⁷

By 1830s, a divergence of opinion began to emerge within liberal intellectuals and political circle regarding the morality, necessity and desirability and efficacy of social reform.⁷⁸ In London, readily available newspapers appearing to an increasingly literate middle class for creating widespread political support for social reform.⁷⁹ As a result the Company's governors and officials like Bentinck, Metcalf, and Dalhousie, influenced by utilitarian-liberal ideology, took several steps to refresh Indian Society and passed several legislations for the purpose of elevating social obscurantism. But Aydelotte pointed out that "social reform was the consequences of well meaning humanitarianism not of liberalism."⁸⁰ During the years of the imperial flush and vigour several names leap to attention towards the imperial idea. All of them were liberals by political affiliation: perhaps also liberal by the tenor and drift of their intellect. There was Sir Henry Maine, (the venerated author of Ancient Law), Sir Fitzames Stephen (a former law member of the Viceroy's council in India,) who expounded an interesting melange of liberal-imperial ideas in his liberty, equality, fraternity. Then there were Henry Sidgwick and John Seeley who looked at the empire from the top of the liberal fortress and were pleased with the view.⁸¹ It was basically Liberal Imperialism, not a freak of British politics. It commanded the support of a large intellectual circle of liberal men. The contradiction between their radicalism and their love of liberty at home and their burning with in imperialism abroad was not hidden from the eyes of the best of them. In a land mark study, Anthony Pagden argued that European theories of civilizational and commercial progress were closely related to enlightenment critiques of earlier neo-Roman ideologies of universal lordship. Thus, enlightenment attacks on early modern European empires as cruel and rapacious tyrannies become the lurching-off point for new theories of liberal imperialism in the nineteenth century.⁸²

In the Fifth Report of 1812 the Bengal District judge had put forward the proposal of reforms through education.⁸³ But Utilitarianism held sway over these liberal minds. For them social progress was governed by the inflexible laws of logic,

⁷⁷ Nandy, Ashis, *The Intimate Enemy in Exiled at Home*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998., p.viii

⁷⁸ Briggs, Asa, *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867*, Longman, London, 1959, p.514

⁷⁹ Macdonough, Oliver, *The Nineteenth century revolution in government: A Reappraisal*, Historical journal, vol.1, No.1. 13, 1958, p.52-67,

⁸⁰ Aydelotte, William O., *The conservative and radical interpretation of early Victorian social legislation*, Victorian Studies, Vol.11, No. 2, December 1967, p.225-36

⁸¹ Aziz, K. K., op. cit., p.61

⁸² Pagden, Anthony, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-1800*, New Haven, CT 1995, pp. 5-10

⁸³ Stocks, E., op. cit., p.56

jurisprudence and political economy which utility had lain down. The idea was to bring civilization, progress and liberty to countries and peoples which, it was said, had never been blessed by them. It was not liberalism, but unashamed arrogance compounded with ignorance, which made Macaulay pronounce on the utter worthlessness of all oriental learning. Actually this idea made the British force commercial and diplomatic intercourse on the distant land.⁸⁴

The Utilitarians differed from the liberals in significant ways, respectively with regard to the question of Anglicisation. This was the time that witnessed the Orientalist – Anglicist debate on the nature of education to be introduced in India. While the liberal lord Macaulay in his famous education minute of 1835 presented the strong case for the introduction of English Education, Utilitarians like Mill stilled favoured vernacular education as more suited to Indian needs. In other words, dilemmas in imperial attitudes towards India persisted in the first half of the 19th century. Although gradually the Anglicists and Utilitarians having their day, the old dilemmas were not totally overcome. And the epitome of this dilemma was Lord Bentinck himself, an ardent follower of Mill; he abolished sati and infanticide through legislation. He believed in the Utilitarian philosophy that legislation was an effective agent of change; and the concept of rule of law was necessary precondition for improvement. But at the same time, he retains his faith in Indian Traditions and nurtured a desire to give back to the Indians their true religion.⁸⁵ The official discourse on the proposed reform of Sati was, therefore, grounded in a scriptural logic that its abolition was warranted by Ancient Hindu texts. The dilemma definitely persisted in the mid nineteenth century, in spite of Lord Dalhousie's determination to take forward Mill's vision of aggressive advancement of Britain's mission in India.

Certain broad similarities have often been detected in the thinking of Utilitarians and Evangelicals. Both had turned against the tolerance and respect for Indian Civilization characteristic of the Ages of Clive and Warren Hastings. Both were movement of Individualism, both seeking to liberate the individual from the slavery of custom and from the tyranny of noble and priest.⁸⁶ Both the evangelicals and the utilitarians shared a fundamental contempt for Indian Institution, a contempt which becomes institutionalised as the nineteenth century progressed. But they shared little else. The difference between them lay in their concept of the operative law. The evangelicals believed in God's Law immutable and evident. The utilitarians expelled God from the question.⁸⁷

Romantic schools:

Romanticism basically relied upon illumination ideal of European romantic philosopher, like Rousseau and Edmund Burk, which arises in reaction to the Enlightenment and its exaggerated claims for reason, its general anti-religious posture, its depreciation of the imagination, and its radical individualism and emphasize the emotional, religious, creative, and social

⁸⁴ ⁸⁴Ibid. p. 62

⁸⁵ Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar, op. cit., p.72

⁸⁶ Stocks, E., op. cit., p.54

⁸⁷ Edward, Michael, op. cit., p.58

dimensions to the human personality.⁸⁸ Proponents of Romanticism like poet W. Wordsworth, W. Blank, S. Coleridge, all had a notion that “if politics failed to craft a better world, perhaps poetry, they believed had the capability of redeeming mankind, could”.⁸⁹ Three important romantic writers of this age who wrote about India were Robert Southey, Thomas Munroe and Walter Scott, created something of the romantic vision of India that was an integral part of the total British attitude towards land. The emergence of a body of romantic literature about India in the formative period from 1784 to 1828 was a counterpart of the growing political interest in India. Most so far has risen from individuals and groups with direct political, social and economic concern in the empire. They had centred their attention on India as a defensible conservative culture, or a field of imperial achievement, or a region of social and economic backwardness. In this environment the Romantic Movement⁹⁰ was fulfilling its greatness. In this context Robert Southey’s ‘The Curse of Kehama’ (1810) purported to understand a great deal about the philosophy and society of India. He tried to exhibit several social evils of Indian Hindu society, viz sati, along with numerous indications of liberal Spirit, love of Liberty, natural humanity and the faith in reason,⁹¹ which obviously left good imprint upon the native social reformers of India. On the other hand novelist Walter Scott had romanticised British Imperialism in India, he looked Indian people as a savages and also displayed social evils like child infanticide. Thomas Moore’s “Lalla Rookh” (1817), depicted India as a splendid and dazzling land. His view of India actually was a combination of romantic sensibility and of the morale and political sentiments of the West. He perceived oriental despotism, superstitious religion, and they want of morality in the society of the East.⁹² He revealed the conventional conception of India’s political and religious condition – superstition and despotism without offering any compulsive argument for a change in such condition. No doubt, these philanthropic principles sometime served as a morale guide for the company’s officers to rule India.

Scientific Rationalism and Humanism:

It is conventional in textbooks on the history of ideas to identify the eighteenth century with the Age of Reason. However, Horace Walpole had a different view; writing in the middle of the century he said: ‘A century had now passed since Reason had begun to attain that ascendant in the affairs of the World to conduct which it has been granted to men six thousand years ago.’⁹³ During company’s hundred years rule the intellectual life of Indian people began to undergo revolutionary changes influenced by western ideas of ‘Rationalism’ and ‘Humanism’. Along with racial pride, Christian aggressiveness was the most

unattractive aspect of imperialism. But the impact of Christianity produced one wholesome result: it gave rise to humanitarianism. In fact, humanitarianism was a product of two forces: rationalism and evangelicalism. The enlightenment of the 18th century had made its own contradiction to the imperial attitude. There was a widening of interest and people began to look outwards. The study of mankind stimulated the rise of Utilitarianism and the spread of the humanitarian feeling. As scientific discoveries revealed nature and its secrets, there was greater confidence in Human spirit. Rational explanations rather than blind faith would henceforth guide the material and spiritual life in West. Science had made men look forward to future with confidence.⁹⁴

India will soon be influenced and have a taste of supremacy of science at the battle of Plessey. Basically when an idea has matured, its vibrations are unstoppable. Suddenly a fresh new wave began blowing all over the world. Authority of reason, instead of religion had become supreme. Suddenly the aim of life completely transformed. Basically the concept of rationalism and humanism of Europe reached in India in the 19th century through the writing of Philosophers and scholars who not only influenced not only the Englishmen but also the Indian educated class, which in turn carried out several social and cultural reform missions and tried to establish an egalitarian society in India.

Now the political ideas of the philosophers of the enlightenment were based on the assumption that human institutions started justifying on the basis of Reason. The rationalist was arguing passionately against what they considered irrational institutions and developed an exaggerated view of the power of the legislators to shape the future of the world.⁹⁵ As its impact a tendency of transplanting English constitutional law and right of equality and liberty by the Governors of the EIC through the means of legislation and codification were appearing in India which revolutionised Indian society. It has by now been well acknowledged that imperial powers legitimized their claim over foreign territory not only through promises of political and economic benefit but also on the basis of civilizing discourses which were informed by Enlightenment notions of universal human and civil rights. But the Company's Legislative Council recoiled from a plethora of social issues which reflected ‘immemorial custom’. For concerns raised by the first reports of female infanticide, cases of adultery and practices ranging from hook swinging to polygamy among Kulin Brahmins, the Council deferred to the educational process. Very early in the nineteenth century the Company realized that remedies for cases that might have been addressed in the Diwani Adawlut or civil courts would be more effectively confronted by an extension of vernacular and female education.⁹⁶

The European ideas of egalitarian society channelized through the medium of English educated natives as a result of ideological vibration or it as “objective knowledge”⁹⁷, postulated

⁸⁸ Daiches, D. 2nd edit. ‘A critical History of English Literature’, vol.4, Allied publisher Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2003, p. 856-860.

⁸⁹Joshi, Vandana, op. cit., p.295.

⁹⁰ Romanticism brought to India a new kind of sensibility that enhanced the appeal of a more personal style of rule. The romantics in India included such figures as Thomas Munro, John Malcolam, M. Eliphinstone, and Charles Metcalf.

⁹¹ Bearce, George D., op. cit., p.102-104

⁹² Ibid. p. 100-130

⁹³ Walpole, H. (ed), ‘Memoirs of the Reign of George II’, 2 vols. Lord Holland, London, 1846, p.278

⁹⁴ Gupta, B. Bhushan, op. cit., p.247

⁹⁵ Ventry, ‘Oriental Despotism’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xxiv, 1963, p.135.

⁹⁶ Nancy Gardner’ “The Twin Faces of the East India Company’s Civilizing Mission’

⁹⁷ Objective knowledge” means a creator’s knowledge become public or shared within the relevant community, subject to public criticism, analysis, application and manipulation.

by Karl Popper, in the second half of the 19th century. Already the colonial conquest underlined the weaknesses of the traditional order and the need for reform and regeneration of its institution. Now a cultural ideological struggle ensued on two planes simultaneously, against the ideological basis of the traditional order as well as against the colonial hegemonization. The intellectual quest to shape the future of Indian society, which was based on this dual struggle, remained ambivalent, often contradictory, its attitude towards tradition and modernity. In the development of cultural-ideological struggles the formation of a community of intellectuals, distinct from the intelligentsia, cutting across regional, religious and caste barriers was of crucial importance which was facilitated by the colonial rule. During the course of the nineteenth century the intellectuals were brought together, either in opposition or in unity, in a series of struggles over socio-cultural issues between the debate over the abolition of sati, infanticide, child marriage, widowhood etc.⁹⁸ The early formation of the community was around socio-cultural organisation and voluntary associations established by colonial officials and ideologues which served as channels of disseminations of colonial culture and ideology, reflected initial intellectual ferment in colonial India. The relationship between indigenous cultural tradition and intellectual transform in colonial India was mediated by the process of acculturation, occurring through an active intervention of state institutions, voluntary organizations and religious orders.

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AUTHORS

First Author – Firoj High Sarwar, Research Scholar, Dept. History, AMU, Aligarh

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