

# THE INTIMATE ENEMY

Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism

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*One*  
The Psychology of Colonialism:  
Sex, Age and Ideology  
in British India

I

Imperialism was a sentiment rather than a policy; its foundations were moral rather than intellectual. . .

D. C. Somervell<sup>1</sup>

It is becoming increasingly obvious that colonialism—as we have come to know it during the last two hundred years— cannot be identified with only economic gain and political power. In Manchuria, Japan consistently lost money, and for many years colonial Indochina, Algeria and Angola, instead of increasing the political power of France and Portugal, sapped it. This did not make Manchuria, Indochina, Algeria or Angola less of a colony. Nor did it disprove that economic gain and political power are important *motives* for creating a colonial situation. It only showed that colonialism could be characterized by the search for economic and political advantage without concomitant *real* economic or political gains, and sometimes even with economic or political losses.<sup>2</sup>

This essay argues that the first differentia of colonialism is a state of mind in the colonizers and the colonized, a colonial consciousness which includes the sometimes unrealizable wish to make economic and political profits from the colonies, but

other elements too. The political economy of colonization is of course important, but the crudity and inanity of colonialism are principally expressed in the sphere of psychology and, to the extent the variables used to describe the states of mind under colonialism have themselves become politicized since the entry of modern colonialism on the world scene, in the sphere of political psychology. The following pages will explore some of these psychological contours of colonialism in the rulers and the ruled and try to define colonialism as a shared culture which may not always begin with the establishment of alien rule in a society and end with the departure of the alien rulers from the colony. The example I shall use will be that of India, where a colonial political economy began to operate seventy-five years before the full-blown ideology of British imperialism became dominant, and where thirty-five years after the formal ending of the Raj, the ideology of colonialism is still triumphant in many sectors of life.

Such disjunctions between politics and culture became possible because it is only partly true that a colonial situation produces a theory of imperialism to justify itself. Colonialism is also a psychological state rooted in earlier forms of social consciousness in both the colonizers and the colonized. It represents a certain cultural continuity and carries a certain cultural baggage.

First, it includes codes which both the rulers and the ruled can share. The main function of these codes is to alter the original cultural priorities on both sides and bring to the centre of the colonial culture subcultures previously recessive or subordinate in the two confronting cultures. Concurrently, the codes remove from the centre of each of the cultures subcultures previously salient in them. It is these fresh priorities which explain why some of the most impressive colonial systems have been built by societies ideologically committed to open political systems, liberalism and intellectual pluralism. That this split parallels a basic contradiction within the modern scientific-rational world view which, while trying to remain rational within its confines, has consistently refused to be rational *vis-*

<sup>1</sup> *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Longman Green, 1929), p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> I am for the moment ignoring the fact that the colonial societies in our times lost out in the game of political and economic power in the First World itself.

*a-vis* other traditions of knowledge after acquiring world dominance, is only the other side of the same explanation.<sup>33</sup> It also explains why colonialism never seems to end with formal political freedom. As a state of mind, colonialism is an indigenous process released by external forces. Its sources lie deep in the minds of the rulers and the ruled. Perhaps that which begins in the minds of men must also end in the minds of men. –

Second, the culture of colonialism presumes a particular style of managing dissent. Obviously, a colonial system perpetuates itself by inducing the colonized, through socioeconomic and psychological rewards and punishments, to accept new social norms and cognitive categories. But these outer incentives and disincentives are invariably noticed and challenged; they become the overt indicators of oppression and dominance. More dangerous and permanent are the inner rewards and punishments, the secondary psychological gains and losses from suffering and submission under colonialism. They are almost always unconscious and almost always ignored. Particularly strong is the inner resistance to recognizing the ultimate violence which colonialism does to its victims, namely that it creates a culture in which the ruled are constantly tempted to fight their rulers within the psychological limits set by the latter. It is not an accident that the specific variants of the concepts with which many anti-colonial movements in our times have worked have often been the products of the imperial culture itself and, even in opposition, these movements have paid homage to their respective cultural origins. I have in mind not only the overt Apollonian codes of Western liberalism that have often motivated the elites of the colonized societies but also their covert Dionysian counterparts in the concepts of statecraft, everyday politics, effective political methods and Utopias which have guided revolutionary movements against colonialism.

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3 On this other contradiction see Paul Feyerabend, *Science in a Free Society* (London: NLB, 1978). In the context of India and China this point emerges clearly from Claude Alvares' *Homo Faber: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West, 1500-1971* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1979). See also Ashis Nandy, 'Science, Authoritarianism and Culture: On the Scope and Limits of Isolation outside the Clinic', M. N. Roy Memorial Lecture, 1980, *Seminar*, May 1981 (261); and Shiv Viswanathan, 'Science and the Sense of Other', paper written for the colloquium on New Ideologies for Science and Technology, Lokayan Project 1982, Delhi, mimeographed.

The rest of this essay examines, in the context of these two processes and as illustrations, how the colonial ideology in British India was built on the cultural meanings of two fundamental categories of institutional discrimination in Britain, sex and age, and how these meanings confronted their traditional Indian counterparts and their new incarnations in Gandhi.

## II

The homology between sexual and political dominance, which Western colonialism invariably used—in Asia, Africa and Latin America—was not an accidental by-product of colonial history. It had its correlates in other situations of oppression with which the West was involved, the American experience with slavery being the best documented of them. The homology, drawing support from the denial of psychological bisexuality in men in large areas of Western culture, beautifully legitimized Europe's post-medieval models of dominance, exploitation and cruelty as natural and valid. Colonialism, too, was congruent with the existing Western sexual stereotypes and the philosophy of life which they represented. It produced a cultural consensus in which political and socio-economic dominance symbolized the dominance of men and masculinity over women and femininity. During the early years of British rule in India, roughly between 1757 and 1830, when the British middle classes were not dominant in the ruling culture and the rulers came mainly from a feudal background, the homology between sexual and political dominance was not central to the colonial culture.<sup>44</sup> Most

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4 Frantz Fanon was one of the first to point out the psychological dominance of the European middle-class culture in the colonies. See his *Black Skin, White Masks* translated by G. L. Markman (New York: Grove, 1967); also Gustav Jahoda, *White Man* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 102, 123. Quoted in Renate Zahar, *Frantz Fanon: Colonialism and Alienation* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), p. 45n. James Morris (*Heaven's Command: An Imperial Progress*, London: Faber and Faber, 1973, p. 38) says, in the context of India: 'By 1835 one detects a certain smugness among the islanders, and this superior tone of voice came not as it would later come, from an arrogant Right, but from a highly moralistic Left. The middle classes, newly enfranchised, were emerging into power: and it was the middle classes who would eventually prove, later in Victoria's reign, the most passionate imperialists of all.' It is

rulers and subjects had not yet internalized the idea of colonial rule as a manly or husbandly or lordly prerogative. I am not speaking here of the micro-politics of colonialism but of its macro-politics. Individual racialists and sadists were there aplenty among the British in India. But while British rule had already been established, British culture in India was still not politically dominant, and race-based evolutionism was still inconspicuous in the ruling culture. Most Britons in India lived like Indians at home and in the office, wore Indian dress, and observed Indian customs and religious practices. A large number of them married Indian women, offered *puja* to Indian gods and goddesses, and lived in fear and awe of the magical powers of the Brahmins. The first two governor-generals, renowned for their rapaciousness, were also known for their commitment to things Indian. Under them, the traditional Indian life style dominated the culture of British Indian politics. Even the British Indian Army occasionally had to pay respect to Indian gods and goddesses and there was at least one instance when the army made money from the revenues of a temple. Finally, missionary activity in British India was banned, Indian laws dominated the courts and the system of education was Indian.<sup>5</sup>

In Britain, too, the idea of empire was suspect till as late as the 1830s. Visitors to colonies like India often found the British authority there 'faintly comical'.<sup>6</sup> The gentlemen of the East

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in the context of this correlation between middle class culture and the spirit of imperialism that one must make sense of psychologist J. D. Unwin's reported proposition: 'only a sexually restrained society . . . would continue to expand' (*Heaven's Command*, p. 30). The political culture of British India was however a product of the dialectic between British feudalism and British middle class culture. I have avoided the details of this dialectic here.

5 E.g., Harihar Sheth, *Proem Kalkatar Paricay* (Calcutta: Orient Book, 1982), new ed; Binoy Ghose, *Kalkata Culture* (Calcutta: Bihar Sahitya Bhavan, 1953); Morris, *Heaven's Command*, pp. 75—6.

6 Morris, *Heaven's Command*, pp. 20, 24. Morris sums up as follows: 'All in all the British were not thinking in imperial terms. They were rich. They were victorious. They were admired. They were not yet short of markets for their industries. They were strategically invulnerable, and they were preoccupied with domestic issues. When the queen was crowned, . . . we may be sure she thought little of her possessions beyond the seas. She was the island queen. . . . Even the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish were unfamiliar to her then, when the world called her kingdom simply "England".... No, in 1837 England seemed to need no empire, and the British people as a whole were not much interested in the

India Company had not actually intended to govern India but to make money there,<sup>7</sup> which of course they did with predictable ruthlessness. But once the two sides in the British-Indian culture of politics, following the flowering of the middle-class British evangelical spirit, began to ascribe cultural meanings to the British domination, colonialism proper can be said to have begun.<sup>8</sup> Particularly, once the British rulers and the exposed sections of Indians internalized the colonial role definitions and began to speak, with reformist fervour, the language of the homology between sexual and political stratarchies, the battle for the minds of men was to a great extent won by the Raj.

Crucial to this cultural co-optation was the process psychoanalysis calls identification with the aggressor. In an oppressive situation, the process became the flip side of the theory of progress, an ontogenetic legitimacy for an ego defence often used by a normal child in an environment of childhood dependency to confront inescapable dominance by physically more powerful adults enjoying total

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colonies. How can one be expected to show an interest in a country like Canada, demanded Lord Melbourne the Prime Minister, where a salmon would not rise to a fly' (pp. 25-6, 30.)

7 Morris, *Heaven's Command*, pp. 71-2.

8 After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, however, the 'universalism' which had powered the early British reformers of Indian society had to give way to a second phase of 'tolerance' of Indian culture due to the fears of a second mutiny. But this new cultural relativism clearly drew a line between Indian culture seen as infantile and immoral and the culture of the British public school products: austere, courageous, self-controlled, 'adult men'. Lewis D. Wurgaft, 'Another Look at Prospero and Caliban: Magic and Magical Thinking in British India', mimeographed, pp. 5-6. Wurgaft bases his analysis partly on Francis Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence, British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967). This shift to tolerance however did not change the basic relationship between the colonized. As in Albert Memmi's Africa, the 'good' and the 'bad' colonizers were but two different cogs performing equally important functions in the same machine. See Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, translated by Howard Greenfeld (New York: Beacon, 1967); also Wurgaft, 'Another Look at Prospero and Caliban', pp. 12-13. C. Northcote Parkinson in his *East and West* (New York: Mentor, 1965), p. 216, sums it up neatly: 'It was the knowledgeable, efficient, and polite Europeans who did the serious damage.' The whole process was part of a larger picture, which involved the rejection of Europe's pre-modern conceptualization of the East and reincorporation of the East into European consciousness according to the needs of colonialism. See Part Two below. It is interesting that for European philosophers of the eighteenth century, to men like Voltaire for example, China, perhaps, was the most advanced culture of the world. By the nineteenth century the Chinese had become, for the European literati, primitives.

legitimacy. In the colonial culture, identification with the aggressor bound the rulers and the ruled in an unbreakable dyadic relationship. The Raj saw Indians as crypto-barbarians who needed to further civilize themselves. It saw British rule as an agent of progress and as a mission. Many Indians in turn saw their salvation in becoming more like the British, in friendship or in enmity. They may not have fully shared the British idea of the martial races—the hyper-masculine, manifestly courageous, superbly loyal Indian castes and subcultures mirroring the British middle-class sexual stereotypes—but they did resurrect the ideology of the martial races latent in the traditional Indian concept of statecraft and gave the idea a new centrality. Many nineteenth-century Indian movements of social, religious and political reform—and many literary and art movements as well—tried to make Ksatriyahood the 'true' interface between the rulers and ruled as a new, nearly exclusive indicator of authentic Indianness. The origins and functions of this new stress on Ksatriyahood is best evidenced by the fact that, contrary to the beliefs of those carrying the psychological baggage of colonialism, the search for martial Indianness underwrote one of the most powerful collaborationist strands within the Indian society, represented by a majority of the feudal princelings in India and some of the most impotent forms of protest against colonialism (such as the immensely courageous but ineffective terrorism of Bengal, Maharashtra and Panjab led by semi-Westernized, middle-class, urban youth).

The change in consciousness that took place can be briefly stated in terms of three concepts which became central to colonial India: *purusatva* (the essence of masculinity), *narltva*

(the essence of femininity) and *klibatva* (the essence of hermaphroditism). The polarity defined by the antonymous *purusatva* and *narltva* was gradually supplanted, in the colonial culture of politics, by the antonyms of *purusatva* and *klibatva*; femininity-in-masculinity was now perceived as the final negation of a man's political identity, a pathology more dangerous than femininity itself. Like some other cultures, including some strands of pre-modern Christianity, India too had its myths about good and bad androgynes and its ideas about valuable and despicable androgyny. Now there was an attempt to lump together all forms of androgyny and counterpoise them against undifferentiated masculinity. Rabindranath Tagore's (1861-1941) novel *Car Adhyay* brilliantly captures the pain which was involved in this change. The inner conflicts of the hero of the novel are modelled on the moral and political dilemmas of an actual revolutionary nationalist, who also happened to be a Catholic theologian and a Vedantist, Brahmabandhav Upadhyay (1861-1907). Tagore's moving preface to the first edition of the novel, removed from subsequent editions because it affronted many Indians, sensed the personal tragedy of a revolutionary friend who, to fight the suffering of his people, had to move away from his own ideas of *svabhava* and *svadharma*. It is remarkable that twenty-seven years before *Car Adhyay*, Tagore had dealt with the same process of cultural change in his novel *Gora*, probably modelled on the same real-life figure and with a compatible political message.<sup>9</sup>

Many pre-Gandhian protest movements were co-opted by this cultural change. They sought to redeem the Indians' masculinity by

9 Rabindranath Tagore, 'Car Adhyay', *Raamdvali* (Calcutta: West Bengal Government, 1961), pp. 875-923; 'Gora', *Racanavali*, pp. 1-350. On Brahmabandhav Upadhyay see the brief article by Smaran Acharya, 'Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: Rabindra-Upanyaser Vitarkita Nayak', *Desk*, 49(20), 20 March 1982, pp. 27-32. On Tagore's response to the criticisms of his position on extremist politics in *Car Adhyay*, see his 'Kaifyat' (1935), reproduced in Shuddhasatva Bosu, *Rabindranāth Car Adhyay* (Calcutta: Bharati Prakasani, 1979), pp. 7-10. Bosu also provides an interesting, politically relevant, analysis of the novel. I am grateful to Ram Chandra Gandhi for pointing out to me that even Vivek-ananda, whose masculine Hinduism was a clear denial of the androgyny of his guru Ramakrishna Paramahansa, himself became painfully aware of the cultural changes his Hinduism represented towards the end of his brief life. On Indian traditions of androgyny and myths about androgynes, see Wendy D. O'Flaherty, *Sexual Metaphors and Animal Symbols in Indian Mythology* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980) and *Women, Androgynes and Other Mythical Beasts* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980).

defeating the British, often fighting against hopeless odds, to free the former once and for all from the historical memory of their own humiliating defeat in violent power-play and 'tough politics'. This gave a second-order legitimacy to what in the dominant culture of the colony had already become the final differentiae of manliness: aggression, achievement, control, competition and power.<sup>10</sup> (I am ignoring for the moment the structural changes which gradually came to parallel this consciousness. Kenneth Ballhatchet has recently described the distant intimacy between British soldiers and administrators, on the one hand, and Indian women, on the other, which was officially promoted and in fact systematically institutionalized.<sup>11</sup> I am also ignoring the parallel process, reflected in the latent recognition by a number of writers,<sup>12</sup> that the white women in India were generally more exclusive and racist because they unconsciously saw themselves as the sexual competitors of Indian men, with whom their men had established an unconscious homo-eroticized bonding. It was this bonding which the 'passive resisters' and 'non-cooperators' exploited, not merely the liberal political

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10 This in spite of the fact that many of these characteristics were traditionally associated with femininity in India. See on this subject my 'Woman Versus Womanliness in India: An Essay in Political and Social Psychology', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 1978, 63(2), pp. 301—15. Also in *At the Edge of Psychology: Essays in Politics and Culture* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 32-46. Thus, we find the well-meaning M. C. Mallik saying in his *Orient and Occident: A Comparative Study* (London, 1913), p. 183, quoted in Parkinson, *East and West*, p. 210: 'Europeans even of a friendly type lament the want of manliness in Indian nature and conduct. It would be strange if after so many centuries of coercion by religious, spiritual and political teachers, and of demoralizing social conditions, any manliness should survive, especially as when any sign of it is displayed by individuals, it is discouraged by parents, teachers, spiritual guides and political rulers as impertinence and disloyalty . . .' It is a minor tragedy of contemporary India that one of its finest products, Satyajit Ray, expresses the same consciousness in a more sophisticated way in his movie *Shatranj Ke Khilari*. Ray's ambivalence towards the dancing, singing poet-king who loses out to British statecraft based on *realpolitik* represents a sophisticated version of Mallik's awareness. See on this my review of the movie in 'Beyond Oriental Despotism: Politics and Femininity in Satyajit Ray', *Sunday*, Annual No., 1981, pp. 56-8.

11 Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1980). I have spelt out the relationship between Ballhatchet's work and the argument of this essay in my review of it in the *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 1982, 20(2), pp. 29-30.

12 This latent recognition comes close to being manifest in E. M. Forster, who was himself a homosexual. See his *A Passage to India* (London: Arnold, 1967).

institutions. They were helped in this by the split that had emerged in the Victorian culture between two ideals of masculinity. To draw upon Ballhatchet and others, the lower classes were expected to act put their manliness by demonstrating their sexual prowess; the upper classes were expected to affirm their masculinity through sexual distance, abstinence and self-control. The former was compatible with the style of rulership of Spanish, Portuguese and, to a lesser extent, French colonialism in Latin America and Africa; the latter was compatible with, of all things, one strand in the traditional Indian concept of manliness. The Brahman in his cerebral, self-denying asceticism was the traditional masculine counterpoint to the more violent, 'Virile', active Ksatriya, the latter representing—however odd this may seem to the modern consciousness—the feminine principle in the cosmos. This is how traditional India imposed limits on Ksatriyahood as a way of life. To avoid confusion, I am avoiding here the languages in which hyper-masculinity includes withdrawal from sexuality or positive androgyny.)

In such a culture, colonialism was not seen as an absolute evil. For the subjects, it was a product of one's own emasculation and defeat in legitimate power politics. For the rulers, colonial exploitation was an incidental and regrettable by-product of a philosophy of life that was in harmony with superior forms of political and economic organization. This was the consensus the rulers of India sought, consciously or unconsciously. They could not successfully rule a continent-sized polity while believing themselves to be moral cripples. They had to build bulwarks against a possible sense of guilt produced by a disjunction between their actions and what were till then, in terms of important norms of their own culture, 'true' values. On the other hand, their subjects could not collaborate on a long-term basis unless they had some acceptance of the ideology

of the system, either as players or as counterplayers. This is the only way they could preserve a minimum of self-esteem in a situation of unavoidable injustice.

When such a cultural consensus grows, the main threat to the colonizers is bound to become the latent fear that the colonized will reject the consensus and, instead of trying to redeem their 'masculinity' by becoming the counterplayers of the rulers according to the established rules, will discover an alternative frame of reference within which the oppressed do not seem weak, degraded and distorted men trying to break the monopoly of the rulers on a fixed quantity of machismo. If this happens, the colonizers begin to live with the fear that the subjects might begin to see their rulers as morally and culturally inferior, and feed this information back to the rulers.<sup>13</sup> Colonialism minus a civilizational mission is no colonialism at all. It handicaps the colonizer much more than it handicaps the colonized.

### III

I now come to the subsidiary homology between childhood and the state of being colonized which a modern colonial system

almost invariably uses.<sup>14</sup> Colonizers, as we have known them in the

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13 I have briefly dealt with this in my 'Oppression and Human Liberation: Towards a Third World Utopia', in *The Politics of Awareness: Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias* (forthcoming); see an earlier version in *Alternatives*, 1978-9, 4(2), pp. 165-80.' On this theme, see the sensitive writing of Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. One of the best examples of the absence or erosion of civilizational mission in the colonizers is the Manchu conquest of China. The small group of conquerors became "integrated in Chinese society over one or two generations and what was colonialism quickly became a variant of internal oppression. The more recent Japanese conquest of parts of China, too, failed to produce a theory of civilizational mission, though there were some efforts to do so. It is interesting that one of the main themes in these efforts was the stress on Japan's greater modernization and on her 'responsibility' to modernize other Asian societies. The modern West's contribution to Japanese society has been more wide-ranging than many believe! The British conquest of India during its first phase showed all the signs of being similarly integrated into Indian society. What probably stopped the integration was mainly the digging of the Suez Canal, which allowed the British to have stronger links with their cultural base than they previously had, and the entry into the Indian scene of British women, which, combined with the Indian caste system and the cultural self-confidence of large parts of Indian society, ensured endogamy.

14 My over-all theoretical understanding of this homology is in 'Reconstructing Childhood: A Critique of the Ideology of Adulthood', in *The Politics of Awareness: Traditions, Tyranny and*

last two centuries, came from complex societies with heterogeneous cultural and ethical traditions. As already noted, it is by underplaying some aspects of their culture and overplaying others that they built the legitimacy for colonialism.<sup>15</sup> For instance, it is impossible to build a hard, this-worldly sense of mission on the tradition to which St Francis of Assisi belonged: one perforce has to go back to St Augustine and Ignatius Loyola to do so. It is not possible to find legitimacy for the colonial theory of progress in the tradition of Johannes Eckhart, John Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy, based as it is on the rejection of the ideas of an omnipotent high technology, of hyper-competitive, achievement-oriented, over-organized private enterprise, and of aggressively proselytizing religious creeds operating on the basis of what Erik Erikson calls pseudo-species. One must find that legitimacy in utilitarians such as Jeremy Bentham and James Mill, in the socialist thinkers conceptualizing colonialism as a necessary step to progress and as a remedy for feudalism, and in those generally trying to fit the colonial experience within the mould of a doctrine of progress. (Childhood innocence serving as the prototype of primitive communism was one of Marx's main contributions to the theory of progress, which he conceptualized as a movement from prehistory to history and from infantile or low-level communism to adult communism. India to him always remained a country of 'small semi-barbarian, semi-civilized communities', which 'restricted the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition' and where the peasants lived their 'undignified, stagnant and vegetative life'. 'These little communities', Marx argued, '

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*Utopias* (forthcoming). A briefer version in *Resurgence*, May 1982, and in *The Times of India*, 2, 3 and 4 February 1982. In the context of India, see a discussion of such a relationship in Bruce Mazlish, *James and John Mill: Father and Son in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), particularly Chapter 6, pp. 116-45. For a brief introduction to the over-all picture of the assimilation of new worlds by the West (which set the context for the homology among childhood, primitivism and colonial subjugation to emerge) see Michael T. Ryan, 'Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1981, 23(4), pp. 519-38. Ryan mentions 'the tendency to compare—if not confuse—ancients with exotics', as also its relationship with the existing body of demonological theory in Europe.

15 Memmi, in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, has graphically described the process through which the new entrant is broken into the ruling culture of the colonizer.

. . . brought about a brutalising worship of nature exhibiting its degradation in the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, fell down on his knees in the adoration of *Kanuman* [sic], monkey, and *Sabbala*, the cow.' It followed, according to Marx, that 'whatever may have been the crime of England she was the unconscious tool of history'.<sup>16</sup> Such a view was bound to contribute handsomely—even if inadvertently—to the racist world view and ethnocentrism that underlay colonialism.<sup>17</sup> A similar, though less influential, cultural role was played by some of Freud's early disciples who went out to 'primitive' societies to pursue the homology between primitivism and infantility.<sup>18</sup> They, too, were working out the cultural and psychological implications of the biological principle 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny', and that of the ideology of 'normal', fully socialized, male adulthood. Only, unlike the utilitarians and the Marxists, they did not clearly identify primitivism and infantility with disvalues like structural simplicity and 'static history'.<sup>19</sup>)

There was blood-curdling shadow-boxing among the competing Western schools of social philosophy, including the various versions of Western Christianity. But there can be no doubt about which sub-tradition in Europe was the stronger. There was an almost complete consensus among the sensitive European intellectuals that colonialism was an evil, albeit a necessary one. It was the age of optimism in Europe. Not only the arch-conservatives and the apologists of colonialism were convinced that one day their cultural mission would

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16 Karl Marx, 'The British Rule in India' (1853), in Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Articles on Britain* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971), pp. 166-72; see especially pp. 171-2.

17 These imageries provided the psychological basis of the theory of the Asiatic mode of production. I am grateful to Giri Deshingkar for pointing out to me that the Communist Party of China tried to escape this Marxian double-bind by passing an official resolution in 1927 that China was not an Asiatic society. Such are the pulls of scientific social sciences.

18 That another view of primitivism is possible, more or less within the same framework, is shown by the political use of Freud's concept of the polymorphous perverse infant in a contemporary Marxist, Herbert Marcuse, in *Eros and Civilization* (London: Sphere, 1969). Before him Wilhelm Reich in psychoanalysis, D. H. Lawrence in literature and Salvador Dali in art had explored the creative possibilities of primitivism within a meta-Freudian framework.

19 See on this theme O. Mannoni, 'Psychoanalysis and the Decolonization of Mankind', in J. Miller (ed.), *Freud* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972), pp. 86-95.

be complete and the barbarians would become civilized; even the radical critics of Western society were convinced that colonialism was a necessary stage of maturation for some societies. They differed from the imperialists, only in that they did not expect the colonized to love, or be grateful to the colonizers for introducing their subjects to the modern world.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in the eyes of the European civilization the colonizers were not a group of self-seeking, rapacious, ethnocentric vandals and self-chosen carriers of a cultural pathology, but ill-intentioned, flawed instruments of history, who unconsciously worked for the upliftment of the underprivileged of the world.

The growth of this ideology paralleled a major cultural reconstruction that took place in the West during the first phase of colonialism, the phase in which colonialism was becoming consolidated as an important cultural process and a way of life for the Spanish and the Portuguese. Philippe Aries argues that the modern concept of childhood is a product of seventeenth-century Europe.<sup>21</sup> Before then the child was seen as a smaller version of the adult; now the child became—this Aries does not fully recognize—an inferior version of the adult and had to be educated through the newly-expanded period of childhood.

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20 On the sense of betrayal which British colonialists had because of the 'ungratefulness' of Indians, seen as a cultural feature, see Wurgaft, 'Another Look at Prospero and Caliban'. Wurgaft obviously borrows from O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, trans. Pamela Powes (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), and edition.

21 Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Knopf, 1962). For a different point of view, see Lloyd deMause 'The Evolution of Childhood', in deMause (ed.), *The History of Childhood* (New York: The Psychohistory Press, 1974), pp. 1-73.



(A parallel and contemporary development in Europe was the emergence of the modern concept of womanhood, underwritten by the changing concept of Christian godhead which, under the influence of Protestantism, became more masculine.<sup>22</sup>)

The new concept of childhood bore a direct relationship to the doctrine of progress now regnant in the West. Childhood now no longer seemed only a happy, blissful prototype of beatific angels, as it had in the peasant cultures of Europe only a century earlier. It increasingly looked like a blank slate on which adults must write their moral codes—an inferior version of maturity, less productive and ethical, and badly contaminated by the playful, irresponsible and spontaneous aspects of human nature. Concurrently, probably propelled by what many Weberians have identified as the prime mover behind the modernization of West Europe, the Protestant Ethic, it became the responsibility of the adult to 'save' the child from a state of unrepentant, reprobate sinfulness through proper socialization, and help the child grow towards a Calvinist ideal of adulthood and maturity. Exploitation of children in the name of putting them to productive work, which took place in the early days of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, was a natural corollary of such a concept of childhood.<sup>23</sup>

Colonialism dutifully picked up these ideas of growth and development and drew a new parallel between primitivism and childhood. Thus, the theory of social progress was telescoped not merely into the individual's life cycle in Europe but also into the area of cultural differences in the colonies.<sup>24</sup> What was childlikeness of the child and childishness of immature adults now also became the lovable and unlovable savagery of primitives and the primitivism of subject societies. This version of the theory of progress is summarized below.

<sup>22</sup> Nandy, 'Woman Versus Womanliness'.

<sup>23</sup> See Nandy, 'Reconstructing Childhood'.

<sup>24</sup> V. G. Kiernan says in the context of Africa in his *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to the Outside World in the Imperial Age* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 243: 'The notion of the African as a minor, endorsed at times even by a Livingstone, took very strong hold. Spaniards and Boers had questioned whether natives had souls: modern Europeans cared less about that but doubted whether they had minds, or minds capable of adult growth. A theory came to be fashionable that mental growth in the African ceased early, that childhood was never left behind.'

The <i>childlike</i> _ Indian: innocent, ignorant but willing to learn, masculine, loyal and, thus, 'corrigible'	Reforming the <i>childlike</i> through Westernization, modernization or Christianization	Partnership in the liberal utilitarian or radical Utopia within one fully homogenized cultural, political and economic world
The <i>childish</i> Indian: ignorant but unwilling to learn, ungrateful, sinful, savage, unpredictably violent, disloyal and, thus, 'incorrigible'	— <i>Repressing the childish</i> by controlling rebellion, ensuring internal peace and providing tough administration and rule of law	

One element in the legitimization of colonialism through reconstruing the human life cycle has not been touched upon. Not that it was unimportant in the colonial culture; but it was, I suspect, specific to India and China and, to that extent, less generally applicable to modern colonialism. I shall briefly say something about it now.

Modern Europe had delegitimized not merely femininity and childhood but also old age.<sup>25</sup> Judaeo-Christianity always had an element which saw aging as a natural unfolding and result of man's essential sinfulness. The decomposition of the human body was seen as only an indicator of the evil in the one degenerating: according to the old South European saying, till youth a person looked the way god made him; after that he looked the way he really was. With increasing stress on the reprobate nature of man, it was this postulate which came to the fore in Europe's new ideology of male adulthood, completing the picture of a world where only the adult male reflected a reasonable approximation of a perfect human being.

<sup>25</sup> See a brief statement of the problem in its interrelatedness with colonial encounters in my 'The Politics of Life Cycle', *Mazingira* (forthcoming).

The elderly (representing wisdom and the negation of 'pure' intellect) were now increasingly seen as socially irrelevant because of their low physical power and because their social productivity and cultural role could not be easily quantified. I need hardly add that, given the nature of available technology, the ideological changes neatly fitted the emerging principles of 'productive' work and 'performance' as they were monetized and enshrined in new political and social institutions.

This part of the ideology of male-adulthood too was exported to the colonies in a few chosen cases. Kiernan does refer to the ideological problem of British colonialism in India which could not easily grapple with the fact that India had a civilization, however strange by European standards. Newly-discovered Africa, with its strong emphasis on the folk, the oral and the rural could be more easily written off as savage. It was more difficult to do so for India and China which the European Orientalists and even the first generation rulers had studied and, sometimes, venerated. And, everything said, there were the traditions of four thousand years of civic living, a well-developed *literati* tradition (in spite of all its stress on oral cultures), and alternative traditions of philosophy, art and science which often attracted the best minds of Europe. The fact that India's past was living (unlike, say, pre-Islamic Egypt) complicated the situation. Some explanation had to be given for her political and cultural 'degradation'.

The colonial ideology handled the problem in two mutually inconsistent ways. Firstly, it postulated a clear disjunction between India's past and its present. The civilized India was in the bygone past; now it was dead and 'museumized'. The present India, the argument went, was only nominally related to its history; it was India only to the extent it was a senile, decrepit version of her once-youthful, creative self. As a popular myth would have it, Max Muller, for all his pioneering work in Indology and love for India, forbade his students to visit India; to him, the India that was living was not the true India and the India that was true had to be but dead.

Secondly and paradoxically, the colonial culture postulated that India's later degradation was not due to colonial rule—which, if anything, had improved Indian culture by fighting against its irrational, oppressive, retrogressive elements—but due to aspects of the traditional Indian culture which in spite of some good points

carried the seeds of India's later cultural downfall. Like a sinful man Indian culture was living through a particularly debilitating senility. (The very fact that Hinduism did not have in its concept of *papa* the strong inner-directed connotations of the Christian, post-reformation concept of sin was itself seen as one of the main proofs of India's fatal cultural flaw. Even a man like Albert Schweitzer did not remain uncontaminated by this ideology; he made it a central plank of his interpretation of Hinduism.<sup>26</sup>) Thus, in this argument, there was a postulate of continuity but it applied more to sinfulness than to virtues; for an explanation of India's virtues one had to fall back upon her contacts with the modern world.

#### IV

What were the main dimensions of the efforts to reorder Indian culture in response to and as a part of these colonial categories? The answer is best given in terms of a few of the nineteenth-century figures who revalued the traditional Hindu orientations to the male and the female, and coped with the modern concepts of mature, adult normality as opposed to abnormal, immature, infantile primitivism.<sup>27</sup>

Probably the person who most dramatically sought to redefine popular mythology to fit the changing values under colonialism was Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73) whose Bengali epic *Meghnadvadh Kavya* was hailed, in his lifetime, as one of the greatest literary efforts of all time in Bengali.<sup>28</sup>

26 Albert Schweitzer, *Hindu Thought and Its Development* (New York: Beacon, 1959)

27 The examples I shall use will be mainly from Bengal, not merely because the Bengali culture best illustrated—and dramatized—the colonial predicament in India's political, cultural and creative life, but also because it was in Bengal that the Western intrusion was the deepest and the colonial presence the longest.

28 'Meghnadvadh Kavya,' 1861, Kshetra Gupta (ed.), Madhusadan Racanavali, vols 1 and 2 (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1965) pp. 35-117.

Madhusudan, flamboyantly Westernized in life style and ideology—he had even embraced the Church of England's version of Christianity and declared that he cared only 'a pin's head for Hinduism'—first wanted to make his mark in English literature. But he returned to his mother tongue within a decade to write brilliant interpretations of some of the Puranic epics. *Meghnadvadh* was the greatest of them all.

As is well known, *Meghnadvadh* retells the Ramayana, turning the traditionally sacred figures of Rama and Laksmana into weak-kneed, passive-aggressive, feminine villains and the demons Ravana and his son Meghnad into majestic, masculine, modern heroes. It interprets the encounter between Rama and Ravana as a political battle, with morality on the side of the demons. The epic ends with the venal gods defeating and killing the courageous, proud, achievement-oriented, competitive, efficient, technologically superior, 'sporting' demons symbolized by Meghnad.

*Meghnadvadh* was not the first reinterpretation of the Ramayana. In south India, an alternative tradition of Ramayana, which antedated Madhusudan, had off and on been a source of social conflict and controversy. In Jainism, too, a version of the Ramayana had been sometimes a source of intercommunal conflicts.<sup>29</sup> In any case, Rama, however godlike, was traditionally not the final repository of all good. Unlike the Semitic gods, he was more human and more overtly a mix of the good and the bad, the courageous and the cowardly, the male and the female. Ravana, too, had never been traditionally all bad. He was seen as having a record of genuine spiritual achievements.

Madhusudan Dutt therefore was in the living tradition of dissent in India. (This dissent did not become a political absurdity because he lived towards the end of the period during which the British, though politically the most powerful, were still only one of many forces in India and the Western culture

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29 At least one literary critic, it seems, has traced the source of Madhusudan's reinterpretation of Ramayana to his probable exposure to the Jain Ramayana while he was in Madras. Asit Bandopadhyay, *Adhunik Bangla Sahityer Samksipla Itivitta*, 1965, cited in Bishwanath Bandopadhyay, 'Pramilar Utsa', *Desh*, 49(18), 6 March 1982.

was a manageable vector within India; Westernism enjoyed the support of only small minorities of both the rulers and the ruled.) Simultaneously, Madhusudan's criterion for reversing the roles of Rama and Ravana, as expressed in their characters, was a direct response to the colonial situation. He admired Ravana for his masculine vigour, accomplished warriorhood, and his sense of *realpolitik* and history; he accepted Ravana's 'adult' and 'normal' commitments to secular, possessive this-worldliness and his consumer's lust for life. On the other hand, he despised 'Rama and his rabble'—the expression was his—because they were effeminate, ineffective pseudo-ascetics, who were austere not by choice but because they were weak.

There was an obvious political meaning in the contradiction Madhusudan posed in a culture which rejected most forms of competitive individual achievement, frequently underplayed sex-role differences, gave low status to high technology, granted equal status to myth and history, and rejected hedonism, including possessive individualism and consumerism. This is not to say that the values Ravana articulated were alien to the Indian traditions: in fact, they were sometimes associated with mythical figures who evoked admiration and respect. But on the whole they had been contained or marginalized as so many culturally-defined esoterica. Ravana himself, after all, was seen as someone who knew the Vedas well and had won his powers from sacred sources through years of *tapas*. His good qualities, however, were recognized within the constraints of his *rdksasa* self. Madhusudan now freed Ravana from these traditional constraints to give him a new stature as a scientific, learned, modern Ksatriya king, fighting the non-secular politics and anti-technologism of a banished pastoral prince.

*Meghnadvadh* was a tragedy. Madhusudan's heroes were, to a point, oddities in a culture which apparently had no tradition of tragedy. However, to get the full meaning of this deviation, one must recognize that in the Puranic tradition there *was* a distinctive concept of the tragic in life and letters. Tragedy in the Puranas did not centre around a grand final defeat or death of the hero, or around the final victory of the ungodly. Tragedy

lay in the majestic sweep of time and in the unavoidable decline or decay that informed the mightiest and the humblest, the epochal and the trivial, and the 'permanent' and the transient. In the Mahabharata, the self-chosen and yet fated *mahaprasthanā* or the great departure of the Pandavas after their climactic victory in the battle at Kuruksetra and the death of god Kṛṣṇa —lonely, aged, nostalgic, and partly forgotten—are good examples of what I am trying to convey.

*Meghnadvadh* represented a different concept of tragedy. Not only were the good and the evil clearly separated in the epic, according to well-defined ethical criteria, but evil finally triumphed. Traditionally the *rdksasas* represented a demonic version of masculinity which was unfettered by dominant norms and traditions. Now aspects of this demonic masculinity were endorsed, for the Indians, by the new culture of colonialism and the variation on the myth of the Promethean man it popularized. By making *Meghnadvadh* a tragedy, by inducing his readers to identify with his heroes, Madhusudan legitimized the personality type portrayed by his heroes and underwrote the emerging ideology of modernity as well as compatible concepts of masculinity and adulthood in his community's world view. What was recessive and in fetters in traditional Indian masculinity was now made salient with the help of existing<sup>1</sup> cultural imagery and myths.

This is how Madhusudan updated the early cultural criticisms of Rammohun Roy (1772-1833).<sup>30</sup> Rammohun had introduced into the culture of India's expanding urban middle classes—for the sake of those alienated from the older life style and values by the colonial intrusion into eastern India—the ideas of organized religion, a sacred text, monotheism and, above all, a patriarchal godhead. Simultaneously he had 'misread' the nondualism of Sankaracarya to suggest a new definition of masculinity, based on the demystification of womanhood

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<sup>30</sup> See Nandy, 'Sati: A Nineteenth Century Tale of Women, Violence and Protest', in *At the Edge of Psychology*, pp. 1-31, for a discussion of the psychological dimensions of Rammohun Roy's response to colonialism. The paper also discusses the personal and cultural ambivalence which powered Rammohun Roy's philosophy of social change.

and on the shifting of the locus of magicality from everyday femininity to a transcendent male principle. He had sought to liberate woman from the responsibility she bore in the shared consciousness—or unconsciousness—for failures of nurture in nature, politics and social life. Madhusudan, on the other hand, innocent of the questions Rammohun had raised in his philosophy of reform, tried to contain within the Indian world view Western concepts of the male and the female, and the adult and the infantile, and thus to make the Western presence in India seem natural in a context where the West had seemingly come to represent, for many Indians, the more valued aspects of Indian culture. The previously rejected hyper-masculine *raksasa* qualities of Havana became now the heroic qualities of a demon-king representing true, adult masculinity; and the many-faceted, open personality of Rama, on whom successive generations of Indians had projected their complex concepts of goodness, became a non-masculine, immature, effete godhead, representing a lower—perhaps even false—concept of goodness. This is not the place to discuss the Oedipal passions which pushed Madhusudan towards a new definition of masculinity and normality. The point to remember is that his efforts, on behalf of his culture, to 'tame' the Western concepts of manhood and womanhood were made when the full power and glory of British imperialism were not yet apparent. As a result, there was little defensiveness in him. His aggressive criticism of Indian traditions was in the style of the major reform movements of India: it was not merely an attempt to explain Indian culture in Indian terms, or even in Western terms, but was an attempt to explain the West in Indian terms and to incorporate it in the Indian culture as an unavoidable experience.

I now turn to the second stream of cultural criticism in response to colonialism, once again grounded in reinterpreted sacred texts but in reality dependent on core values borrowed from the colonial world view and then legitimized according to existing concepts of sacredness. Probably the most creative representative of this stream was Bankimchandra Chatterjee

(1838-94) whose novels and essays were an attempt to marginalize the earlier model of critical Hinduism and suggest a new framework of political culture which projected into the Hindu past, into a lost golden age of Hinduism, the qualities of Christianity which seemingly gave Christians their strength.

*Anandamath*, a novel which became the Bible of the first generation of Indian nationalists, particularly the Bengali terrorists, was a direct attempt to work out the implications of such a concept of religion.<sup>31</sup> The order of the *sannyasis* in the novel was obviously the Hindu counterpart of the priesthood in some versions of Western Christianity. In fact, their Western-ness gave them their sense of history, their stress on an organized religion, and above all, their acceptance of the Raj as a transient but historically inevitable and legitimate phenomenon in Hindu terms.

But it was Bankimchandra's elegant essay on Krsna which provided the missing link—a reinterpreted traditional godhead—to the new model of Hinduism.<sup>32</sup> What Madhusudan sought to do in the context of the Ramayana, Bankimchandra sought to do in the context of the Mahabharata and the five Puranas dealing with Krsna. He tried to build a historical and a historically conscious Krsna—self-consistent, self-conscious and moral according to modern norms. He scanned all the ancient texts of Krsna, not only to locate Krsna in history, but to argue away all references to Krsna's character traits unacceptable to the new norms relating to sexuality, politics and social relationships. His Krsna was not the soft, childlike, self-contradictory, sometimes immoral being—a god who could blend with the everyday life of his humble devotees and who was only occasionally a successful, activist, productive and chastising god operating in the company of the great. Bankimchandra did not adore Krsna as a child-god or as a playful—sometimes sexually playful—adolescent who was simultaneously an androgynous,

31 Bankimchandra Chatterji, *Racanavali*, with an introduction by Jogesh Bagal (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1958), vol. i, pp. 715–88.

32 Bankimchandra Chatterji, 'Krsnacaritra', 1886, in *Racanavali*, vol. 2, pp. 407-583.

philosophically sensitive, practical idealist. His Krsna was a respectable, righteous, didactic, 'hard' god, protecting the glories of Hinduism as a proper religion and preserving it as an internally consistent moral and cultural system. Bankim-chandra rejected as latter-day interpolations—and hence un-authentic—every trait of Krsna that did not meet the first requirement for a Christian and Islamic god, namely all-perfection.<sup>33</sup> His goal was to make Krsna a normal, non-pagan male god who would not humiliate his devotees in front of the progressive Westerners.

It was this consciousness which Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83) and Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) shared and developed further. The two Swamis entered the scene when the colonial culture had made deeper inroads into Indian society. It was no longer possible to give priority to cultural reform over mass politics without ignoring the fact that a psychological invasion from the West had begun with the widespread internalization of Western values by many Indians, and an over-emphasis on the reform of the Indian personality ' could only open up new, invidious modes of Westernization.

Yet, this is exactly what the two redoubtable Swamis did. They borrowed their fundamental values from the Western world view and, in spite of their image as orthodox revivalists, were ruthlessly critical of the Hindus. They also took the position that the Hindus had been great—which meant, in their terms, virile and adult—in ancient times and had fallen on bad days because of their loss of contact with textual Brahminism and true Ksatriyahood. Obviously, *ifksatratej* or martial valour was the first differentia of a ruler, the ruler who had greater *ksatratej* deserved to rule. This was hardly a compliment to the living Hindus; if anything, it perfectly fitted the dominant structure of colonial thought,<sup>34</sup> as well as the ideology of some Western Orientalists.

Thus, Vivekananda and Dayanand, too, tried to Christianize Hinduism, particularly the dominant Hindu concept of the desirable person. In doing so, they identified the West with power and

33 This itself was modern. In an ahistorical or epic culture, temporality cannot be allowed to determine authenticity. See Section VII of the essay.

34 Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind*.

hegemony, which in turn they identified with a superior civilization. Then they tried to 'list' the differences between the West and India and attributed the former's superiority to these differences. The rest of their lives they spent exhorting the hapless Hindus to pursue these cultural differentiae of the West. And predictably they found out—Indian culture being the complex, open-ended system it is—that traditions supporting some of the valued Western traits were there in Hinduism but were lost on the 'unworthy' contemporary Hindus. Predictably, too, the main elements of their Hinduism were, again: an attempt to turn Hinduism into an organized religion with an organized priesthood, church and missionaries; acceptance of the idea of proselytization and religious 'conscientization' (*Suddhi*, the *bete noire* of the Indian Christians and Muslims, was a Semitic element introduced into nineteenth-century Hinduism under the influences of Western Christianity) ; an attempt to introduce the concept of The Book following the Semitic creeds (the Vedas and the Gita in the case of the two Swamis); the acceptance of the idea of linear, objective and causal history; acceptance of ideas akin to monotheism (Vivekananda even managed to produce that rare variant of it: a quasi-monotheistic creed with a feminine godhead as its central plank); and a certain puritanism and this-worldly asceticism borrowed partly from the Catholic church and partly from Calvinism.

Such a model was bound to lead to the perception that the loss of masculinity and cultural regression of the Hindus was due to the loss of the original Aryan qualities which they shared with the Westerners. There *was* a political meaning in Dayanand's decision to call his church Arya Samaj. It was also bound to lead to an emphasis on basic psychological and institutional changes in Hinduism and to the rejection of other forms of critical Hinduism, which stressed the primacy of political changes and sought to give battle to British colonialism by accepting the contemporary Hindus *as they were*. (For instance,

Gandhi later on organized the Hindus as Indians, not as Hindus, and granted Hinduism the right to maintain its character as an unorganized, anarchic, open-ended faith.) Not surprisingly, the second model gradually became incompatible with the needs of anti-colonialism and, by over-stressing exogenous categories of self-criticism, indirectly collaborationist. There was yet another political paradox in which the model was caught. While in the first phase of the Raj the rulers supported political participation of the Hindus (because such participation by the then pro-British Hindus was advantageous to the regime), in the second phase, the rulers discouraged it because of growing nationalism. Similarly, while in the first phase the regime frowned upon all social reform movements and often took decades to pass laws on any Indian social practice against which Indian reformers fought, in the second phase they promoted those schools of nationalism which expected political freedom to follow from social reform, particularly the reform of Indian national character.

Though there were instances of deviation even among those who accepted the second model of critical Hinduism, such as the great bravery and immense sacrifices made for the nationalist cause by the terrorists and by their larger-than-life versions like Vinayak D. Savarkar and Subhas Chandra Bose, the model *did* allow Western cultural ideas to percolate to the deepest levels of Hindu religious ideas and accepted Western cultural theories of political subjugation and economic backwardness. I The newly created sense of linear history in Hinduism—an internalized counterpart of the Western theory of progress— was a perfect instrument for this purpose. It allowed one to project into history the sense of inferiority *vis-a-vis* an imperial faith and to see the golden age of Hinduism as an ancient version of the modern West.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> In fact, the anti-Muslim stance of much of Hindu nationalism can be construed as partly a displaced hostility against the colonial power which could not be expressed directly because of the new legitimacy created within Hinduism for this power. Such a dynamic would seem to roughly duplicate the displacement of Oedipal hostilities in the authoritarian personality. Cf. T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, D. Levinson and R. N. Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper, 1960).

In short, both streams of political consciousness, though seemingly hostile to each other, produced partly-colonial designs of cultural and political selfhood for the colonized. Actually the first, evolved by the likes of Rammohun Roy, was based, experientially at least, on greater self-esteem and autonomy, though later on it was to seem—as well as to become—more subservient to the Western world view, both to its opponents and its supporters.

It only slowly became obvious to those living with the full-grown culture of British colonialism that neither of the two models could provide an adequate basis for self-esteem and cultural autonomy. Yet, there was no alternative model in sight that could take a critical look at Indian traditions, evaluate the nature of the Western impact on them, and update Indian culture without disturbing its authenticity.

However, some scattered efforts were made to break out of this stagnation in the nineteenth century itself. Persons like Iswarchandra Vidyasagar (1820-91) *did* seek to create a new political awareness which would combine a critical awareness of Hinduism and colonialism with cultural and individual authenticity. It is thus that they emerged, as a biographer seems to recognize in the case of Vidyasagar, 'whole and enriched from the clash of cultures ... in the nineteenth century'.<sup>36</sup> Iswarchandra too fought institutionalized violence against Indian women, giving primacy to social reform over politics. But his diagnosis of Hinduism did not grow out of feelings of cultural inferiority; it grew out of perceived contradictions within Hinduism itself. Even when he fought for Indian women, he did not operate on the basis of Westernized ideals of masculinity and femininity or on the basis of a theory of cultural progress. He refused to Semiticize Hinduism and adopt the result as a ready-made theory of state. As a result, his society could neither ignore nor forgive him. (The pandit, when he was

<sup>36</sup> Amalsh Tripathi, *Vidyasagar: The Traditional Modernizer* (Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1974).

dying, could hear the bands playing outside his house, celebrating his approaching death.) Vidyasagar's Hinduism looked dangerously like Hinduism and hence subversive to the orthodox Hindus. Simultaneously, his cultural criticisms seemed fundamental even to those allegiant to the other two models of internal criticism and cultural change. He could be ignored neither as an apostate nor as an apologist.

Vidyasagar acquired this cultural embedding by eschewing some of the normative and institutional goals of the competing models. He refused to use the imagery of a golden age of the Hindus from which contemporary Hindus had allegedly fallen, he refused to be psychologically tied to the history of non-Hindu rule of India, he resisted reading Hinduism as a 'proper religion' in the Islamic or Western sense, he rejected the ideologies of masculinity and adulthood, and he refused to settle scores with the West by creating a nation of super-Hindus or by defending Hinduism as an all-perfect antidote to Western cultural encroachment. His was an effort to protect not the formal structure of Hinduism but its spirit, as an open, anarchic federation of sub-cultures and textual authorities which allowed new readings and internal criticisms.

Thus, Iswarchandra's anti-colonialism was not defined by the Western version of rationalism, the popular Bengali *bhadralok* stereotypes about him notwithstanding. It was also not heavily reactive, though that impression too was created by some elements of his everyday life (including his aggressively Indian dress, interpersonal style and food habits).<sup>37</sup> He was first and foremost a Brahman pandit, a man of learning and a polemicist with a clear position on sacred texts which he saw as congruent with his reforms.<sup>38</sup> He was not even a man of religion out to sell a new version of Hinduism and, unlike Gandhi, he did not face the imposition of any mahatmahood on

<sup>37</sup> Benoy Ghose, *Vidyasagar o Bangali Samaj*, vols. 1-3 (Calcutta: Bengal Publishers, 1973), 2nd ed; Indra Mitra, *Karundagar Vidyasagar* (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 1971).

<sup>38</sup> Tripathi, *Vidyasagar*, Chapter i. The problems involved in this reinterpretive mode have been touched upon by Asok Sen, *Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and His Elusive Milestones* (Calcutta: Riddhi India, 1977).

him. But, like Gandhi, he could have declared himself an orthodox Hindu and claimed his Hinduism better than that of his opponents because it encompassed the colonial experience. Though Iswarchandra came from a poor rural background, his times did not allow him to take his dissent outside the urban middle classes, to mobilize the peripheries of his society, or to make a more creative use of folk—as opposed to Sanskritic—Hinduism. But his model did resolutely resist the ideology of hyper-masculinity and 'normality'. Popular readings of Iswarchandra recognized this. Madhusudan Dutt once wrote that the obstinate fiery Brahman had 'a Bengali mother's heart' and during Vidyasagar's own lifetime the Sanskrit saying 'tougher than thunder and softer than flower' became a standard, if trite, account of his androgyny. There was an implicit awareness all around that his combination of aggressive defiance of authority and authoritative reinterpretations of authority challenged some of the basic postulates of the colonial theory of progress, particularly the joint construction of 'legitimate inequality' by the Indians and the British. If Iswarchandra failed to fully politicize this dissent, he at least sought to make instrumental use of the transient, 'unavoidable' oppression of colonialism to meet India's needs. And this, without accepting the Western utilitarian, social Darwinist, and radical conceptions of these needs.

## V

The problem of colonization did not only concern the overseas countries. The process of decolonization—which is in any case far from complete in those countries—is also under way at home, in our schools, in female demands for equality, in the education of small children and in many other fields. ... If certain cultures prove capable of destroying others . . . the destructive forces brought forth by these cultures also act internally. . . .

O. Mannoni<sup>39</sup>

The colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as *an animal*, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform

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39 Mannoni, 'Psychoanalysis', pp. 93-4.

*himself* into an animal. . . . They thought they were only slaughtering Indians, or Hindus, or South Sea Islanders, or Africans. They have in fact overthrown, one after another, the ramparts behind which European civilization could have developed freely.

Aime Cesaire<sup>40</sup>

The broad psychological contours of colonialism are now known. Thanks to sensitive writers like Octave Mannoni, Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi we even know something about the interpersonal patterns which constituted the colonial situation, particularly in Africa.<sup>41</sup> Less well-known are the cultural and psychological pathologies produced by colonization in the colonizing societies.

As folk wisdom would have it, the only sufferers of colonialism are the subject communities. Colonialism, according to this view, is the name of a political economy which ensures a one-way flow of benefits, the subjects being the perpetual losers in a zero-sum game and the rulers the beneficiaries. This is a view of human mind and history promoted by colonialism itself. This view has a vested interest in denying that the colonizers are at least as much affected by the ideology of colonialism, that their degradation, too, can sometimes be terrifying. Behind all the rhetoric of the European intelligentsia on the evils of colonialism lay their unstated faith that the gains from colonialism to Europe, to the extent that they primarily involved material products, were real, and the losses, to the extent they involved social relations and psychological states, false. To venture a less popular interpretation of colonialism—which I hope is relatively less contaminated by the ideology of colonialism—I shall produce examples from the experience of one of the world's stablest and most subtly-managed colonial polities of all times, British India. These examples will show that what Aime Cesaire calls the 'decivilization' of the colonizers is not an impotent fantasy after all, that it is an empirical

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40 Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp. 20, 57-8.

41 Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*; Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*; Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*.



reality of the kind on which even Mannoni and Fanon can agree.<sup>42</sup> Fanon describes a police officer who, as he tortured the freedom fighters in Algeria, became violent towards his own wife and children.<sup>43</sup> Even from Fanon's impassioned political psychiatry, it becomes obvious that the officer *had* to do within his family—and within himself—what he did to the freedom fighters. Colonialism as a psychological process cannot but endorse the principle of isomorphic oppressions which restates for the era of the psychological man the ancient wisdom implied in the New Testament and also perhaps in the Sauptik Parva of the Mahabharata: 'Do not do unto others what you would that they do not do unto you, lest you do unto yourself what you do unto others.'

The impact of colonialism on India was deep. The economic exploitation, psychological uprooting and cultural disruption it caused were tremendous.<sup>44</sup> But India was a country of hundreds of millions living in a large land mass. In spite of the presence of a paramount

42 Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, p. 13. The psychological principle involved was recognized by Plato himself. As Iris Murdoch sums up in her *The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 39: 'Whatever his [Plato's] dogma, there is little doubt about his psychology. . . . We cannot escape the causality of sin. We are told in the *Theaetetus* (176-7) that the inescapable penalty of wickedness is simply to be the sort of person one is.' It is surprising that Fanon, whom Peter Berger calls the 'Clausewitz of Revolution' had only limited awareness of the creative possibilities of such a philosophy of evil.

43 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 215-17.

44 The political and economic dislocation is of course well known and well documented. For an early discussion of the economic exploitation under British colonialism, see for example R. C. Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1903) and Dadabhoi Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (1901), (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1969). For instances of cultural and psychological pathology produced by colonization in India, see R. C. Majumdar, A. K. Majumdar and D. K. Ghose (eds.), *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, part 2 (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965). For a case study of a specific cultural pathology under the Raj, see for instance, my 'Sati'. The political and economic dislocation is of course well known and well documented. For an early discussion of the economic exploitation under British colonialism, see for example R. C. Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1903) and Dadabhoi Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (1901), (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1969). For instances of cultural and psychological pathology produced by colonization in India, see R. C. Majumdar, A. K. Majumdar and D. K. Ghose (eds.), *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, part 2 (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965). For a case study of a specific cultural pathology under the Raj, see for instance, my 'Sati'.

power which acted as the central authority, the country was culturally fragmented and politically heterogeneous. It could, thus, partly confine the cultural impact of imperialism to its urban centres, to its Westernized and semi-Westernized upper and middle classes, and to some sections of its traditional elites. That was not the case for the rulers from a relatively more homogeneous small island. They were overwhelmed by the experience of being colonial rulers. As a result, the long-term cultural damage colonialism did to the British society was greater.

Firstly, the experience of colonizing did not leave the internal culture of Britain untouched. It began to bring into prominence those parts of the British political culture which were least tender and humane. It de-emphasized speculation, intellection and *caritas* as feminine, and justified a limited cultural role for women—and femininity—by holding that the softer side of human nature was irrelevant to the public sphere. It openly sanctified—in the name of such values as competition, achievement, control and productivity—new forms of institutionalized violence and ruthless social Darwinism.<sup>45</sup> The instrumental concept of the lower classes it promoted was perfectly in tune with the needs of industrial capitalism and only a slightly modified version of the colonial concept of hierarchy was applied to the British society itself. The tragedy of colonialism was also the tragedy of the younger sons, the women, and all 'the etceteras and and-so-forths' of Britain.

Nobody who wandered among the imperial gravestones, though, pondering the sadness of their separate tragedies, could fail to wonder at the waste of it all, the young lives thrown away, the useless courage, the unnecessary partings; and the fading image of Empire, its even dimmer panoply of flags and battlements, seemed then to be hazed in a mist of tears, like a grand old march shot through with melancholy, in a bandstand by the sea.<sup>46</sup>

45 Some of these emphases are compatible with the 'standard' description of the authoritarian syndrome deriving from the Frankfurt School of Marxists, elaborated empirically in T. W. Adorno *et al.*, *The Authoritarian Personality*. On the culture of social Darwinism in Britain, see Raymond Williams, 'Social Darwinism', in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: NLB, 1980), pp. 86-102.

46 James Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets: An Imperial Retreat* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978) p. 556.

Secondly and paradoxically, the ideology of colonialism produced a false sense of cultural homogeneity in Britain. This froze social consciousness, discouraging the basic cultural criticism that might have come from growing intellectual sensitivity to the rigid British social classes and subnational divisions, and from the falling quality of life in a quickly industrializing society. Colonialism blurred the lines of social divisions by opening up alternative channels of social mobility in the colonies and by underwriting nationalist sentiments through colonial wars of expansion or through wars with other ambitious European powers seeking a share of colonial glory. The near-total cultural dominance of a small elite in Britain was possible because the society shunted off to the colonies certain indirect expressions of cultural criticism: social deviants unhappy with the social order and buffeted by the stresses within it. I have in mind the criminality which comes from the rage of the oppressed, displaced from the rulers to the co-oppressed.<sup>47</sup> This process was recognized even by some apologists of colonialism. Here is one Carl Siger, speaking of the French experience:

The new countries offer a vast field for individual violent activities which, in the metropolitan countries, would run up against certain prejudices, against a sober and orderly conception of life, and which, in the colonies, have greater freedom to develop and consequently, to affirm their worth. Thus to a certain extent the colonies can serve as a safety valve for modern society. Even if this were their only value, it would be immense.<sup>48</sup>

The British might not ever have put it that way, but this logic was always implicit in the ruling culture of Britain.

Thirdly, there was what E. M. Forster called the 'undevel-

47 Fanon in his *The Wretched of the Earth* seems to recognize this displacement.

48 *Essai sur la Colonisation*, Paris, 1907, quoted in C'esaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, p. 20. Cesaire also quotes one straight-thinking Renan: 'The regeneration of the inferior or degenerate races by the superior races is part of the providential order of things for humanity. With us, the common man is nearly always a declassé nobleman, his heavy hand is better suited to handling the sword than the mental tool. Rather than work, he chooses to fight. ... Pour forth this all-consuming activity onto countries which, like China, are crying aloud for foreign conquest. Turn the adventurers who disturb European society into a *ver sacrum*, a horde like those of the Franks, the Lombards, or the Normans, and every man will be in his right role. Nature has made a race of workers, the Chinese race . . . : a race of tillers of the soil, the Negro . . . ; a race of masters and soldiers, the European race' (p. 16).

oped heart' in the British which separated them not merely from the Indians but also from each other.<sup>49</sup> This undevelopment came both in the form of isolation of cognition from affect—which often is a trigger to the 'banal' violence of our times—and in the form of a new pathological fit between ideas and feelings. The theory of imperialism did not remain an insulated political position in Britain; it became a religious and ethical theory and an integral part of a cosmology. -It not only structured the inner needs of the changing British society but also gave grotesque expression to a 'primitive' religious and social consciousness that had acquired immense military and technological power and was now operating on a global scale. Richard Congreve, Bishop of Oxford, once said, 'God has entrusted India to us to hold it for Him, and we have no right to give it up.'<sup>50</sup> And what Lord John Russel, a future prime minister of Britain, said about Africa applied to India, too. The aim of colonization, he declaimed, was to encourage religious instruction and let the subjects 'partake of the blessings of Christianity'.<sup>51</sup> Both these worthies were articulating not only an imperial responsibility or a national interest but also a felt sense of religious duty. James Morris sums it up neatly. 'Never mind the true motives and methods of imperialism', he says; 'in the days of their imperial supremacy the British genuinely believed themselves to be performing a divine purpose, innocently, nobly, in the name of God and the Queen.'<sup>52</sup> The other side of this sense of religious duty in the rulers was the growing and deliberately promoted sense of a religious duty to be ruled, including a cosmologically rooted political fatalism in some sections of the Indians. Even Bankimchandra Chat-terji's novel *Anandamath* sought to legitimize this duty to be ruled on the basis of a new theory of stages of history.

49 Forster's *A Passage to India* of course examines this separation only in the context of the British society in India.

50 Quoted in K. Bhaskar Rao, *Rudyard Kipling's India* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1967), p. 26. See an interesting treatment of this moral dimension in Wurgaft, 'Prospero and Caliban', and Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*.

51 Quoted in Morris, *Heaven's Command*, pp. 37-8.

52 Morris, *Farewell to Trumpets*, p. 551.

Finally, as Francis Hutchins and Lewis D. Wurgaft have so convincingly argued in the context of India, colonialism encouraged the colonizers to impute to themselves magical feelings of omnipotence and permanence. These feelings became a part of the British selfhood in Britain too. And the society was sold the idea of being an advanced techno-industrial society where science promised to liberate man from his daily drudgery, an advanced culture where human reason and civilized norms had the greatest influence, and—for the sake of the radical internal critics of the society who took to the idea like fish to water—a polity farthest on the road to revolutionary self-actualization. Britannia not only ruled the waves; for its inhabitants and for its many admirers in Europe it also ruled the future of human self-consciousness. (Both British liberalism and the vaunted British insularity were also underwritten by colonialism in important ways. The full-blown theory of colonialism emerged exactly at the time when, for the liberals, Britain had replaced Napoleonic France as the hope of mankind.<sup>53</sup> Once the empire broke down, the liberalism revealed its racist underside. And the famous insularity, too, gave way to wholesale Westernization—Britain also has its own West—and threatened to leave, as Malcolm Muggeridge once said, some sections of Indians as the sole surviving Britons in the world.)

Jacques Ellul has argued that the two major myths of the modern world are science and history.<sup>54</sup> The contours of both these myths, their early 'developmental pathologies', and the magicality associated with them could be found in the dominant cosmology of nineteenth-century Britain.

These cultural pathologies invoked four distinct responses in British society. The more obvious of them were reflected in Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) and George Orwell (1903-45), the former representing the pathetic self-hatred and ego constriction which went with colonialism, and the latter the relative

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<sup>53</sup> Morris, *Heaven's Command*, Chapter I.

<sup>54</sup> Jacques Ellul, *The New Demons*, trans. C. Edward Hopkin (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), Chapter 4.

sense of freedom and critical morality which were the true antitheses of colonialism and which one could acquire only by working through the colonial consciousness. Both came from direct or indirect exposure to the colonial situation and both struggled, though in dramatically different ways, with ideas of authority, responsibility, psychological security, self-esteem, hierarchy, power and evangelism. The third response was indirect, unselfconscious and overtly apolitical. It was reflected in the chaotic, individuated, 'pathological' protests against hyper-masculinity and over-socialization by individuals like Oscar Wilde and many of the members of the Bloomsbury group and by aspects of the elite culture in institutions like Oxford and Cambridge. I have in mind not the formal radicalism of a few politically conscious intellectuals, but the half-articulated protest by more apparently apolitical intellectuals against the official ideas of normality and dissent gradually taking over the whole of the culture of Britain.

Lastly, there was the numerically small but psychologically significant response of many who wholly opted out of their colonizing society and fought for the cause of India. Some of them became marginal to the Western life style in the course of their search for an alternative vision of an ideal society outside technocratic Utopias and outside modernity. One may describe them as persons searching for a new Utopia untouched by any Hobbesian dream. Such persons as Sister Nivedita, born Margaret Noble (1867-1911), Annie Besant (1847-1933) and Mira Behn, born Madeleine Slade (1892-1982), found in Indian versions of religiosity, knowledge and social intervention not merely a model of dissent against their own society, but also some protection for their search for new models of transcendence, a greater tolerance of androgyny, and a richer meaning as well as legitimacy for women's participation in social and political life.<sup>55</sup> More relevant for us however are others like

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Mira Richard's case, briefly touched upon in pp. 94-6, in this volume. It is also worth noting that many of these women were Irish. I leave it to the psycho-historians to work out the possible meanings of these relationships between womanhood, dependency and independence, Anglo-Irish political relationships, and Catholicism and its greater tolerance for premodern or nonmodern categories of thought.

C. F. Andrews (1871-1940) who never became marginal to the West, but found a richer meaning for Western Christianity and a new endorsement of traditional Christian virtues in some strands of anti-colonialism in India. India for them was both a place for Christian social intervention and a place which could be a mirror to organized Western Christianity which had become a cat's paw of British imperialism.

I shall very briefly describe the four responses in the rest of this section.

Kipling probably was the most creative builder of the political myths which a colonial power needs to sustain its self-esteem. The psychological co-ordinates of his imperialist ideology have often been the co-ordinates of the West's image of the non-West in our times.

Elsewhere in this book I have described Kipling's early experiences and world view to show that he was something more than a rabid imperialist with an integrated identity. He was, I have argued, a tragic figure seeking to disown in self-hatred an aspect of his self identified with Indianness—which in turn was identified with victimization, ostracism and violence—because of a cruel first encounter with England after an idyllic childhood in India.<sup>56</sup> In this state, Kipling reproduced in his personal life both the painful cultural changes that had taken place in his society and the history of British colonialism in India from Robert Clive to Winston Churchill.

Since about the seventeenth century, the hyper-masculine over-socialized aspects of European personality had been gradually supplanting the cultural traits which had become identified with femininity, childhood, and later on, 'primitivism'. As part of a peasant cosmology, these traits had been valued aspects of a culture not wedded to achievement and productivity. Now they had to be rejected as alien to mainstream European civilization and projected on to the 'low cultures' of Europe and on to the new cultures European civilization encountered. It was as part of this process that the colonies came to be seen as the abode of people childlike and innocent on the one hand, and

devious, effeminate and passive-aggressive on the other. The positive qualities of childlikeness, Kipling argued, were the attributes of the good savages—for instance, the devoted, obedient martial races of India, the Gunga Dins—and those of the good-hearted, patriotic lower classes of Britain supplying the Raj with 'Tommies' who dutifully went to their untimely death in distant lands. Childish or feminine passive-aggression was the attribute of the effete nationalists and fake sahibs or babus drawn from the non-martial races and that of the uninformed, shallow, British liberals supporting the former. It was also the attribute of whatever apparent civilization India, as opposed to the 'savage' Africans, seemed to have.

This was the ultimate meaning of the spirit of colonialism and its civilizing mission mounted on behalf of modernity and progress. Kipling merely produced new myths to consolidate these cultural ideas as a part of his own search for an integrated selfhood. To use an overworked expression of Herbert Marcuse's, it was an instance of internal repression mirroring an externally repressive system. Kipling's idea of the effeminate, passive-aggressive, and 'half-savage-half-child' Indian was more than an Anglo-Indian stereotype: it was an aspect of Kipling's authenticity and Europe's other face.

The *denouement* for Kipling came in his old age, when his literary success with generations of young readers had very nearly established his superiority over his critics in India as well as in the West. It came when his only son died defending the cause of the Empire Kipling held so dear. Kipling, neither a clear-cut product of the self-confident colonialism of the nineteenth century nor at home with modern wars based on mega-technology and mega-death, was broken. The fear of loss of nurture had always haunted him. The characters in his stories, mostly parentless like Wilde's, sometimes sought that nurture through a reversal of roles: they secured nurture from their wards, from children and from the childlike aliens they befriended or protected. In the process, they presumably ensured for their creator a similar nurture from the children among—and the children in—his readers. That fantasy world

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<sup>56</sup> See pp. 64-70 below.

of nurture from below, perhaps compensating loss or deprivation of parental nurture, collapsed with the death of Kipling's son.

Edmund Wilson sensitively captures the spirit of this Kipling, broken as much by the imperialism he so admired as by his self-repression.<sup>57</sup> Wilson does so by quoting the defeated imperialist—lonely, depressed, and fearful of insanity in his old age:

I have a dream—a dreadful dream—  
A dream that is near done,  
I watch a man go out of his mind,  
And he is My Mother's Son.

George Orwell's response to the ideology of colonialism was the antipode of Kipling's; he worked with creative myths that were direct attempts to reassert some of the values which colonialism forced one to disown. He clearly sensed that British colonialism had created the demand for a 'mother culture'—and a production line for colonial rulers—which alienated the colonizers not only from their political subjects but also from their own selves. Orwell operated from an anthropocentric, socialist-humanistic rationalism which never allowed him to develop the full meaning of the continuity between the oppressor and the oppressed.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, he did sense that the subjugation of the ruled also involved the subjugation of the ruler, that the subjects in the colonies controlled their rulers as surely as the rulers controlled their subjects. He also was aware, perhaps to some extent against himself, that the first kind of control was the more difficult to defy because it was covert, subtle and involved

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<sup>57</sup> Edmund Wilson, 'The Kipling that Nobody Read', in Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Kipling's Mind and Art* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 17-69.

<sup>58</sup> See for instance Orwell's 'Reflections on Gandhi', in Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (eds.), *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1968), vol. 4, pp. 463-70. Orwell stresses the moral Gandhi and rejects Gandhi's world view as irrational and anti-humanist and his personality as aesthetically distasteful. In the same volume however is his 'James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution', pp. 160-81, which does show an acute sensitivity to the specific problem of modern oppression which Gandhi attacked.

within-person repression, whereas in the second case, the repression was overt and involved two cultures.

The most telling portrayal of this mutual bondage is in Orwell's 'Shooting an Elephant', an essay which graphically describes some of the anxieties and fears the colonizer lives with.<sup>59</sup> All the themes which can be identified with the present cultural crisis of the West are in the essay: the reification of social bonds through formal, stereotyped, part-object relationships; an instrumental view of nature; created loneliness of the colonizers in the colony through a theory of cultural stratification and exclusivism; an unending search for masculinity and status before the colonized; the perception of the colonized as gullible children who must be impressed with conspicuous machismo (with resultant audience demands binding the colonizer to a given format of 'play'); and the suppression of one's self for the sake of an imposed imperial identity—inauthentic and killing in its grandiosity. What Kipling articulated indirectly through his life and tried to hide through his writings, Orwell articulated openly through his self-aware political analysis.

Orwell was basically a critic of totalitarianism. But those who have read his *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will recognize him also as a critic of the oppression which grows out of ideologies of egalitarianism and progress. It is this part of his self which is relevant to this essay, because much before the modern doctrines of progress came home to roost in the First and the Second Worlds, the colonized societies had to bear their full brunt.

Orwell was the scion of an old, quasi-aristocratic family in decline, with a history of colonial service and slave-owning. Like Kipling, he was born in India and brought up in England. But he left the country of his birth too early to have any memories. He had, thus, a standard English middle-class upbringing. In later life Orwell believed that he had had an oppressive childhood and he wrote about his journey through

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<sup>59</sup> George Orwell, *Inside the Whale and Other Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957), pp. 91-100. See also his *Burmese Days* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967).

a tyrannical school that was close to being a 'total' institution. His biographer Bernard Crick however argues that, objectively speaking, Orwell's childhood was not really oppressive after all, that Orwell 'rewrote' his memories to make them compatible with his later concerns.<sup>60</sup> But at the same time, Crick's account itself underscores three themes in Orwell's early life which are linked with the adult Orwell's understanding of oppression and his defiance of the colonial culture in Britain.

First, Orwell grew up in an essentially woman's world with imageries of men as dirty, violent and inferior. Like Kipling he showed an early predilection for a life of the mind; like Kipling, he felt handicapped in a school organized around conflicting ideas of asceticism, sexual (especially homosexual) puritanism, hard work, sportsmanship and hyper-masculinity.<sup>61</sup> Like Kipling again, Orwell was a sensitive, seclusive boy and for that very reason unpopular in his school and subject to bullying. But the end-results of these experiences were very different for Orwell. The ambivalence towards maleness in his early environment deterred him from opting for the reigning culture of hyper-masculinity. He remained in essence an opponent of the patriarchal world view.

Secondly, young Orwell, according to Orwell the auto-biographer, learnt early in his life that he was 'in a world where it was *not possible* for him to be good'; that is, 'in a world . . . where the rules were such that it was actually not possible . . . to keep them.'<sup>62</sup> This probably included the specific lesson that the inability to be good applied especially to the weak. All this can be explained away as a 'screen memory', as Crick seems to do, but it could be also read as a belief rooted in experience. Orwell was a bed-wetter, and had to learn to live with humiliation and corporal punishment in school for his 'crime'. Victorian morality taught him to recognize bed-wetting as wicked, but

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60 Bernard Crick, *George Orwell, A Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), especially Chapters 1 and 2. It is not clear why Crick stresses this point because Orwell *does* admit it (pp. 344, 347).

61 George Orwell, 'Such, Such Were the Joys', in *Collected Essays*, vol. 4, pp. 330-69, see particularly pp. 351-3, 359.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 334.

the wickedness was outside his control. 'Sin was not necessarily something that you did; it might be something that happened to you.'<sup>63</sup>

Third, it was in school that Orwell had the first intimation of a principle which took him, by his own admission, another twenty years to realize: 'the weak in a world governed by the strong' must 'break the rules, or perish.' The weak, he was to claim, had 'the right to make a different set of rules for themselves.'<sup>64</sup> Unless they had the 'instinct to survive', they had to accept the world in which 'there were the strong, who deserved to win, and there were the weak who deserved to lose and always did lose, everlastingly.'<sup>65</sup>

Strange though it may sound, Orwell could have been, given the 'right' values, one of Kipling's heroes. He had the right approach to the 'natives' as well as to the English lower classes: deep empathy without total identification, a sense of moral responsibility, and an unencumbered spirit of the kind which enabled one to do the dirty work of one's time. But Orwell put this approach to a different use. He became a critic of the dominant, middle-class culture of modern Britain which had found in imperialism its final fulfilment.

The third form of internal response to colonialism protected the more feminine aspects of the British self through 'psycho-pathological'—and 'criminal'—modes of self-expression in a few confined geographical and psychological spaces such as Oxbridge and Bloomsbury and in persons in conflict about their sexual identities and seeking to make an indirect ideological issue out of the conflicts. Almost all these persons were unaware that their inner drives were a joint political statement as well as the elements of a common private conflict. Nevertheless, their personal lives and the ambience of their interpersonal relationships set apart such non-political figures as Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), G. E. Moore (1873-1958), John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), Lytton Strachey (1880-1932), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), Somerset Maugham (1874-1965), E. M. Forster

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63 *Ibid.*, p. 334.

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 362-3.

65 *Ibid.*, pp. 359, 361.

(1879-1970) and W. H. Auden (1907-73) as living protests against the world view associated with colonialism.

Psychoanalyst Lawrence Kubie has explored in some detail the search for bisexuality that characterized gifted individuals like Virginia Woolf and the anguish that was associated with that search.<sup>66</sup> This anguish was sharpened in a cultural context that was trying to disown its own recessive traditions of androgyny and the psychological correlates of the biological fact of human bisexuality.<sup>67</sup> 'The ideology of higher sodomy', aestheticism and neo-Hellenism to which many creative persons subscribed in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain cannot be explained without reference to the way British society had devalued femininity as low-status, contaminating and anti-social, and rejected the presence of femininity in man as virtually the negation of all humanness. What the colonial culture was doing in India by stressing the antonymy between *purusatva* and *klibatva* had its collateral in the struggle to further consolidate the dominance of the principle of hyper-masculinity in Britain. Colonialism only helped marginalize, using the popular British sexual stereotypes, the strands of consciousness in Britain protesting against this antonymy.

Let me give the example of a remarkably creative person who was apparently far removed from the world of British-Indian politics, Oscar Wilde. Richard Ellmann's recent essay on Wilde's life at once reveals the extent to which Wilde's sexuality was a cultural phenomenon and a statement of protest.<sup>68</sup> The Marquess of Queensberry, the vindictive father of Wilde's lover

66 Lawrence Kubie, 'The Drive to Become Both Sexes' *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, '974. 43(3). PP-349-426.

67 See also the autobiography of Noel Coward, *Future Indefinite* (London: Heinemann, 1954), for a flavour of how wit and pleasantness was often used to hide the pain and loneliness of sexual deviation within the mould of social acceptability and popularity. For a discussion of 'the structure of feeling' which interlinked critiques of existing man-woman relationship, attempts to relate to lower classes, anti-imperialism and anti-militarism, see Raymond Williams, 'The Bloomsbury Fraction', *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, pp. 148-69. Williams also provides a vague clue to the nature of the relationship between depth psychology and the Bloomsbury syndrome.

68 Richard Ellmann, 'A Late Victorian Love Affair', *New York Review of Books*, '977. 24(3) pp. 6-10.

Bossie (Lord Alfred Douglas) was not merely a flat-footed conservative, but a culturally typical counterplayer to Wilde's atypical sexual identity. Both Wilde and his lover saw themselves as the negation of the staid Marquess who sought constant endorsement of not only his but his culture's masculine self. As the inventor of the Queensberry rules of competitive boxing, it is this endorsement which the Marquess symbolically sought by defining and demanding rule-bound violence and conformity to that ultimate virtue of aggressive British masculinity, sportsmanship.<sup>69</sup> And this is the endorsement Wilde tried to deny him. Wilde's younger son, Vyvyan Holland, was to later write that Wilde had a 'horror of conventionality' and that this contributed to his destruction by his society.<sup>70</sup> He failed to recognize that imperialism was based on the pathology of existing conventionality and commonsense; it sought its legitimacy by selling the idea of a moral civilization based on these two elements of British folk culture. By defying conventionality—particularly stereotyped definitions of sexual norms—Wilde threatened, however indirectly, a basic postulate of the colonial attitude in Britain.

It is well known that Wilde's homosexuality would have been 'forgiven' had he been more discreet about it; had he, for instance, not instituted criminal proceedings against the Marquess. Victorian England was willing to tolerate Wilde's sexual identity as long as it was accepted as a part of the life style of a marginal sect and not openly flaunted.

But by demonstratively using his homosexuality as a cultural ideology, Wilde threatened to sabotage his community's dominant self-image as a community of well-defined men, with clear-cut man-woman relationships. What the elite culture of England could not tolerate was his blatant deviation from rigidly defined sexual roles in a society which, unknown to the hyper-aesthete Wilde, was working out the political meanings of these definitions in a colony thousands of miles away.

69 Geoffrey Gorer, 'The British National Character in the Twentieth Century,' *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, no. 370, March 1967, pp. 74-81, see especially pp. 77-8.

70 Quoted in H. Montgomery Hyde, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Methuen, 1976), p. 136.

Oscar Wilde 'childishly' defied respectability in yet another sphere. By stressing this part of Wilde's ideology, Ellmann, a literary critic, allows me to conceptualize the essentially apolitical Wilde as an unself-aware, but more or less complete, critic of the political culture which sired colonialism.<sup>71</sup> Wilde rejected Matthew Arnold's dictum: 'The aim of criticism is to see the object as in itself it really is.' To him the aim of criticism was to see the object as it really was not. This may be seen as the other side of the old maxim, art for art's sake, but it could also be read, as Ellmann himself says, as an earlier version of Picasso's faith: art is 'what nature is not'. In that form it becomes an early critique of over-socialized thinking, of the kind later ventured by Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse. The art which defies the existent is the art which is subversive; it 'undermines things as they are.' Thus, Wilde's admiration for historians who defy history:

He celebrates those historians who impose dominion upon fact instead of surrendering to it. Later he was to say much more boldly, 'The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it.' It is part of his larger conception that the one duty (or better, whim) we owe nature, reality, or the world, is to reconstruct it.<sup>72</sup>

Wilde, everything said, was a marginal man. His philosophy of life, too, was peripheral to his society. Neither his sexual deviance nor his critiques of everyday life and history made sense to the mainstream culture of Britain. Appropriately, the characters he created for his plays and stories were parentless.<sup>73</sup> They were not burdened by close authority and thus by any passionate conflict with such authority. The humour these characters produced arose out of distant defiance rather than proximate rebellion. Perhaps it is now time for us to turn to criticisms of Western culture which defied conventional masculinity and normal history as parts of a more articulate,

<sup>71</sup> Richard Ellmann, 'The Critic as Artist as Wilde', *Encounter*, July 1967, pp. 29-37.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-1.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

culturally legitimate, ideology. In other words, I shall now discuss a mode of dissent which had parents.

Charles Freer Andrews, revered in India and forgotten in England, was born into an inheritance of religion and nonconformity.<sup>74</sup> Like Orwell, he was his mother's favourite and, like both Kipling and Orwell, his relationship with his father, a minister of the Catholic Apostolic Church, was distant. Andrews' childhood was deeply influenced by religious myths and imageries, and he was also exposed to more than the normal quota of classical literature. He was later to describe his early home life as 'a kind of backwater into which the current of modern thought has not been allowed to enter.'<sup>75</sup> Again like Kipling and Orwell, he was miserable in his school, partly because of the burden of his studies, but more so because, as a delicate, over-protected boy he was surrounded by older, bigger and 'coarser' boys whose object of homosexual attention he became. Andrews' response to them was not perhaps entirely passive and, throughout his life, he was to remember these experiences as 'an evil form of impurity' in him. Hugh Tinker, certainly not an overly psychological biographer, describes the consequences as follows:

Charlie was never to have a girl friend, and the enormity of this 'impurity' was to be buried deep in his psyche. Perhaps it was at school that he subconsciously turned, or was turned away from the possibility of the physical love of a woman. For some years there was an emotional struggle at school, and though as he grew older he mastered the situation, the sense of guilt remained.<sup>76</sup>

Andrews may not have been easy with conventional heterosexuality but in spite of all his neurasthenia and nervous activism, he was always easy with children. Whether it was this combination that helped him see through the colonial ideology or not, he was to become the one person who, to many of his friends, 'was an Indian at heart, at the same time

<sup>74</sup> Hugh Tinker, *The Ordeal of Love: C. F. Andrews and India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 1.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.



a true Englishman.<sup>77</sup> It is thus that he bridged the classical universalism of Rabindranath Tagore and the folk-based, critical traditionalism of Gandhi. He saw both as valid alternatives to the modernism which informed colonial ideology and, though he probably found Tagore easier to understand, he based his critique of British colonialism, following Gandhi, on critical Christian ethics. (He would have certainly rejected the apolitical, non-critical traditionalism of some contemporary Christian missionaries, as he would have rejected its more impressive and touching version in someone like Mother Teresa today. He would have considered such anti-politics unacceptable.<sup>78</sup>) Predictably, when in India, Andrews adopted many Indian and specifically Hindu social customs—in dress, food and social relations—but he also took care to see that nobody mistook him for a lapsed Christian. He even took pains during his last years to ensure a proper Christian burial for himself. Evidently, he owed his social and political activism not merely to his Indianized self, but also to his non-modern Western traditions. It is a comment on modern theories of dissent that the Westerner who perhaps came closest to the Indian cause in two hundred years of British colonial history operated on the basis of religious traditions, not on that of a secular ideology.

In a moment of terrible defeatism Vivekananda had said that the salvation of the Hindus lay in three Bs: beef, biceps and Bhagvadgita. The nationalist-chemist P. C. Ray, too, allegedly expressed similar sentiments once. Andrews, if he had come across such proposals, would have found them painful. He recognized the nexus between capitalism, imperialism and Christianity, in spite of his limited intellectual repertoire and his simple theology.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, his Christianity demanded

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77 M. K. Gandhi, quoted in Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1958), vol. 2, p. 100.

78 This I say in spite of his liking for Albert Schweitzer (Tinker, *The Ordeal of Love*, p. 206) whose subtle moral and cultural arrogance the simple Andrews was unlikely to notice.

79 C. F. Andrews, *Christ and Labour* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1923); and *What I Owe to Christ* (London: Hodder Stoughton, 1932).

from the Hindus not a masculine Christianity masquerading as Hindu nationalism. His Christianity sought to authenticate Gandhi's faith, enumerated in his sixteen-point thesis, that the East and West could—and did—meet outside the bounds of modernity.<sup>80</sup> It was modern Britain Andrews disowned, not the traditional West. When Gandhi described him as an Indian at heart and a true Englishman, it remained unstated that it was by being a true Englishman that Andrews became an Indian.

My account of the responses to colonialism in Britain—I find after having written it—differs from my account of the Indian responses in one respect. In the case of the Indians I seem to have stressed texts and myths; for the Westerners, persons. Is this accidental? Or is this an unwilling acknowledgement of the different ways in which cultures can be described? Are some cultures primarily organized around historical time intersecting with life-histories, and others around the timeless time of myths and texts? One of the following sections may provide a partial answer to these questions.

## VI

The most creative response to the perversion of Western culture, however, came, as it must, from its victims. It was Colonial India, still preserving something of its androgynous cosmology and style, which ultimately produced a transcultural protest against the hyper-masculine world view of colonialism, in the form of Gandhi. Gandhi's authenticity as an Indian should not blind us to the way his idiom cut across the cultural barriers between Britain and India, and Christianity and Hinduism. Albeit a non-Westerner, Gandhi always tried to be a living symbol of the other West. Not only did he sense and 'use' the fundamental predicament of British culture caught in the hinges of imperial responsibility and subjecthood in victory, but he implicitly defined his ultimate goal as the liberation of the British from the history and psychology of British colonialism.

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80 Gandhi, quoted in T. K. Mahadevan, *Dvija* (New Delhi: East-West Affiliated Press, 1977), pp. 118-19.

The moral and cultural superiority of the oppressed was not an empty slogan to him.

That is why Gandhi's spirited search for the other culture of Britain, and of the West, was an essential part of his theory of salvation for India. It is true that 'Gandhi was a living antithesis set up against the thesis of the English',<sup>81</sup> but that antithesis was latent in the English, too. All through his adulthood, Gandhi's closest friend was an English cleric devoted not only to the cause of Indian freedom but also to a softer version of Christianity. C. F. Andrews was to Gandhi what Thomas Mann had been to Sigmund Freud: an affirmation of the marginalized reflective strain that must underlie—or, to protect one's own sanity and humanity, must be presumed to underlie—every 'homogeneous' culture that goes rabid. (That this may not be reduced to a merely moral posture in circumstances in which shared madness establishes its domination over history is best shown by Gene Sharpe's description of a successful peaceful resistance against the Nazi state in wartime Berlin.<sup>82</sup>) Similarly, Gandhi's partiality for some of the Christian hymns and Biblical texts was more than the symbolic gesture of a Hindu towards a minority religion in India. It was also an affirmation that, at one plane, some of the recessive elements of Christianity were perfectly congruent with elements of Hindu and Buddhist world views and that the battle he was fighting for the minds of men was actually a universal battle to rediscover the softer side of human nature, the so-called non-masculine self of man relegated to the forgotten zones of the Western self-concept.

What was the constituency he was appealing to? Was it only a lunatic fringe or an ineffective minority? I suspect that there was in Gandhi not only a sophisticated ethical sensitivity but also political and psychological shrewdness. Here is, for in-

81 Rollo May, *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Sources of Violence* (New York: Delta, 1972), p. 112.

82 Gene Sharpe, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, vol. I (Boston: Porter Sargent, '973) pp. 87-90.

stance, a description of an aspect of British national character which the reader, if brought up on ideas of Indian and particularly Gandhian pacifism and Western aggressiveness, might find interesting:

With the exception of the anomalous members of the lower working class (who never came to the colonies in large numbers), the English are preoccupied with the control of their own aggression, the avoidance of aggression from others, and the prevention of the emergence of aggressive behaviour in their children ... In the English middle and upper classes this control of aggression would appear to have been a major component in their character for several centuries. In the context of games this control of aggression is called 'sportsmanship', a concept which the English introduced into much of the rest of the world. One aspect of 'sportsmanship' is controlling physical aggression by rules. . . . The other aspect of 'sportsmanship' is the acceptance of the outcome unaggressively, neither taunting the vanquished nor showing resentment against the victor. This concept of 'sportsmanship' has long been metaphorically extended from games to almost all situations of rivalry or competition; the reputation of being a 'good sport' is one that is very highly valued by the majority of the English.<sup>83</sup>

Against this observation I want to offset the view of Nirad G. Chaudhuri, an internal critic of the Indie civilization, even though he would be rejected out-of-hand by many as hopelessly anti-Indian and as a lobbyist for the West in the East.

The current belief is that the Hindus are a peace-loving and nonviolent people, and this belief has been fortified by Gandhism. In reality few communities have been more warlike and fond of bloodshed. . . . About twenty-five words in an inscription of Asoka have succeeded in almost wholly suppressing the thousands in the rest of the epigraphy and the whole of Sanskrit literature which bear testimony to the incorrigible militarism of the Hindus. Their political history is made up of bloodstained pages. . . . Between this unnecessary proclamation of non-violence in the third century B.C. and its reassertion, largely futile, in the twentieth century by Mahatma Gandhi, there is not *one word* of non-violence in the theory and practice of statecraft by the Hindus.<sup>84</sup>

Mine is not an attempt to substitute the existing stereotypes of the

83 Gorer, 'The British National Character', p. 77.

84 Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *The Continent of Circe* (London: Chatto and Windus, '965), pp. 98-9. A number of social scientists, too, have noticed that the aggressive needs repeatedly top the list among needs projected in projective, particularly thematic, tests and many of them have identified aggression as the Indian's major conflict area. For details see Ashis Nandy and Sudhir Kakar, 'Culture and Personality', in Udai Pareekh (ed.), *Research in Psychology* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1980), pp. 136-67.

British ruler and Indian subject with the help of two partisan observers. What I am saying is that Gandhi's non-violence was probably not a one-sided morality play. Nor was it purely a matter of humane Hindus versus the inhuman Britons. The shrewd Bania, a practical idealist, had correctly seen that, at some levels of national consciousness in Britain, there was near-perfect legitimacy for the political methodology he was forging. On the other hand, he knew well that he would have to fight hard in India to establish his version of nonviolence as 'true' Hinduism or as the central core of Hinduism. After all, Gandhi himself said that he had borrowed his idea of non-violence not from the sacred texts of India but from the Sermon on the Mount. In the 150 years of British rule prior to Gandhi, no significant social reformer or political leader had tried to give centrality to non-violence as a major Hindu or Indian virtue. The closest anyone came to it was Rammohun Roy with his concept of *daya* or mercy. Many years before Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda had sarcastically said that the British had, following the 'real' injunctions of the classical Indian texts, excelled in their this-worldly, hedonic, manly pursuits, while the Indians, foolishly following the 'true' injunctions of Christianity, had become their passive, life-denying, feminine subjects.<sup>85</sup> It is not relevant whether Vivekananda's reading of Christianity and Hinduism was right. The important point is that Gandhi made a different use of the same awareness.

It was in this sense that Gandhi wanted to liberate the British as much as he wanted to liberate Indians. The panicky, self-imposed captivity of the dominant or ruling groups in their self-made oppressive systems, for the sake of values which Chaim Shatan has recently called bogus honour and bogus

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85 Vivekananda, *Pracya o Paicalya* (Almora: Aclvaita Ashrama, 1898). This aspect of Vivekananda comes out also from Sudhir Kakar's interpretation of Vivekananda in *The Inner World: Childhood and Society in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 160-81.

manliness, is something which he never failed to notice or use.<sup>86</sup>

To put this awareness to political use, he challenged first the ideology of biological stratification acting as a homologue of—and legitimacy for—political inequality and injustice. As already noted, the colonial culture's ordering of sexual identities assumed that

*Purusatva > Naritva > Klibatva*

That is, manliness is superior to womanliness, and womanliness in turn to femininity in man. I have also pointed out that the first Indian response to this was to accept the ordering by giving a new salience to Ksatriyahood as true Indianness. To beat the colonizers at their own game and to regain self-esteem as Indians and as Hindus, many sensitive minds in India did what the adolescent Gandhi at the ontogenetic level had tried to do symbolically with the help of a Muslim friend:<sup>87</sup> they sought a hyper-masculinity or hyper-Ksatriyahood that would make sense to their fellow-countrymen (specially to those exposed to the majesty of the Raj) and to the colonizers.

But in an unorganized plural society, with a tradition of only parochial, not absolute, legitimacy for warriorhood, such Di-onysian games with the colonizers were doomed. This is what the Bengali, Panjabi and Maharashtrian terrorists found out to their own cost during the early part of this century. They had isolated themselves from the society even more than the British when Gandhi entered Indian politics in the nineteen-twenties.

Gandhi's solution was different. He used two orderings, each of which could be invoked according to the needs of the situation. The first, borrowed intact from the great and little traditions of saintliness in India, and also probably from the doctrine

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86 Chaim F. Shatan, 'Bogus Manhood and Bogus Honor: Surrender and Transfiguration in the United States Marine Corps', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 1977, 64(4), pp. 585-610.

87 On the young Gandhi's attempt to work out or pursue at the personal level the macho model to its logical absurdity see the sensitive account of Erik H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Man-Violence* (New York: Norton, 1969)

of power through divine bi-unity in some of the *vandchari* or left-handed sects, was as follows :

Androgyny > *Naritva Purusatva*

That is, manliness and womanliness are equal, but the ability to transcend the man-woman dichotomy is superior to both, being an indicator of godly and saintly qualities. To do this Gandhi had to ignore the traditional devaluation of some forms of androgyny in his culture.

Gandhi's second ordering was invoked specifically as a methodological justification for the anti-imperialist movement: first in South Africa and then in India. It went as follows:

*Naritva > Purusatva > Kdpurusatva*

That is, the essence of femininity is superior to that of masculinity, which in turn is better than cowardice or, as the Sanskrit expression would have it, failure of masculinity. Though the ordering is not inconsistent with some interpretations of Indian traditions, when stated in such a fashion it acquires a new play. This is because the first relationship (*naritva > purusatva*) often applies more directly to the transcendental and the magical, whereas the second relationship (*purusatva > kapurusatva*) is a more general, everyday principle. Perhaps the conjunction of the two sets makes available the magical power of the feminine principle of the cosmos to the man who chooses to defy his cowardice by owning to his feminine self.

There are a few implied meanings in these relationships. These meanings were culturally defined and, therefore, 'assumed' by Gandhi, but could be missed by an outside observer. First, the concept of *naritva*, so repeatedly stressed by Gandhi in nearly fifty years before the woman's liberation movement began, represented more than the dominant Western definition of womanhood. It included some traditional meanings of womanhood in India, such as the belief in a closer conjunction between power, activism and femininity than between power, activism and masculinity. It also implied the belief that the feminine principle is a more powerful, dangerous and uncontrol-

lable principle in the cosmos than the male principle. But even more central to this concept of womanhood was the traditional Indian belief in the primacy of maternity over conjugality in feminine identity. This belief specified that woman as an object and source of sexuality was inferior to woman as source of motherliness and *cantos*. Gandhi's fear of human sexuality, whatever its psychodynamic explanation in Gandhi's personal history, was perfectly consistent with this reading of Indian culture.

Second, while the dominant principle in Gandhian praxis is non-violence or avoidable violence, an implicit subsidiary principle is what K. J. Shah calls unavoidable violence. The principle of non-violence gives men access to protective maternity and by implication, to the godlike state of *ardhanarUvara*, a god half-man, half-woman. But given the cultural meaning of *ndritva*, non-violence also gives men access to the powerful, active, maternal principle of the cosmos, magically protective and carrying the intimations of an oceanic and Utopian beatitude. Along the same continuum, courage—what Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph call Gandhi's new courage<sup>88</sup>—allows one to rise above cowardice or *kapurusatva* and become a 'man', on the way to becoming the authentic man who admits his drive to become both sexes. This courage is not definitionally wedded to violence as in Ksatriyahood, but it may involve unavoidable violence under some circumstances, particularly in circumstances where the alternative is passive tolerance of injustice, inequality and oppression—willing victimhood and acceptance of the secondary gains of victimhood—which are all seen as worse than violence.

In sum, Gandhi was clear in his mind that activism and courage could be liberated from aggressiveness and recognized as perfectly compatible with womanhood, particularly maternity. Whether this position fully negated the Ksatriya world view or not, it certainly negated the very basis of the colonial culture. The colonial culture depended heavily on Western

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<sup>88</sup> Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), part 2.

cosmology, with its built-in fears about losing potency through the loss of activism and the ability to be violent. I have avoided discussing here the fantasies which underlie these fears— fantasies of rape and counter-rape, seduction and counter-seduction, castration and counter-castration—which have accompanied the Western concept of manhood whenever Western man has gone beyond his narrow cultural borders to civilize, populate or self-improve. (The depth of this linkage between activism and aggression in parts of the Western world is evident from the fact that the West's major ethnopsychology, Freudian psychoanalysis, locates the source of all activism and the concern with power in the instinctual patterning of aggression.)

## VII

The past in history varies with the present, rests upon the present, is the present. . . There are not two worlds—the world of past happenings and the world of our present knowledge of those past events—there is only one world, and it is a world of present experience.

Michael Oakeshott<sup>89</sup>

Gandhi's reply to the colonial homology between childhood and political subjugation was indirect. He rejected history and affirmed the primacy of myths over historical chronicles. He thereby circumvented the unilinear pathway from primitivism to modernity, and from political immaturity to political adulthood, which the ideology of colonialism would have the subject society and the 'child races' walk.<sup>90</sup> This was his way of grappling with colonial racism, a racism at least one psychiatrist has diagnosed as 'a historical ill, a disorder of the historical self

89 Michael Oakeshott, *Experience and its Modes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 107-8. Oakeshott's classical conservatism is of course totally oblivious of the critical functions this orientation to history can be made to play. For an implicit awareness of those functions one might have to go back to a politically schizophrenic personality like Martin Heidegger in the modern Western tradition.

90 As already noted, the equation between childhood and primitivism received powerful support from psychoanalytic ethnography. In Freud's own lifetime, some of his followers were busy studying primitive cultures which supposedly displayed all the characteristics of childhood.

which 'reveals the fullness of that self even as it reveals its inadequacies'.<sup>91</sup>

(There *was* a direct component in Gandhi's defiance of the ideology of adulthood, but it was relatively trivial. Not only did every Westerner and Westernized Indian who came in touch with Gandhi refer at least once to his child's smile, his admirers and detractors dutifully found him childlike and childish respectively. His 'infantile' obstinacy and tendency to tease, his 'immature' attacks on the modern world and its props, his 'juvenile' food fads and symbols like the spinning wheel—all were viewed as planks of a political platform which defied conventional ideas of adulthood.<sup>92</sup> One could offset these oddities against Bruno Bettelheim's view that under oppression, when survival is at stake, there is regression to infantilism. And against Lionel Trilling's observation, in the context of India, that 'generations of subjection can diminish the habit of dignity and teach grown men the strategy of the little child'.<sup>93</sup> An enterprising psychoanalyst probably could even be persuaded to argue that Gandhi's style of leadership was, in retrospect, a natural corollary of the culture of oppression with which his people lived. For the moment, however, I shall stress the other part of the story where a specific political position became in Gandhi a point of convergence between immediate social needs and metaphysical defiance.)

Gandhi's position on history was based on three assumptions, two of them derived from the traditional Indian orientations to time.<sup>94</sup> The first of these two was the salience given by

91 Joel Kovel, *White Racism: A Psychohistory* (London: Allen Lane, 1970), p. 232.

92 Ashis Nandy, 'From Outside the Imperium: Gandhi's Cultural Critique of the "West"', *Alternatives*, 1981, 7(2), pp. 171-94.

93 Bruno Bettelheim, *Surviving and Other Essays* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979); Lionel Trilling, 'A Passage to India (1943)', in Malcolm Bradbury (ed.), *E. M. Forster: A Passage to India* (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 77-92, especially p. 80.

94 For an excellent detailed analysis of the traditional Indian concept of time as it relates to authority and change, see Madhav Deshpande, 'History, Change and Permanence: A Classical Indian Perspective', in Gopal Krishna (ed.), *Contributions to South Asian Studies*, vol. I (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 1-28.

Indian culture to myth as a structured fantasy which, in its 'dynamic of the here-and-the-now, represents what in another culture would be called the dynamic of history. In other words, the diachronic relationships of history are mirrored in the synchronic relationship of myths and are fully reproducible from the latter if the rules of transformation are known. In Gandhi, the specific orientation to myth became a more general orientation to public consciousness. Public consciousness was not seen as a causal product of history but as related to history non-causally through memories and anti-memories. If for the West the present was a special case of an unfolding history, for Gandhi as a representative of traditional India history was a special case of an all-embracing permanent present, waiting to be interpreted and reinterpreted. (This also indirectly coped with the subsidiary homology between old age and Indian civilization but, for the moment, I shall let that pass.)

Even to the critics of industrial capitalism in the West, history was a linear process sometimes with an implied cycle underlying it. Marx, for instance, following the Judaeo-Christian cosmology, conceived of history somewhat as follows:

Prehistory proper (ahistorical primitive communism)	Objective stage-bound history (class struggle)	False history as a part of false consciousness (History as ideology)
	End of history (class-less adult communism, based on scientific history)	

Gandhi, however, was a product of a society which conceptualized the past, as a possible means of reaffirming or altering the present :

Past as a special case of present	Fractured present (competing pasts)	Remaking of present including past	New past
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From such a viewpoint, the past can be an authority but the nature of the authority is seen as shifting, amorphous and amenable to intervention. Mircea Eliade puts it thus:

While a modern man, though regarding himself as the result of the course of universal history, does not feel obliged to know the whole of it, the man of the archaic societies is not only obliged to remember mythical history but also to *re-enact* a large part of it periodically. It is here that we find the greatest difference between the man of the archaic societies and modern man: the irreversibility of events, which is the characteristic trait of History for the latter, is not a fact to the former. . .<sup>95</sup>

This is of course a less colourful way of paraphrasing T. S. Eliot in *Burnt Norton*:

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future,  
And time future is contained in time past.  
If all time is eternally present  
All time is [unredeemable.

Borrowing from psychoanalysis, Jiirgen Habermas in another context uses the expression 'future-oriented memories' to describe the means through which one breaks the power of the past over the present.<sup>96</sup> Some strands of Indian culture would find this fully acceptable. But they would formulate the consequences of such a view differently. The Indian's past is always open, whereas his future is so only to the extent that it is a rediscovery or renewal.<sup>97</sup> For Freud, as for Marx, ill health follows from history; health either from the present or from the future. The psychoanalyst, like the Marxist historian, is an expert who anticipates the self's capacity to bare, and live with, the repressed other history which creates the crucial disjunction between the past and the present. For the Indian folk 'historian' —the *bhat*, *caran*, or the *kathakdr* for instance—there can be no real disjunction between the past and the

95 Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Rites, Symbols*, Wendell C. Beane and William G. Doty (eds.) (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1976), vol. i, p. 5.

96 Jurgen Habermas, 'Moral Development and Ego Identity', in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (London: Heinemann, 1979), pp. 69-94.

97 For a brief discussion of this attitude from a psychological point of view, see my *Alternative Sciences: Creativity and Authenticity in Two Indian Scientists* (New Delhi: Allied, 1980), Chapter i.

present. If ill health follows from the past, health too follows from the past. The idea of 'determination' could apply to the present or to the future, as the notorious Indian concept of fatalism implies; in the past there are always open choices.

Past as present	Fractured present	Remade past	New past
Determined future (Indian fatalism)			Alternative determined future (new 'fatalism')

While this position does not fully negate history and in fact anticipates a number of fashionable post-Gandhian philosophies of history and interpretations of myths as history, the Gandhian position does make a subsidiary anti-historical assumption that, because they faithfully contain history, because they are contemporary and, unlike history, are amenable to intervention, myths are the essence of a culture, history being 'at best superfluous and at worst misleading. Gandhi implicitly assumed that history or *itihasa* was one-way traffic, a set of myths about past time or the *atit*, built up as independent variables which limit human options and pre-empt human futures. Myths, on the other hand, allow one access to the processes which constitute history at the level of the here-and-the-now. Consciously acknowledged as the core of a culture, they widen instead of restricting human choices. They allow one to remember in an anticipatory fashion and to concentrate on undoing aspects of the present rather than avenging the past. (Myths widen human choices also by resisting co-optation by the uniformizing world view of modern science. In spite of recent attempts to show the rationality of the savage mind *a la* Levi-Strauss, the savage mind itself has remained on the whole unconcerned about its own rationality. Both the science of myth and the scientific status of the myth continue to be a predominantly modern concern. In this sense, too, the affirmation of ahistoricity is an affirmation of the dignity and autonomy of non-modern peoples.)

The reverse of the same logic, however, is that myths can be analysed, traced or reduced to history as the dominant tradition

of Western social analysis had tried to do throughout modern times. History here is seen as the reality, the myth being a flawed, irrational fairy tale produced by 'unconscious' history, meant for savages and children. The core of such a concept of time—produced in the West for the first time after the demise of medievalism—consists in the emphasis on causes rather than on structures (on 'why' rather than 'what'), on progress and evolution as opposed to self-realization-in-being, and on the rationality of adjustment to historical reality (pragmatics) and of change through constant dramatic action (rather than on the rationality of a fundamentally critical attitude towards earlier interpretations and change through only critical interventions and new interpretations). For the modern West, and for those influenced by its concept of time, history itself is a chronology of good and bad actions and their causes, and every revolution is a disjunction in time which must be either protected against counter-revolutions or reduced to the stature of a false 'coming' on the way to a real revolution.

The subsidiary assumption of the second approach is that the cultures living by myths are ahistorical and thus, representatives of an earlier, second-rate social consciousness. Historical societies are the true representatives of mature human self-consciousness and, therefore, their constructions of the ahistorical societies are more valid scientifically than those of these societies themselves. The latter must act out their ahistorical fates as understood by those who are historians to the world.

This is the paradigm of the adult-child relationship which was challenged in Gandhian theory as well as practice.<sup>98</sup> This

98 It was at the level of practice that Gandhi introduced into Indian concepts of childhood and child-rearing something analogous to the concept of original sin. It is a moot psychological point whether, without this distortion of the Indian tradition of childhood (see Sudhir Kakar's 'Childhood in India: Traditional Ideals and Contemporary Reality', *International Social Science Journal*, 1979, 31(3)1 pp. 444-56), Gandhi personally could have given such a centrality to the concept of *seva* or service in the public sphere and to the idea of intervention in life situations for which there was very little place in the high cultures of India. Gandhi's concept of *seva* was essentially reparative; it was born of his own personal experiences, which partly underwrote a Western-style solution of his Oedipal conflicts. As a result, Gandhi built his concept of political and social work on an un-Indian concept of a sinful childhood which could be atoned for in adulthood only through the reparative gesture

was done in two ways: by reaffirming the language of continuity and by re-emphasizing the language of self.

The language of continuity took advantage of the deep ambivalence towards disjunction in the ideology of modernity. Modernity seeks to locate all 'true' creativity, including creative social action, in clear-cut breaks with the past. Yet, paradoxically, it strives hard to locate each such break in history. For instance, the rhetoric of revolution not only undervalues anything which is insufficiently disjunctive with the past; it positively disvalues reformism as a hindrance to revolution. At the same time, the effort of every modern history of revolutions and every revolutionary thought is to place all 'true' or 'false' revolutions in history. No explanation of, or call for, a revolution is complete unless it has spelt out the historical continuities which has or could lead to a revolution or would explain its career line.

The language of continuity re-legitimized the under-emphasis on disjunction in the Indian world view. It recognized that exactly as the language of revolution hid within it the message of continuity, the language of continuity too had a latent message of disjunction. Indian culture emphasized continuities so much that even major breaks with the past passed as minor reforms, till the full implications of the break became evident after decades or centuries, when the metaphors of continuity and permanence could no longer hide the fundamental changes that had already taken place in the culture. (The Bhakti movement is a reasonably good example of the process being described.) It therefore did not ultimately matter whether one used the rhetoric of disjunction or of continuity, as long as the feel for the immediacy of suffering was maintained and suffering was not reified through an ornate sophisticated intellectual packaging.

The reaffirmation of the language of self could be briefly described as a part of an old dialectic. The modern world view challenges the traditional faith that greater self-realization

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of public service. See Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth*, 6.

leads to greater understanding of the not-self, including the material world. Modernity includes the faith that the more human beings understand or control the 'objective' not-self, including the not-self in the self (the id, the brain processes, social or biological history), the more they control and understand the self (the ego, praxis, consciousness). A non-modern person, if using Freudian or Marxian categories, would argue the other way round: the more he understands his ego or his praxis, he would say, the more he understands the universal primary processes of the id as well as the universal dialectic of history. It is possible that the non-modern civilizations had to some extent exhausted the critical or creative possibilities of this primacy given to self-realization when modernity began to stress the other side of the story. But modernity in turn had over-corrected for the staleness of the older vision when critical traditionalists like Thoreau, Tolstoy and Gandhi began to re-emphasize the world views which, through self-control and self-realization, sought to understand and change the world.

It was as a part of these two languages that Gandhi broke out of the determinism of history. His concept of a free India, his solution to racial, caste and inter-religious conflicts and his concept of human dignity were remarkably free from the constraints of history. Whatever their other flaws, they gave societies the option of choosing their futures here and now— without heroes, without high drama and without a constant search for originality, discontinuous changes and final victories. They were the Indian version of historians 'who impose dominion upon fact instead of surrendering to it'.<sup>99</sup> If the past does not bind social consciousness and the future begins here, the present is the 'historical' moment, the permanent yet shifting point of crisis and the time for choice. One can either call it an Oriental version of the concept of permanent revolution or a practical extension of the mystical concept of timeless time in some Asiatic traditions.

With this, Gandhi rounded up his critique of the colonial

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<sup>99</sup> Ellmann, 'The Critic as Artist as Wilde', p. 30.



consciousness and proceeded to fight the organized aspects of colonialism. That second battle does not concern us here.

### VIII

I started with the proposition that colonialism is first of all a matter of consciousness and needs to be defeated ultimately in the minds of men. In the rest of this essay I have tried to identify two major psychological categories or stratificatory principles derived from biological differences which gave structure to the ideology of colonialism in India under British rule and to show how these principles related the colonial culture to the subject community, and ensured the survival of colonialism in the minds of men. I have also, I hope, shown that the liberation ultimately had to begin from the colonized and end with the colonizers. As Gandhi was to so clearly formulate through his own life, freedom is indivisible, not only in the popular sense that the oppressed of the world are one but also in the unpopular sense that the oppressor too is caught in the culture of oppression.

One question now remains to be answered. In examining parts of the mindscape of British colonialism in India I have gone back into time. Has that time travel observed the rules of history or is it also a matter of a myth? Did Gandhi really construct human nature and society the way I have described? Or is mine a second-order construction—a secondary elaboration, as a psychoanalyst may prefer to call it—which imputes to a man a new structure in the manner of India's traditional commentators on persons and texts? Perhaps the question is irrelevant. As Gandhi so effortlessly demonstrated, for those seeking liberation, history can sometimes be made to follow from myths.