British Historiography of South Asia: Aspects of Early Imperial Patterns and Perceptions

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Introduction

This is a collection of papers presented in different national and international seminars and conferences and/or published in the Pakistani journals of international repute, during different times, in between 2002 to 2012. Coming out of a dialectics to understand the multitude of British historiographic patterns and perceptions about South Asia (the continent/subcontinent of India), these papers form discrete parts of modern academic and intellectual discourse within the expanding paradigm of historical knowledge.

Each one of these papers was written under a linear thematic assumption, to which the logic of its arguments follows, without any pre-supposed idea of writing its follow up or planning its elaboration, extension or collection for a broader theme. However, these 'individual papers' belong to a single major stream of historical knowledge. Sharing common sources and patterns of then contemporary thought, following a uniform method of historical discourse and linking eighteenth and nineteenth century with now current paradigm of historical knowledge of South Asia, these papers become closely relevant to each other, rather these papers complement each other. Therefore, put together into a single volume, with a specific chronological order[1] from the last quarter of eighteenth century to the first half of nineteenth century, these papers generate a collective view of British patterns of historical understanding and perceptions about the South Asian past prevailing by the mid nineteenth century. The view is presented through a mutually coherent and some times overlapping system of arguments working behind these papers and through the

1 This chronologic order is not that in which these papers were published in the journals. The chronological order of publishing has been changed for the chronologic order of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British intellectual pursuits to understand the past of South Asian politics and people.

subject-base listing of issues working behind the British historiography. In this context, these papers are reflecting the application of the method of random sampling and analysis of the evolution of British historiographic patterns of understanding of South Asia and perceptions about South Asia, especially during the last quarter of eighteenth century and first half of nineteenth century.

Historiographic Paradigm

The idea of writing papers on historiography as individual samples of methods, concepts, ideas and approaches and putting them together into single coherent theme of evolution of historiographic patterns and perceptions involve a number of concepts and issues closely associated with postmodern paradigm of historical knowledge.[2] The discipline of history, in its scientific form, has been considered the spouse of modernity, constructing the current western claims of modernity in the form of objectivity in the socio-political spheres[3] and, therefore, has faced a criticism which modernity, modern science and objectivity is facing today. This criticism involves the question of subjectivities of history, especially in terms of relationship which historiography has with the subjective aspects of knowledge. In this context, these papers expose the perspective of relationship between historiography and the concepts focusing the subjective aspects of historiography such as literature, identity, tradition and unit of study thereof.

Inspite of historians' claims of following an objective method and drawing unbiased laws from the past, these papers bring to light the subjectivities of British

2 For a detail of the view see Beverley Southgate, *Postmodernism in History Fear or Freedom*, London: Routledge, 2003.

3 Modernity has produced one major concept universally prevalent in today's world and that is the concept of civilization. Leafburve is of the opinion that this concept is the product of historians. In the same way the critiques of now current modernity do believe that modernity is constructed by the historians and its best representation can be found in the form of emergence of the discipline of history. See for details, chapter 9.

historiographic methods, arguments and views. If 'all history [historiography] is contemporary history', the history written during the last quarter of eighteenth century and first half of nineteenth century, represents then contemporary historical discourse encompassing intellectual, administrative, political and cultural debates.[4] As these debates had a variety of subjective understandings, their individual representations provide glimpses of 'subjective' nature of history and historiography.

However, the collection of these articles represents another aspect of subjectivity of historical knowledge. That is the way the study of historiography is approached through modern intellectual/academic concerns, by the author of these papers and the way and order these papers are collected and presented to the readership, reflecting the evolution of twenty first century scholarship of the eighteenth and nineteenth century imperial historiography. Under this term, this collection has brought another set of challenges to the concept of scientific and objective historiography to sharp focus for postmodern analysis.

One important development of 'linguistic turn'[5] of theory of knowledge in the late twentieth century is the debate on the relation between literature as an imaginative creativity and history as a claimant of objective knowledge. This debate has raised questions whether history is the 'representation' of past or 'construction' of past? Whether it is the discovery of past or formation of past? The same hypothesis with the concept of 'all history is contemporary history', is linked with the theory of history as a 'discourse'. The concept of discourse connects past with the subjectivities of authors of histories. This approach considers historiography a part of socio-political and intellectual

4 See for example Chapter one to four.

5 See George G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century from Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, London: Wesleyan University Press, 1997, pp. 118-33; also see Yvonne Sherratt, *Continental Philosophy of Social Sciences Hermeneutics, Genealogy and Critical Theory from Greece to the Twenty First Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

discourse which was potentially influencing the historians' contemporary times and his contemporary issues.

The concept of identity forms another set of objectives of the historiography. Identity is a very loose but lucid concept having multiple dimensions and representations which form a culture or personality.[6] However, the system of prioritization of these identities is basically the complex one which all social scientists and humanists want to resolve. History and historiography is considered a major tool for the achievement of this end. History is the major fabric of identity, linking a society with a set of tradition of customs, culture, institutions and system having a sense of continuity from the past to present. The development and preservation and even the formation of tradition is considered closely connected with history and historiography.

Definition of Scope

'Orientalism', 'Imperialism' and 'Modernity' are three terms which are determining the scope of western scholarship in the rest of the world. The British concern with the South Asia, especially of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been analyzed in this context. The British had ruled over South Asia for more than two hundred years and has left a deep impact on the region, culturally, politically, administratively and intellectually. Therefore, 'British' do occupy a central place in these papers. The British perceptions of South Asian past potentially contributed to the administrative and cultural strength of the British Indian Empire. It laid down the foundation of a pattern of historical knowledge, which has been considered synonym to 'modernity' in South Asia, culturally, politically and intellectually, not only by the British, but also by the South Asians themselves and the rest of the world.

6 For the details of the concept see Rogers Brubaker & Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond "Identity"', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 29, No, 1, (Feb., 2000), pp. 1-47, 34; and H.J. Paton, 'Self-Identity', *Mind*, New Series, Vol.38, No.151 (July, 1929), pp. 312-29, 313.

The papers do not focus on the 'Oriental' aspect of British Historiography of South Asia. Rather, they feature a 'deconstructionist' approach to the concept of 'Orientalism. 'Orientalism' since long has been used without differentiating it from 'oriental'. Putting all literary and intellectual efforts related to the concept of 'orient' into the same cart of ideological connotation of 'ism' seems problematic in critical academic discourse. Although, Edward W. Said[7] has used the world 'Orientalism' in a much generalized meaning, yet, he had to determine his boundaries to Western concerns with Semitic races and regions. In the same way, so many other writers, such as J. J. Clarke, perceived it as a 'range of attitudes that have been evinced in the West towards traditional religious and philosophical ideas and systems…'.[8] However, he has fixed his limitation with the South and East Asia. Another group of Orientalists has continuously used the context of 'Orientalisms' in Plural terms. This limitation of regional diversity along with diversity of intellectual concerns makes it convenient not to deal 'Orientalism' as a uniform concept.

However, 'Imperialism' might prove a more relevant term in case of British India, especially, during the period concerned, as all British coming in India and writing on India were closely associated with the British East India Company and were trying to influence the British Policy towards South Asia. One can observe that:

> The use of history for imperial purposes brings to light a number of anomalies inherent in the British claims and intellectual construction. The centralization of 'historical' in the western intellectual tradition appear to be subordinated to the 'imperial' motives and this conflict can be perceived as a conflict of 'intellectual' and 'imperial' mind. The imperial motives subverted the claims that India was being seen under the western intellectual paradigm and that British were presenting what they had observed. The romance of the exploration of an ancient and sister civilization, appears to be challenged by an

7 Edwards W. Said, *Orientalism, Western Conception of the Orient*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

8 J.J. Clarke, Oriental Enlightenment *The Encounter between Asian and Western Thought*, London: Routledge, 1997, p.7.

> imperial distrust on the indigenous people and system. This nature of imperial motive seems unable to differentiate between the 'human curiosity' to understand human society and its past and interest base interpretation of colonized people's past. This nature has prevailed in the post colonial indigenous understanding of South Asian Past.[9]

India and South Asia are used here as two mutually exchangeable terms, keeping in view the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British conception, in which 'India', geographically, appears to be a blend of Northern Mughal and Southern British Empires. However, its Imperial representation was replaced by a new model of culturally and religiously integrated-interaction and mutually-harmonized inter-regional culture, called 'civilization'. In this context, India represented a geographical entity, having dogmatic and institutional harmony, in the form of 'continent' or 'subcontinent'. The concept of nation, in geographical terms, had not yet taken a public as well as intellectual acceptance. It was more attached to races, regions and rituals than to a macro-spatial identity, encompassing a number of races and regions. If it be taken as 'continent' or 'subcontinent' as the British had perceived and understood, then modern term of South Asia appears to be more appropriate for 'India', of British Historiography, accommodating all claims of identities in the region except that of what have now got merged into the claims of 'Indian Nationalism'. So India represents more properly to a civilization than to a nation and modern term of 'South Asia' is being applied in this context.

Patterns and Perceptions

These papers collectively present a view of the patterns of British historical understanding as well as a view of the perceptions emerging out of those patterns. On the basis of epistemological topography, these papers constitute four groups of coherent categories on the bases of model, method, subject matter and chronology. Paper one published in 2012, after compilation of first draft of this

9 Chapter 4, last paragraph.

collection, provides theoretical ground for the understanding of British historical knowledge on South Asia.

Paper two to four, or what one can say, chapter two to four, published in between 2002 and 2010, primarily, are concerned with the origin and development of modern British Historiography of South Asia, its nature, purpose and subject matter. Paper five to seven highlight the new paradigm of Historiography of South Asia set by the British through a polemical discourse within the British imperialist tradition on the nature and necessity of British Empire in India and on the nature of British Indian state and society. Both the questions and contents of these papers are closely associated with the problem of imperial construction of historical knowledge for the administration of British Indian Empire, through the perception of religious, ethnic, cultural and political identities, inherent within the concepts of 'empire' and 'civilization'.

Last two papers analyze the impact of the new British paradigm on the British perception of South Asian society as well as on the development of new models of Historiography. It deals with how the concepts of races, nations and regions were integrated to replace the centrality of the concepts of religion and empire, with the concept of 'civilization'. Assigning the concept of 'civilization' a central place in the modern model of dialectical historiography, last two papers analyze British criterion to determine the place of a society on the scale of civilization, especially Indian societies, from the late eighteenth century to the first half of twentieth century.

The intellectual development of Europe appears to be major factor working behind the emerging patterns of British historiography of South Asia. As it was generating different philosophical themes, therefore, Indian past appears to be revisited in the light of those philosophical themes and the schools following those themes. However, the biases of 'otherness' are complemented or supplemented with a comparative methodology of periods, paradigms and socio-

political, cultural and intellectual growth in Europe as well as in South Asia.

Dissatisfaction with the indigenous patterns of historiography, emerging out of application of western philosophy becomes a permanent pattern of British historiography of South Asia. As a result, a shift from traditional concern of historiography to the formation and establishment of new paradigm of historiography marks a great distinction of British historiography of South Asia during the last quarter of eighteenth century and first half of nineteenth century. Although, 'Orientalism' was a popular traditional intellectual theme since the ancient times, colonial political theme of 'empire', practically dominated the historiographic pattern. It created a difference between historiography at home and historiography in colonies. The combination of nationalism at home and empire in South Asia gave way to a concept of division of history into phases, centralizing the paradigm of evolution and progress. The problem of administration of empire makes justice a permanent concern in this perspective.

The trends created a new perception of South Asian past among the British. This perception was based on a vision of civilization, cumulating regional cultures in wider sense and form of geographical coherence, uniform pattern of thinking and practices and continuity of such system within a greater span of time.

The irresolvable cultural differences, in this perception, appear to be basically the conflict between civilizations or what in modern terminology is called 'the clash of civilizations'. Constructed around the conflict between indigenous and foreign people, the clash takes the form of perception of clash between rulers and ruled, in terms of application of the concept to civilizations, between Muslims and Hindus. The idea of cultural assimilation and synthesis of civilization generally became irrelevant in this perception. However, the need of mediation between clashing civilizations was perceived through the application of the theory of 'white man's burden', the western concept of

modernity and through the adjustment of the concept of 'nation' within the broader concept of Indian civilization. These perceptions closely matched the intellectual developments in the West, rather experiments in South Asian historiography helped the British to build up and understand the concept of civilization in the West.

1. The first chapter 'Postmodern Discourse on the Nature of Historical Knowledge' is a revised version of paper 'Limiting the Authority of Historical Knowledge: Postmodern Critique of Historicism and History', published in Pakistan Journal of Social Science in June 2012. The paper is included in this collection as a theoretical discourse for the understanding of the nature of historiography. Objections on the historians' claims of Objective narration and postmodern emphasis on the subjective nature of historiography form the crust of the discourse this chapter is leading.

2. The second paper 'British Historiography of India: A Study in the late Eighteenth Century Shift of Interest', originally presented in the 19th Pakistan History Conference 2002, held in Karachi and published in *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society* (Vol. L/3, July–September, 2002, pp. 85-104), demarks the initiation of a new phase in the British historiographic understanding of India. The paper does highlight a shift of interest in the British historiographic pursuits, from medieval to ancient, translation to self-construction, political to cultural and resultantly from Muslim history to pre-Muslim history. Focusing on the understanding of subjective approaches to history, the paper explores how this shift of interest was suitable for the study of pre-Islamic indigenous societies and cultures of South Asia and how it marginalized the study of medieval and Muslim period of the history of South Asian subcontinent.

The paper brings to light that it was not a 'symbolic' shift in the field of interest, rather it was a shift in 'the mode, model, method and unit' of historical studies. The system of preferences set by this shift provided a base for prioritization of selection from the available records of the past, to replace the medieval 'facts with myths, reason with romance,

empirical with interpretations and 'institutions with passions', in the understanding of history. It evolved new perceptions about the development of human civilization and marked an indication of a visible change in British social and political policy in India on the communal basis. This was an indication of the removal of the Muslims from the central scene to the periphery and appearance of the Hindus as the key agents of 'history' in the British understanding of South Asia.

3. The third and fourth papers focus on the dynamics of shift discussed in the second paper. The third paper 'Coalescing the Romance of Antiquity, Literature, Orient and Imperial Justice: Sir William Jones and the Birth of Indology', published in *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* (Vol. 29/1 (2009), pp.91-100), can be taken as exploration of dynamics of shift discussed in the first and second chapters. Focusing on the point that the British efforts to understand the past of the people of South Asian subcontinent gave birth to a new discipline of knowledge which is now called 'Indology', the paper explores and analyses the role of Sir William Jones (1746-1794) as 'the Father of Indology' and the 'internal dynamic, necessity, process and mechanism working behind the emergence of Indology'. Through a comparative analysis of Sir William Jones' thought as an 'Orientalist' and as an 'Indologist', the paper revolves around the theme that Jones had a romance of antiquity, literature, orient and imperial justice, which he found best-coalesced with the emergence of Indology. However, it concludes that the mechanism and romance of Jones' 'Indology' widened the gulf between major communal components of Indian society: Hindus and Muslims.

4. The theme of third paper is aggravated in imperial-administrative terms in the fourth paper 'Empire, Law and History: The British Origin of Modern Historiography of India' published in *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* (Vol. XXX/2, 2010, pp. 389-400), which explores the relations between the British Empire, the customary and religious laws of the subcontinent and the need for the study of the

history of South Asian subcontinent. It concentrates on the point that it was the British Imperial need for the understanding of customary and religious laws and rules, to establish an efficient imperial administration, which initiated a new concern for the study of Indian past among the British. It provides evidences of correlation between the British administrators' legal researches to make administration 'free of indigenous Maulvis and Pundits' exploits and use of same sources by same administrator for the understanding and writing of South Asian history. Later, it was used to develop arguments for then ongoing debate on the administration and status of British Indian Empire. This relation initiated the modern phase of historiography of South Asia and necessitated the introduction of 'history' as an academic discipline to influence the minds of new generation of Indians, Hindus as well as Muslims. Modern tradition of Historiography, even by the South Asian historians, is constructed on this base.

5. The fifth paper 'Antecedents, Precedents and Tradition: The Early Nineteenth Century English Historiographic Literature on India', published in *Journal of Research* (*Humanities*), (Vol. 8, 2005, pp.35-46) sums the early development of British Historiography of South Asia in a concluding way. Focusing on the relations between literature and history, it evolves around the view that 'tradition of historiographic literature is always set by some literary antecedents and precedents'. It surveys the historical literature on India produced by the Muslims as ' antecedent' and European intellectual tradition working behind the historiography at the verge of nineteenth century as 'precedents' for the early nineteenth century English tradition of the historiography of South Asian subcontinent. Blending subject matter, contents, purpose and form of Indo-Muslim historiographic tradition with then current streams of western thought, British historians drew new conclusion of philosophical generalizations through history. Historiography of India provided a battlefield for that contest of intellectual and administrative imperial ideas to the British schools of

thought, especially, the Romanticists, the Utilitarians and the Missionaries.

6. After the presentation of discourse on the nature and purpose of historiographic shift and its dynamics alongwith the emergence of new tradition, sixth paper, published in *Journal of Research (Humanities),* (Vol. 26 (2006), pp. 1-14) , 'Discourse on the Christianization of India: William Tennents' British Self-Righteousness and Future Impression', adds to the arguments in the discourse a theme of relations between religion and empire as two dominating criteria working behind the determination of new paradigm of historiography. For, the paper centralizes the arguments of Dr. William Tennant (1758-1813), an ex-chaplain in the services of the British East India Company, at the end of first decade of eighteenth century. The paper examines the diversity of opinions on Christianization of South Asia, such as 'mission as a universal purpose', 'deliverance in the life hereafter' and 'strength of empire by the Christianization', through the study of interlinking and interacting purposes and personalities of religious and imperial devotees, focusing William Tennant. The paper highlights that the individual British mind, at the beginning of nineteenth century, had the power enough to convert individual psychic-pessimism into imperial-optimism, by a strong sense of self-righteousness and self-responsibility of playing a role not only for the spread of Christianity, but also to synthesize the conflict of religion and politics or Christian-self and imperial-interests. However, the paper argues that Tennant's focus on worldly manifestations for essentially religious arguments, support of imperial motives and ignoring Charles Grant's traditional ethico-moral plea for the legitimacy of British Indian Empire, symbolizes a very strong religious-polemical challenge to religious missions' tautological methods and arguments on the part of indigenous Indian intellectuals. This polemical challenge compelled Tennant to develop an argument favouring the relations of mutual dependence between empire and religious missions. This argument contributed potentially to the development of the policy of

opening Indian land for the missionary activities, officially, through the Charter Act of 1813, as they could combine a moral justification of empire with commercial-economic justification.

7. Seventh paper 'Contesting Criteria: Colonial British Scaling of Indo-Muslim Civilization' published in *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* (Vol. XXVII/2, 2007, pp.115-126) brings to light the application of then new western themes on Indian society. Considering 'civilization' essentially a western concept, the paper presents a view that indo-Muslim societies has been evaluated on multiple scales by the British historians and policy makers. These scales vary to, and contest with, each other due to the difference of criteria generated to formulate these scales, for a contest to influence colonial and home policies of the governing bodies of the British. The British had developed various levels on the scale of civilization to mark the status of historical societies of the world on the scale of civilization. The difference in developing scales is basically constituted in the difference of criteria devised for determining the levels of scales. The paper explores that scales and criteria seem to be emerging out of a contest among the different schools of thought, especially romanticists, utilitarians and missionaries and major part of it was the result of a dialectics between the romanticists and the utilitarians. It had a number of constant underlying geo-cultural assumptions with implicit normative and qualitative criteria, such as 'self' and 'other', West and East, Europe and Asia, and Britain and India, former as 'superior' and 'civilized' and later as 'inferior' and 'uncivilized'. Major ladders on this scale has been 'highly civilized, civilized, semi civilized, non-civilized, barbarians and savage'. Hindus and Muslims have been placed on every level of the scales, from the savages to civilize by different aspirants. This scaling had a lasting impact on the British treatment of the Indian communities, politically, socially, culturally, economically and historically. It provided a foundation to the later European schemes, developed for the understanding of history and civilization. Therefore, the

classification of history of civilization on the scale of Ancient, Medieval, Modern or Hindu, Muslim and Christian or British have become very common in the recent past. Same contest of criteria seems to be visible in the thoughts of Spangler,[10] Max Weber, Lord Acton, Croace[11] and Collingwood.[12] Toynbee seems to be synthesizing this contest of scales and criteria by assimilating all themes of literature, religion, philosophy and politics, beginning the scale from barbarians at the bottom of human society to an ideal universal civilization at the top. In his understanding, Indo-Muslims fail to find a place of their own, but as an alien intermixture of Hindu and Muslim civilization.[13]

8. In the backdrop of the discourse on civilization, empire and religion, eighth paper 'Historiography and Identity: A Mid-Nineteenth Century British Perspective for Modern South Asia' published in *Pakistan Vision* (Vol. 9/1 (June 2008), pp. 95-108), explores the British map of national identities constituting Indian subcontinent as an ancient centre of human civilization. Examining the conflict between newly emerging European politico-intellectual concepts and the imperial objectives, the paper focuses on the view that in spite of romaticization or criticization of ancient Indian civilization, administrators such as Charles Grant Duff, James Tod, Mountstuart Elphinstone and J. D. Cunningham tried their level best to apply new western thought and institutions such as nationalism, liberalism and utilitarianism to the politics of Indian administration and identity. Observing grass-root level social, cultural, linguistic and political differences among the Indian population, Elphinstone, applying the epistemology of emerging theories of nationalism to India, identified that the subcontinent, named

10 Oswald Spangler, *The Decline of the West*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1968.

11 B. Croace, *History as the Story of Liberty*, New York: Norton, 1941.

12 See for a view of the historians, G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, London: Oxford University Press, 1978.

13 Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. XII, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, see appendixes.

as India, was inhabited by at least ten nations, trans-Sutlej regions in the West, yet, out of the definition of Indian frontiers. As such understandings had generated a view which generally was in contrast with the imperial administrative policy, therefore, the administrators with such understanding such as Charles Grant Duff, James Tod and J.D. Cunningham had to face the charges of neglecting the cause of the company and its colonial commercial interests through the promotion of the cause of indigenous national traits.

However, Elphinstone's *History* was made the part of curriculum of East India Company's administrative services' college, Haileybury, that he had maintained the integrity of the Indian Empire through the concept of unity of Indian civilization. The paper concludes that despite Subaltern and Postcolonial intellectuals have sharply criticized the colonial construction of knowledge; they are following the same paradigmatic model of civilization as nation to maintain the unity of colonial structure of states and to marginalize the ethno-regional identities' claims to nationhood. The paper proposes that the neglect of the ideas of James Grant Duff (1789-1858), James Tod (1782-1835), Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779-1859) and Joseph Davey Cunningham (1812-1851), first by the British Imperialists and then by the postmodern and postcolonial nationalists, can be taken as one major cause of discontent in the region.

9. The Last paper 'Modern Concept of Civilization: A Reassessment of its Origin, Nature and Development', was published in *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* (Vol. 28, 2008, pp.1-11). This paper is added to the debate with a view to highlight the paradigmatic developments in the West corresponding to South Asian historiographic perceptions. Written and published on the occasion of the death of Samuel P. Huntington, the originator of the theory of 'Clash of Civilization'[14], the paper, through a comparison with the

14 S. P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs*, 72/3 (Summer 2003), pp. 22-49.

other papers, can reflect the role of imperial experience in the development of modern western dynamics of socio-political construction. It determines that 'civilization' as we are using it in so many divergent forms in our current debate of comparative cultural studies, is a modern concept. Thematic framework of the paper is constructed on the assumption that concept is 'historians' craft' and the result of an underlying eighteenth and nineteenth century 'historical process' in the Western intellectual tradition. Inherently, the germs of 'clash' seems to be dominating the concept, as the concept unifies the smaller units of political identity called 'nations' into a broadly coherent conceptual and cultural space of 'civilization', disintegrating more wider meta-geographical assimilatory unit of religious or class affiliations such as 'Muslim Ummah', 'Christian Community' and 'Proletariat'. However, the concept does not remain limited to this purpose; it becomes a mechanism to place the societies of different regions onto a hierarchical scale, with special reference to South Asian history. In this context, it seems a broader application of the understanding of the concept of civilization coming out of the South Asian Experience.

The titles and contents of the papers are same as they were published in the journals, except that of first chapter. Some minor errors in spell are checked and a few words are replaced with more appropriate alternatives or removed to make the narration more clearly understandable. However, a few paragraph, sentences or notes are added for the same purpose. To bring uniformity in the system of references, the style of references in some papers have been changed and a collective bibliography is added at the end.

1

Postmodern Discourse on the Nature of Historical Knowledge

[The term 'Historiography', generally, does not differentiate between 'history' as a process and the 'narration' of understanding of that process in the form of knowledge as well as the understanding of that 'narration'.[1] In the following pages, this term is being taken as the study of the narration of past events as a form of knowledge. The claims of the objectivity of history as fact and truth and the literary nature of historiography are two most debated aspects of theories of historical knowledge since ancient times and still attract a reasonable space of intellectual attention. Therefore, a prior understanding of this discourse seems necessary for the understanding of patterns and perceptions of British Historiography of South Asia. It becomes more relevant in the sense that modern concept of history and historiography owes its origin to the times at the

1 The term historiography is being used here to denote the 'study of historiography'. The alternate terms for the 'study of historiography' can be 'historiology' or 'historiographics'. However these terms need to be discussed at length to clearly distinguish between 'historiography' and 'study of historiography'. Some historians have used the term 'history of history', which does not indicate any sign of study of historiography rather reflecting the history of the concept of 'history' or a review of history writings. The difference between 'History' and 'Historiography' appears to be same as that of a 'natural process' and its understanding' or what implies to 'theory' and 'practice'. By the study of historiography one can analyze theory and practice of historical knowledge through the evaluation of a single coherent work.

end of eighteenth century and by the emergence of 'historicism'. The postmodern debates on the nature of history and historical knowledge have focused on the same period and the dominant trend of this period which is known as 'historicism', for the critical evaluation of the nature of historical knowledge. In this context, the postmodern discourse on the nature of historical knowledge basically evaluates the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century state of historical knowledge, critically and thus provides the foundations for the understanding of early imperial / modern British historiographic patterns and perceptions].

The postmodern discourse on the nature of knowledge is constructed on the authority and reliability which different forms of knowledge claim in various walks of life. This discourse has challenged the major formations of modernity, claiming a sort of objective, authentic and reliable knowledge in comparison with non-evidential forms of knowledge such as arts, literature and revelation. 'Historical Knowledge' in the form of 'historicism' and 'history' is considered fundamental embodiment of modernity. The following pages deal with the question what are the major elements of postmodern discourse of 'historical knowledge' and how it challenges the authority claimed by 'historical knowledge'. Focus on the discourse shall help us understand the place of 'history' in early modern/imperial space of knowledge at the time of the emergence of historicism and history as a philosophy and history as a discipline, as well as in the now current space of knowledge. It was the time of the emergence of the British Historiography of South Asia at the end of eighteenth century, which is the subject matter of this undertaking.

'Historical knowledge' is considered one of three major sources of knowledge, along with reason and revelation. It has given birth to 'the discipline of history' or what is called 'historical sciences' in modern academics.[2] However, the status of 'historical knowledge' as well as 'the discipline of

2 Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language*, London: Palgrave, 2001, pp. 247-50.

history', on the scale of reliability of knowledge, has been one of the most debated issues in the twentieth century philosophical, literary and academic discourse. One school of historians has claimed that 'historical knowledge' is 'objective' in its nature; therefore, it is a science and is reliable like a scientific fact.[3] However, theological, rational philosophical and linguistic debate has challenged this claim. Theological school gives preference to 'revealed knowledge' and marginalizes the reliability of all other sources of knowledge. Rational philosophy focuses on 'ahistorical' reason. Linguistic philosophy believes in the textual interpretative nature of 'historical knowledge'.[4] The application of postmodern theory to this discourse has sharpened the challenges posed to the nature and authority of 'historical knowledge' and discipline of history.[5] The purpose of this undertaking is to understand and analyze postmodern standpoint in this discourse. It evolves around the theme that postmodernism challenges those claims of authority which are constructed on the basis of 'historical knowledge' and are ultimately used to determine the course of human development for the future by the historicists and historians. In this context, postmodern criticism of 'historical knowledge' brings to light some limits to the claims of authority based on 'historical knowledge' through an analysis of compatibility of 'historical knowledge' in relation to other forms of knowledge especially imaginative.

As 'historical knowledge' has produced a popular and one of the most influential philosophical trend of 'historicism' and has evolved modern discipline of history, therefore, the understanding of postmodern critic of 'historical knowledge' require the understanding of critic of 'historicism' and the 'discipline of history'. An historical analysis of the place of 'historical knowledge' helps determine its place in modern theory of knowledge.

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3 *Ibid*.

4 M. C. Lemon, *Philosophy of History*, London: Routledge, 2003, pp.28-270.

5 Beverley Southgate, *Postmodernism in History: Fear or Freedom*, London: Routledge, 2003, passim.

'Historical Knowledge', Modernity and Historicism

Traditionally, 'historical knowledge' is considered the knowledge 'produced' 'about the past'.[6] Foucault believes that '…All knowledge is rooted in a life, a society, and a language that have a history; and it is in that very history that knowledge finds the elements enabling it to communicate with other forms of life, other types of society, other significations…'.[7] This 'essential' nature of history for human society not only generates 'historical knowledge', but also makes it an essential part of discourse of authority of knowledge. During the medieval times, historical knowledge was either subject to rational philosophy or subordinate to theology as a helping tool or evidence. However, by the emergence of modernity out of deistic rationalism of enlightenment in the nineteenth century, 'historical knowledge' became a major claimant of authority. Its authority became so widespread that it has been considered the most suitable tool, method and technique for the evaluation of authenticity of rational and theological hypotheses. The concept of modernity, generally, is believed to be constructed on the basis of natural philosophy, scientific method and objective and universal values and laws. The relation of the concept of modernity with 'historical knowledge' has produced two basic results: the emergence of 'historicism' and the emergence of the discipline of history.

'Historicism' is a term which is applied to the behaviour and method of solving the current problems and 'forecast the future on the basis of… experience of past [historical knowledge]'.[8] Following the theme, Karl Popper considers historicism as a 'philosophy which claims to predict the course of human history on the basis of past behaviour'.[9]

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6 Marwick, p.xiii.

7 M. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge,* tr. A. M. Sheridan, New York, 1972, p.372.

8 Antoine-Nicolas De Condorcet, *Sketch of a Historical Picture of the Progress of Mind*, tr. J. Barraclough, [S.l] Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1955, p. 173.

9 Quoted by Paul Hamilton, *Historicism*, London: Routledge, 1996, p.17.

That is, for Foucault '…why historicism always implies a certain philosophy, or at least a methodology, of living comprehension… of inter human communication…'. In this sense it implies the objective and universal values of modernity and science to 'historical knowledge', which led to the derivation of deterministic value of course of history. The philosophers not only began to determine the trends emerging out of historical evidences from the past, but also began to determine the course of future on the basis of historical knowledge. Two best examples of this understanding emerge in the form of works of Hegel (1770-1831) and Karl Marx (1818-1883) who produced theories of dialectical historicism.[10] The later half of nineteenth century and the first half of twentieth century produced a substantial set of knowledge on this basis.

Widening of the scope of 'historical knowledge' by the popularity of historicism led to the emergence of 'history' as an academic discipline. Established on the concepts such as fact, evidence, objectivity, progress, evolution and development, the discipline claimed to be discovering basic knowledge from the past to provide 'lessons' for the future of mankind. That is the ground for the historians' and history's claim of authority to knowledge. 'Historical facts' with most of the methodologies, a linear approach of single thread of causation between the facts, form the base of this authority. This methodology was supposed to be scientific, objective and universal, providing access to universal laws same as that of natural and mechanical sciences. Following the claims of modernity, historians began to find laws in the process of history, a centre oriented linear mechanical concept of progress or historical evolution working behind the occurrings in the universe, on the bases of scientific law. Therefore, a wide circle of modern historians claimed rather believed that history is 'a science, no more, no less'.[11] It evolves around the presupposition that history concerns with

10 See Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973.

11 Marwick, p.241.

factual presentation of past and these facts can sharply be distinguished from the fictional as well as from the mythological and spiritual usurpers. The founding father of modern methodology and discipline of history, Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) claimed that as a historian he had turned 'history' away from fiction and resolved to keep strictly to the facts.[12] Since Ranke's time professional historians have had rules and procedures that enable them to make distinction between facts and fiction. The modernist scientific historians not only challenged the level of authenticity of revealed knowledge, but also questioned the possibilities of impracticability of rational logic. This context made 'historical knowledge' an embodiment of modernity and scientism in the form of discipline of history. Therefore, it has to face the burden of criticism to modernity and history, both supposed to be based on historicism. Two types of challenges 'historical knowledge' seems to be facing in this context: **First,** postmodernists' attacks on the philosophy based on the historical method and knowledge; **Second,** linguists denial of the status of history as an independent discipline, making it subject to linguistic philosophy.

Postmodernism and Historicism

Postmodernism emerged as an intellectual attitude focusing the aspects of modernity other than those which claim a scientific and objective nature of institutional knowledge. Arnold Joseph Toynbee, who introduced this term in the post Second World War (1939-1945) socio-political analysis, used it to point out the absurdity, relativism, irrationality and anxiety nourishing within the claims of universality of values and laws discovered by modern scientific approach to knowledge.[13] The postmodernist do believe that modernity in socio-political perspective was 'historicist turn'. The nineteenth century philosophy of history, propagating the universal and

12 Lemon, passim.

13 Ghulam Rasul Malik, 'Pass-e-Jadidiat Chand Ghaur Talab Sawalat', *Iqbaliat* No. 52/1 (Jan-March 2011), pp. 1-12.

deterministic laws and values working behind the process of history, and the emergence of the disciple of history to strengthen the claims of objective and scientific 'historical knowledge', are used as evidences of historicism's fundamental role in the development of nineteenth century concept of modernity. Therefore, historicism has to face a major burden of postmodern criticism. In this context, two works of linguistic and rational philosophy, H.G. Gadamer's *Truth and Method*[14] and Karl Popper's *Poverty of Historicism*[15] potentially represent this criticism.

H.G. Gadamer is of the view that historicism was not an attack on, but, on the contrary, a new culminating point in the history of the enlightened 'modernistic' program. He considers historical consciousness and historicism a continuation of the tradition of eighteenth century enlightenment which held the view that context is slight and may in principle be overcome as it is similar to universal forms of thought and experience. It argued that individuals perceive themselves with the beliefs universally and un-historically prevalent.[16] This enlightened view was revised with a wide spread nineteenth century romantic view of historical variability and context dependence of thought. Historicism challenged this view with the thesis that enlightened thought neglect the problem of anachronism and context neglects the concept of continuity and change or what is called historical process. The historicists believed that they had overcome this attitude and were able to approach the past in presuppositionless way, in terms of continuous and integrated process.

H.G. Gadamer while not wholly denying the reality of historical consciousness[17] was of the opinion that historicism has overestimated the extent to which context-dependence

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14 H. G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. and ed. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshal, 2nd rev. ed., London: Sheed and Ward, 1989.

15 Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, London: Routledge, 1086.

16 R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics*, ed. Rex Martin, rev. ed., Oxford: Clarendon, 1998, p.179.

17 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp.230-40.

may be overcame and it has continued to ascribe a privileged position to the present. It holds a sort of identity which fails to integrate itself with the past. It assumes that classical texts and remote past contain peculiar views which lack any relevance to the current society.[18] In this context, claims to truth or 'historical knowledge' Gadamer sees as mediated by their authors' context-dependant contemporary presuppositions and thus disregarded. Rather than taking past as a dialogue, historicism attempts to uncover presuppositions and attempts to dismiss claims to truth. Historicism represents the plurality and change as a form of context dependant which unduly affects the knowledge claims.[19] Contrarily, historicism challenges the contextual knowledge and tries to establish universal and objective values on the basis of speculation. Therefore, Gadamer challenges this claim of objective understanding of what is working behind the events in the past and represents it as a 'hermeneutical situation'. He writes:

> [The] consciousness of being affected by history is primarily the consciousness of hermeneutical situation. To acquire an awareness of a situation is, however, always a task of peculiar difficulty…. We always find ourselves in a situation, and throwing light on it is a task that is never entirely finished…. the illumination of this situation-reflection on effective history can never be completely achieved.[20]

That is how Gadamer rejects the Historicists' claims of objectivity of 'aprior' and considers history a speculative and not factual present.

The Gadamerian criticism of historicism is confirmed and expanded by Karl Popper (1902-1994). Challenging the objective and authoritarian nature of speculative philosophy of history with the concept of the fundamental contribution of philosopher's presupposition to the derivation of claims of objectivity and universality, he writes: '…I do admit that at any moment we are prisoners caught in the framework of our

18 H. G. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. and ed. Davi E. Linge, Berkley: University of California Press, 1976, p.8.

19 *Ibid*., p. 484.

20 *Ibid*., pp.301-02.

theories, our expectations; our past experiences, our language. But we are prisoners in Pickwickian sense: if we try, we can break out of our framework any time….'.[21] In this way, Popper challenges the universality of historical knowledge and processes achieved through speculation. However, accepting the validity of tradition, he stresses on the critical appreciation of the tradition to differentiate between historical processes and universal laws. He writes:

> Quantitative and qualitative by far the most important source of our knowledge — apart from inborn knowledge — is tradition…. The fact that most of the sources of our knowledge are traditional condemns anti-traditionalism as futile. But this fact must not be taken to support a traditionalist attitude: every bit of our traditional knowledge… is open to critical examination and may be overthrown.[22]

In this way, Popper asserts that any part of background knowledge, which Gadamer considers as presupposition and forestructure, can be challenged and fundamental aspects of background knowledge may be overthrown at any time.

Postmodernity and the Discipline of History

As discipline of history came into existence out of an interaction between historicism and modernity, therefore the Gadamerian and the Popperian form of critic of historicism and laws and philosophy derived out of a straightforward combination of facts become mechanically applied to the discipline of history. That is why most of the problems of postmodernism are more specifically concerned with history, especially in relation to 'facts', on which historical studies rely. Theorists like Hayden White, Dominick LaCapra, and Hans Kellner have sharply criticised the nature, structure and claims of the discipline of history and historiography. This sort of criticism is followed by a large bread of postmodernists. The major part of this criticism challenges

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21 Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, ed., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p.56.

22 Karl Popper, 'On the Sources of Knowledge and of Ignorance', in *Conjectures and Refutations*, 5th ed., London: Routledge, 1989, p. 238.

the claim of objectivity of 'historical knowledge' through a methodology of comparing historical facts with literary fiction.

Friedrich Nietzsche's criticism of modernity and history provides foundation to Postmodernity. Challenging the claim of modernity that it provides 'scientific and objective knowledge', he believed that although modern historiography claimed to be 'objective', but in fact it is self-indulgent and this character of modern historiography should be exposed. He condemned all claims to objective history and declared that he knows nothing of any thing which is called 'objective'.[23] It is feared that this sort of claim to historiography eliminates 'the research for truth as the main task of historian'.[24]

The ideas of Nietzsche are further interpreted by his disciple Michael Foucault. For Foucault, historians are misguided in the application of scientific assumptions to history and resultant belief in 'objectivity, the accuracy of facts, and the permanence of past'. They claim to efface their own persona and values, to replace it with 'the fiction of universal geometry'. He believes that historians have neglected that in practice no one can erase all personal inputs from their historical understanding. Any attempt to remove such biases by itself reveals the ideological commitments as well as alignment with what are his presuppositions. In this context, every thing can be reduced to comprehensible purpose and there is nothing which can not be assimilated into a historical narrative. It indicates 'insensitivity to the most disgusting things'.[25] On the same model, criticising the historians' claims of scientific and objective historiography Ralf Waldo Emerson was of the opinion that: '…History and the state of the world at any one time directly depend on the intellectual classification then

23 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, New York: Vintage, 1969.

24 Southgate, passim.

25 Cahoone, ed., *From Modernism to postmodernism: An Anthology*, *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 49/1, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1999, p.372.

existing in the mind of the men... That is why we can't get out of our orientation and paradigm we are living in and we have accepted in order to make our lives purposive'.[26]

A contemporary of these intellectuals, Joseph Conard adopted almost same approach towards the discipline of history. He was of the opinion that the world is not consist of 'straightforward facts' which historians belief and use to derive their conclusions and philosophy of history.[27] This problem of 'straight forward facts' and persona/subjective nature of history are further explored by a number of post modern critics. Keith Jenkins believes 'our chosen way of seeing things lack foundation'. History too is an 'abstract metaphysical construction'. Therefore, it challenges the concept of identities.[28] Commenting on the narrative structure of history, Southgate endorses Jenkins' belief that parts of the past are inevitably ignored or excised in the interest of a historical narrative. A narrative is basically a story, which one chooses to impose upon the past, to make some appeal to senses. By implanting the past in a story, the author necessarily choose what he thinks fit in his narrative and what is not. However, it leads to what the author wants his reader to remember and what not, what we are going to include in, and what exclude from history. Historians apply their coherent understanding to the chaotic and absurd historical facts and situations, interpreting them in accordance with the earlier accounts and the current expectations, making it internally coherent to draw conclusions. They impose a time scale and ensure that some meaning is drawn from their collections and editing of facts.[29]

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26 Ralf Waldo Emerson, 'Circles', in *The Works of Ralf Waldo Emerson*, London: G. Bell & Sons, 1913, p.166.

27 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Ware: Wordsworth, 1999 (original 1902), p. 41.

28 Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontent*, Cambridge: Polity, 1997, p.87.

29 Southgate, p.55.

This postmodern discourse on the nature and authority of 'historical knowledge' is used by the linguistic philosophers to eliminate the historians' claims of superiority as producers of objective knowledge and to abolish the distinction between historical facts and literary fiction. Hayden White denies any possibility of keeping fact and fiction separate from each other. He believes that as past has no intrinsic meaning, therefore, historians have a choice of how to employ the traces of past. Their choice depends on what sort of message they want to convey. History is imposed by historians and therefore constitutes a composition which includes the elements of their subjective will. The historians' concerns are same as that of a novelist presenting a story.[30] The attempts to 'fill in' or 'reconstruct' the gaps in available information from the past also reflect writers' perceptions and influences. Therefore, Hayden White seriously claimed that 'history was a form of 'rhetoric'. Linda Hutcheon believes that 'both history and fiction are discourses 'human construct' and 'signifying systems' concerned with the imposition of meaning.[31]

The most of the critics have used the personal objectives, claims or concepts of historians and positivist intellectuals to point out the problems with the discipline of history. One group of postmodernist has used August Comte's view of history as founding father of the positivist theory of knowledge as an evidence of an imperfect status of historical knowledge. August Comte believed that history should have a purpose outlook. It should be confined 'to the elite vanguard of humanity comprising the greater part of white race or the European nations' or 'to the development of most advanced people'. He believed that parts of the world or the centres of civilization 'whose evolution has so far been, for some cause or other, arrested at a more imperfect stage' should not be dealt with by the historians. The places which had not 'exercised any real influence on

30 White, *Metahistory*, Passim.

31 Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse,* London: Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 67.

our past', such as India and China, should not be given any attention as it was a 'puerile and inept display of sterile, ill-directed erudition'.[32] In the same way many other historians thought the study of Asian and Indian history wastage of time.

The postmodern denial of the status of 'historical knowledge' as 'objective knowledge' and its critic of the capacity of 'historical knowledge, to generate a universal philosophy of history, has not only challenged the modern structure of knowledge rather has established new parameters for its evaluation. The elimination of distinction between fact and fiction or history and literature and propagation of history as 'docudrama' (a dramatic form of literature constructed on documents), meta-history and meta-narrative have generated the idea of abolition of history as an academic discipline. Some late twentieth century postmodernist works has refused to assign 'history' an independent place in the postmodern scheme of academic disciplines. Explaining the condition of Postmodernity in 1989, David Harvey did not included history into the postmodernists concern. In his opinion, postmodern concerns were more linked with claims to possibilities by interpretative disciplines such as 'art, literature, social theory, psychology, and philosophy'. Even Architecture and Urban Design have been mentioned as sharing the concern of possibilities with the postmodernism. But a discipline claiming his concern with objectivity or truth such as history has found no place in this perspective.[33] Charles Jencks claimed in 1992 that postmodernism was 'embracing all areas of culture', including literature, art, architecture, film, sociology, politics, geography, feminism, science and religion. However history fails to find a space in this categorization or taxonomy of knowledge.[34] In the same way

32 Robert M. Burns and Hough Rayment-Pickard, ed., *Philosophies of History: From Enlightenment to Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p. 115.

33 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origin of Cultural Change*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, p. 98.

34 Charles Jencks, ed., *The Post-Modern Reader*, London: Academy, 1992.

The Icon Critical Dictionary of Postmodern Thought, the cultural context of postmodernism is focused on, but history fails to find a space in this scheme of fields for knowledge.[35]

The challenge to the independent status of 'historical knowledge' has widened the scope of literature in two ways. On the one hand, linguists and literates have expanded their claims to 'historical knowledge' through the production of 'Docudrama' and 'historiographic metafiction' for the erosion of boundaries between history and fiction.[36] On the other hand, linguists have adopted the linear and objective approach to historiography.[37] Simultaneously, influenced by this debate a large group of historians has very strongly taken up the literary view of history in which historiography emerge more a linguistic effort than a factual. Raising the question of historiography's 'lack of autonomy', F. R. Ankersmit is of the view that it has 'always depended on what happened outside' and has 'ordinarily limited itself to the application to the domain of historical thought of insights that had already been gained else where'.[38] Adopting this view, a number of historians have joined the academic departments such as Postcolonial Studies, Drama and Literature, rather than seeking career with the departments of history. The trend has made the writings of nineteenth century English writers such as Walter Scot (1771-1832), Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), T. B. Macaulay (1800-1859) and G. M. Trevelyan (1876-1962) models for bring to narration the subtle aspects of life more properly than an historian. In this context, Foucault advised historians to abandon the godly claims and concede their own purposive involvement and commitment to the writing of history.

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35 Stuart Sim, ed., *The Icon Dictionary of Postmodern Thought*, Cambridge: Icon, 1998.

36 Jan Patocka, *Heretical Essays*, ed. James Dodd, Illinois: Open Court, 1996.

37 Edwards W. Said, *Orientalism*, *Western Conception of the Orient*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

38 F. R. Ankersmit, '[Historiography and Postmodernism: Reconsiderations]: Reply to Professor Zagorin', in *History and Theory*, vol. 29. No. 3 (Oct., 1990), pp. 275-96.

The debate and views have generated a sort of 'ontological insecurity' among the scientific historians and they have begun to feel to be 'under siege'. Rather than accepting Foucault's advice of abandoning godly claims, the discipline of history has responded to the postmodern criticism through the incorporation of postmodern themes within the claims of the discipline of history. The current themes of 'historical knowledge' or historicism seem to be essentially a synthesis of discourse developed by postmodern historians some thirty years ago. It is drawn on the earlier works in literary criticism in order to develop an argument that historical discourse is based largely upon earlier explanatory patterns, formulaic narratives and established vocabulary. This assumption has been applied to the expansion and decentralization of the approaches to 'historical knowledge' in the form of peripheral, alternate, subaltern, social and cultural histories. The same theme has provided history a new out look with the introduction of new disciplines of history and philosophy of history such as 'History of Arts', 'History of Science', 'Cultural History' and 'Philosophy of History of Science' and 'Philosophy of History of Religion'. On the other hand scientific or modernist historians have refused to accept the linguistic study of historiography on the ground that the postmodernists have not been able to distinguish between the imagination and speculation and between facts and fiction. The question of difference between a narration based on historical records and a narration based on extra-evidential imagination seems still to be providing strength to the 'historical knowledge' and 'new historicism'. Therefore, the discipline of history and historicism or philosophy of history has survived in spite of a mass scale postmodern criticism.

2

British Historiography of India: A Study in the Late Eighteenth Century Shift of Interest

Historiography is a work of subjective creativity. It has always been directed by the historians' contemporary socio-cultural and intellectual environment, which always works behind the historians' thought and thinking. In this regard, if "all history is contemporary history" in one way, "all history is subjective history" in the other way.[1] Whatever unit of historical studies an historian determines, develops a model or adopts, fixes parameters, selects sources, poses questions and analysis of facts he makes, all are subject to his mode and method. This subjectivity evolves new perceptions and understandings of history, establishing new areas of interest, or it diverts the focus for historical studies form one potent field of interest to others.

British historiography of India had been subjected to a number of contemporary factors and forces, working either in Europe or in India. However, a shift of focused interest from one dominant field and unit of historical studies to other and a change in the mode, model and method seem to be taking place in the late eighteenth century British historiography of India. It was based on the shift of British intellectual interest from enlightened to romantic trends and on the changes in Indian scene and situation. However it represented a

1 S.M. Jaffar, *History of History,* Peshawar: S. M. Sadiq Khan, 1944, p. 42.

communal model of shift of historical interest from Muslim India to Hindu India.

The Shift of Interest from Muslim India to Hindu India

The modern Euro-British contacts with India had begun to develop by the sixteenth century,[2] but consolidated British interest for the understanding of Indian past began to appear in the late seventeenth century. This interest was highly influenced by the Muslim, Portuguese and Dutch traditions of historiography of India and by the British commercial contacts with the contemporary splendid Muslim dynasty of Great Mughals. By then, the ancient Indian society was considered not to have a very strong sense of History.[3] It were the Muslims who had imparted a strong and potent tradition of historiography of India.[4] In the seventeenth century, some Portuguese and Dutch historians, too, had added their works to the tradition of historiography of India, yet, their interest remained concentrated on the geographical, demographical, commercial and political conditions of India. This tradition influenced a lot to the European understanding of contemporary India.[5] In this perspective, the early British contacts with then contemporary India began at a time when Muslim rule in India was at its peak under the Mughal sovereignty. It had left an indelible impression on the British mind. Therefore, under the enlightened trends, until the rise of romanticism in

2 The first English man who came into India was Thomas Stephens. He became rector of Jesuit College, Goa, in 1579. In 1583, four English men Fitch, Newbery, Lecdes and Story arrived in India to observe the commercial opportunities.

3 R.C. Majumdar, "Idea of History in Sanskrit Literature", ed. C.H. Phillips, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon,* London: Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 25-7.

4 J.S. Grewal, *Medieval India: History and Historians,* Amritsar: Guru Nanak University, 1975, p. 32.

5 See for details J.B. Harrison's "Five Portuguese Historians" and K.W. Goonewardena's "Dutch Historical Writings on South Asia" ed., C.H. Phillips, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon,* p.155-82.

the late eighteenth century, the Indian history had been considered 'almost synonymous with Indo-Muslim history'.[6]

The early British interest in the Indian history was based on the European travellers'' understanding of Indian past. The European travellers had a close contact with the then contemporary Muslim state and society. The "quasi-historical" form of their travelogues and memoirs provided a ground for the promotion of British interest in the Indian past.[7] Therefore, the early British works on Indian past appeared in the form of translations of these travelogues or memoirs. In 1671 Francois Bernier's *The History of the Late Revolution of the Empire of Great Mogol* was translated into English, Bernier was much impressed by the extent of Indian Muslim Empire, especially by the success of Mughal administration.[8] In 1695 Father Francois Catrou's *The General History of the Mogol Empire*, based on the memoirs of Manucci was translated into English.[9] These works had been considered the only source on Indian history until the mid-eighteenth century.

However, the credit for the increase of British interest in the Indian past and the beginning of a solid tradition of British Indian historiography goes to James Fraser. Fraser's area of interest was very vast, including theology, law, ethics, arts and literature of India. He was deeply involved in the study of Hindu religion and Sanskrit language. But his 'strictly historical narrative'[10] appeared in the form of the history of contemporary Muslim states. In 1742, Fraser published a history of contemporary events of the invasion of

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6 J.S. Grewal, *op. cit.,* p. 32.

7 For a view of European travellers understanding of India see Edward Terry, *The Early European Travellers in India* 1583-1619, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912.

8 Francois Bernier, *The History of the Late Revolutions of the Empire of Great Mogol,* trans. from French, London: Archibald Constable, 1891, first published in English1671, introduction.

9 The exact title of the translation was *The General History of the Mogol Empire from its Foundation by Tamerlane to the Late Emperor Orangzeb*. It was published from London in 1709.

10 J.S. Grewal, *op. cit.,* p. 2.

Nadir Shah, the King of Persia, in India under the title *The History of Nadir Shah* based on written as well as oral testimony. He also gave "a short history" of Mughal Emperors using some primary sources for the first time.[11] About the same time, under the influence of the rise of empirical sciences, and enlightened humanitarianism and, as a result of the awareness of the British contacts with nearly all parts of the world, materialization of the ideal of writing a universal human history began in the name of *English Universal History*. Its thirty-eight volumes were published from 1736 to 1765. For the compilers of *English Universal History*, the world history could be divided into ancient and modern history. They marked the beginning of modern history from the rise of Islam and 'Muslim dominance' in the world. Inspite of traditional polemical attitude towards Islam and the Prophet (peace be upon him), they were much impressed by the political success of Islam and the Muslims. The same impression seems to be dominating the Indian portion of *Modern Universal History*. In the *Modern Universal History*, Indian history was considered almost synonymous with that of History of the Mughals, also quoting some pre-Mughal events.[12]

In 1763, Robert Orme's *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan* was published. Mr. Orme also included 'a dissertation on Muslim conquests in India'. This dissertation marked the extension of British historical interest from the Mughal to Pre-Mughal period of history. However, Muslim India remained the central focus of historical interest.[13] Orme's pre-Mughal history was obscure

11 James Fraser collected a number of important manuscripts which are appended to his *History of Nadir Shah,* published in 1742 from London by W. Straban.

12 The Indian portion of *Modern Universal History* was written by John Swinton. He was not literate in Persian and was interested in the understanding of Muslim history more than the travellers. The exact title of Indian portion of *Modern Universal History* was "A Description of Hindostan or the Empire of the Great Mogol" and it was included in the third volume of the History, published from London in 1759 by T. Osborne.

13 Robert Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan,* London: John Nourse, 1763, Preface and Introduction.

and unconnected. However, it created a strong sense of curiosity among the British towards this period. The result was the finding and translation of Muhammad Qasim Farishta's *Tarikh-i-Farishta* by Alexander Dow in 1768 under the title of *History of Hindostan*. Dow completed his *History of Hindostan* by writing an extension on Farishtah's History, from the death of Akbar to the complete settlement of Empire under Aurangzeb and 'History of Mogol Empire, form its Decline in the Reign of Muhammed Shaw[h] to the Present' until 1772. Dow also had a great appreciation for the Mughals and their government for safeguarding the interests of the subject people. However, his concept of Hindu India remained confined to Farishta's understanding and Muslim India remained the central focus of his historical interest.[14]

This trend of the study of Indian history focusing on Muslim state and society seems to be changing in the late eighteenth century. Although a number of works on Muslim India can be found among the British writings published during this period, such as, Jonathon Scott,[15] Charles Hamilton[16] and Francis Gladwin's,[17] however, 'Muslim India' seems to be loosing its central place in the British historiography of India and Hindu India seems to be

14 Alexander Dow, *History of Hindostan,* III vols., London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1768-72.

15 See translation of *The Memoirs of Eradat Khan,* London; John Stockdale, 1786; Jonathan Scott, *An Historical and Political view of the Deccan, South of the Kistnah,* London: John Stockdale, 1791 and Jonathan Scott, *Ferishta's History of Deccan,* II vols., Shrewsbury: John Stockdale, 1794.

16 See *An Historical Relation of the Origin, Progress and Final Dissolution of the Government of the Rohilla Afghans in the Northern Provinces of Hindostan*, London: G. Kearsley, 1787 and Charles Hamilton, *The Hedaya or Guide: A Commentary on the Mussalman Law*, London: Premier Book House, 1963, first printed, 1791.

17 See *An Epitome of Mohammedan Law,* Calcutta: William Mackay, 1786; Francis Gladwin, *The Memoir of Khojeh Abdul Kureem,* Calcutta: William Mackay, 1788; Francis Gladwin. *The History of Hindostan During the Reigns of Jehangir, Shahjehan and Aurangzebe,* Calcutta: Stuart and Cooper, 1788; Francis Gladwin, *Ayen Akberry* or *Institutes of Emperor Akber,* II vols., London: William Richardson, 1800.

emerging as a new field of historical studies in British interest.

British interest in the study of pre-Muslim India had begun to develop from the time of James Fraser. Alexander Dow too contributed a discourse on Hindu religion. However, the shift of British interest became apparent under Hastings' administration. His efforts to establish Indian administration on indigenous model similar to that of the Mughals resulted in the increase of British interests in Hindu religion and society. In 1774, the publication of Jacob Bryant's *A New System of An Analysis of Ancient Mythology of Asian People* from London, created a new charm for ancient Indian literature. The publication of Nathaniel Halhed's *The Code of Jentoo Laws* in 1776 under the patronage of East India Company, motivated a lot of British writers towards the study of Hindu India. However, this interest took a definite form after the arrival of Sir William Jones in India in 1784.

Sir William Jones was an orientalist, with a classical romantic vision. On his way to India, he had planned to write on a variety of subjects on the orient especially on India.[18] His plan was dominated by contemporary history. What he practically did, he left his plan almost untouched. He not only neglected the history of Muslim India[19] but also contemporary India, except focusing on the British concerns. During his stay in India, he devoted all his energies to the study of Hindu religion, laws, literature, traditions, system, politics, customs, culture and civilization and wrote extensively on Hindu India.[20] For Jones India was

18 S. N. Mukherjee, *Sir William Jones,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 74.

19 Only a few minor tracts or translations necessary to facilitate his work as a judge such as *Muhammeden Law of Succession to the Property of Intestates,* London, 1782, and *AI Sirajyyah or Muhammeden Law of Inheritance,* Calcutta, 1792, were written by Jones on the Muslims. See *The Works of Sir William Jones*, vol. VIII, London: John Stockdale, 1807.

20 For example, see Jones' *Discourses on the Institutions of* a *Society,* London, 1784*; Sacontala,* Calcutta, 1789; *Institutes of Hindu Law or the Ordinances·of Manu,* London, 1796; In *Asiatick Researches* and *The Work,* see "On the Gods of the Greece, Italy and India"; "On the Literature of the Hindus"; "On the Hindus"; "On the Chronology of Hindus"; "On the Antiquity

synonymous with Hindu India and in this regard he has been considered 'the father of Indology'.[21] Theoretically, his emphasis was on the study of Muslim India,[22] but practically his focus remained over Hindu India. In this regard, J.S. Grewal has rightly observed that "before Jones Indian history had been almost synonymous with Indo-Muslim history, after Jones it became almost synonymous with Hindu history".[23]

Jones "Indology" or the study of Hindu India, a new potential field of study, began to replace Indo-Muslim history with that of the history of the ancient Hindostan, during the last decades of eighteenth century. All the potent writers diverted their research activities towards this new field of study.[24] Their main interest remained in Indian soil; geography, demography, mythology, archaeology and literature, all inspired by the concept of Indian antiquity.[25] The Indologists presented India as one of the most ancient centre of potential human civilization. Considering the Indian Muslim as a foreign imperial power, the study of Indo-Muslim civilization was set almost aside.

In 1784, these Indologists established the Asiatic Society at Calcutta through the efforts of Sir William Jones. This society became a potential centre for the exchange of views and presentation of thought on India. It also encouraged and attracted the Indian people to participate in the activities of the society. Although a number of Muslims too can be found among those who participated in the activities or contributed to the Journal of the society, but study of Hindu India seems to be the central focus. The number of papers read on

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of Indian Zodiack", "On the Musical Modes of the Hindus", etc., all in *The Works*.

21 S.N. Mukherjee, p. 91.

22 William Jones, *The Works,* 13 vols., p. 213.

23 J.S. Grewal, *op. cit.,* p. 32.

24 Although a number of works can be found written on Muslim India during the last decades, but the focus of these works was not the Muslim India but the policies adopted by the Muslim government in India to follow.

25 Alfred Master, "The Influence of Sir William Jones on Indian Studies", in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* XI, pp. 798-806.

Muslim India in the proceedings of the society is almost incomparable to the number of papers presented on the Hindu India. In 1788, the society began to publish a journal, Asiatic Researches. Although a few tracts on Persian and Arabic literature were published in this journal, but one can hardly find any article on Muslim or Mughal India. The same is true with the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*. By and large, the journal remained reserved for Indological studies while the researches on Muslim India were given a very limited space. The articles published on Muslim India can be counted on fingertips.[26]

The Asiatic Society, Asiatic Researches and Journal of the Asiatic Society almost practically shifted the British interest from Muslim India to Hindu India. All the leading intellectuals began to follow Jones' themes of Indological Studies. Charles Wilkins had already shifted his interest to Hindu India. People like James Hutton, Richardson, James Cook, Chapman and William Chambers, all asserted the supremacy of Indological Studies. William Robertson devoted his energies to the, study of "the knowledge which the ancients had of India; and the progress of the trade with that country prior to the discovery of the passage to it by the Cape of Good Hope". However, he also penned down his observations on the civil policy, the laws and judicial proceedings, the arts, the sciences, and religious institutions of the Indians. Robertson promoted the view in his works that the "Wisdom of East" appreciated in the Old Testament, was in fact, an appreciation of Hindu society and its contribution in the development of human sciences and arts.[27] Following the same path, H.T. Colebrook in his Essays, emphasized on the Hindu religion, culture, customs and society. Confirming ancient India as 'one of the most ancient' centres of human civilization, his emphasis

26 Among those Abdul Majeed wrote *A Letter on the Subject of Arbelon Problem* and Bahawal Khan, *An Account.* For details see *Index to the Asiatic Researches* and *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1856.

27 William Robertson, *The Works,* London: Whitmore and Fenn, 1824, p. viii.

remained over the presentation of Hindu civilization as a 'common origin of all nations' in the South India.[28] However, this thesis provided a ground to the theme of consideration of India as an 'Archipelago' stretching from Afghanistan to Indonesia, which was later focused and popularized by John Craufard,[29] H.H. Wilson[30] and Charles Masson.[31]

Although a large number of researchers began their career as Indologists and further developed and continued to propagate the themes of Jones, Robertson and Colebrook, however, in J. S. Grewal's words, Thomas Maurice "epitomized the shift of interest" from Muslim India to Hindu India.[32] Maurice was much impressed by Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* He had planned to write a history of India to replace Dow's *History* on the model of Gibbon. Dow's history was praised by Gibbon and both the learned historians were highly impressed by the success of Muslim system. In this perspective, what Maurice had planned in 1783 and what he had proposed "to work' on the history of India to the East India Company's Court of Director to get financial assistance for the writing of his history,[33] was

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28 See for details H.T. Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays,* London: Trubner, 1873.

29 John Craufard, *History of the Indian Archipelago,* 3 vols., Edinburgh, Archibald Constable & Co.., 1820.

30 Horace Hayman Wilson, *Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus,* Calcutta: Bishop's College Press, 1846 was published for several times during the nineteenth century under the different titles such as *Essays and Lectures chiefly of the Religions of the Hindus,* 1861 and *Hindu religions,* 1899.

31 Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys,* Four Volumes, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1977, first published from London in 1842-43.

32 J. S. Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India: The Assessment of the British Historians,* Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 59.

33 In 1790, Thomas Maurice wrote a letter to the Company's Court of Directors in which, he highlighted his plan of writing a *History of Hindostan* and requested for the financial assistance. In this letter, his emphasis seems to be on the study of Muslim empires and their relations with India. He had also introduced some most important original sources on the Indo-Muslim history. The letter has been published several times and is also published as a preliminary chapter to *History of Hindostan,* New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1982.

almost neglected in his research pursuits. He had planned to write a *Modern History of India.* However, Jones' elevated charms of "Indian literature" shifted his interest from the field of poetry to history in order to explore the treasures of ancient India[34] dealt with modern history just in curtsy. His whole work was planned to be published in three volumes. But by 1800, Maurice had published nine volumes, all devoted to ancient Indian Civilization and Hindu religion. His originally planned modern history did not come out.[35] What he had originally planned as *Modern History of Hindostan* was given the weightage of only two volumes, written in haste on Dow's model rather than Gibbon's.

This shift undoubtedly had some intellectual and structural foundations based on the change in the British concept of history and criteria for the study of history. Two main forces seem to be working behind this shift. First force was the emergence of romantic logic out of enlightened rationalism, promoting a passionate, literary and antiquarian concept of history, and the second force was the change in British understanding of Indian scene as a centre of trade to the status of a subjugated land.

Rise of Romanticism and the Shift of Interest

The European enlightenment projected a rational deistic intellectualism which is known as Rationalism.[36] This rationalism founded its bases on the seventeenth century

34 These concepts are derived form Thomas Maurice's *Memoirs*. See for details Thomas Maurice, *Memoirs of the Author of Indian Antiquity,* 3 Vols., London: the Author, 1819-22.

35 These nine volumes were published under two titles. First seven volumes were published under the title of *Indian Antiquities* in between 1793 to 1800 from London. Last two volumes were published under the title of *History of Hindostan: Classical and Ancient,* in 1795 and 1798 by the Author.

36 In this regard the era is also known as "Age of Reason", and the thought promoted during the era are taken as "Empire of Reason", For details see Harold Nicolson's *The Age of Reason: The Eighteenth Century,* New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961 and Henry Steel Commager, *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America Realized the Enlightenment,* London: Barnes & Nobels, 1978.

Scientific Revolution.[37] Descartes (1596-1650) was of the view that if the natural world is mechanically constituted and general laws could be applied to the nature, then man as a product of nature was also to be ruled by "natural laws" or Euclid's Mathematics.[38] Under the influence of Cartesianism[39] of Scientific Revolution and progress of Physics and Mathematics, the eighteenth century rationalists applied the scientific method and physical mechanics to the social and behavioural sciences and tried to interpret social laws on the mechanical and scientific foundations.[40] Thomas Hobbes' (1588-1679) concept of "political equilibrium" or "balance of power",[41] John Locke's (1632-1704) "theory of natural law"[42] and Rousseau's (1712-1778) ''social contract" were attempts to elevate social system on scientific, natural and mechanical foundations. Hobbes was aiming to establish a peaceful political system like that of nature. Locke propagated the concept of "natural rights" and Jean Jacques Rousseau, on the same model, advocated the law of "natural liberties".[43] In this perspective, David Hume

37 For a detailed study of scientific foundations of Rationalism see Rupert A. Hall's *From Galileo to Newton 1630-1720,* London: HarperCollins Distribution Services, 1970.

38 Descartes' works has been published for several times. His views on the subject can be found in his *Discourses on Method,* Twelve Volumes., Paris: Cerf, 1897-1910 and in *Philosophical Works of Descartes,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911. For a brief discussion on the subject see J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, *The Western Intellectual Tradition from Leonardo to Hegel,* New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1960.

39 The method proposed and propagated by Descartes for scientific research in physical as well as social sciences.

40 James Westfall Thompson, *A History of Historical Writings,* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942, pp. 61-62.

41 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955. It was primarily a "Discourse concerning Civil and Ecclesiastical Government", Hobbes was seeking a balance of power between the Church and the European State.

42 Locke presented his views in his *Essay Concerning Toleration,* London: Clarendon Press, 2011, first published 1667; *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Two treatises of Government,* Hayes. Barton Press, 1959, first published 1690.

43 Rousseau's phrase "Man was born free and is now in chains everywhere" has become a symbol of civil liberties in the modern thought. See for details

(1711-1776) tried to explore "human nature" in his *Treatise.*[44] The economists also derived the terms such as "circulation of money" and "circulation of trade" getting inspiration from the discovery of "circulation of blood".[45] The attempts to establish a science of society seem at its height in Charles de Secondat Montesquieu's (1689-1755) *Spirit of Laws,* published in 1748. He tried to define scientifically, the nature of state and society and compared the political system with that of natural. He presented the view that many things govern humans and climate was the first among them. He was of the view that laws should never be arbitrary but should fit the natural spirit of the people.[46] In this way, rationalists introduced new methods of historical criticism and extended the scope of history to the study of climate, geography, geology and physical environment. These views also promoted the ideas of democracy, liberty, equality, fraternity and nationalism as natural to man among the European people.[47]

The concept of rational and natural interpretation of social laws on the bases of scientific method also gave way to the idea of progress. The rationalists were of the view that, by every epoch, man was adding something to the human stock of knowledge. Therefore, society is becoming

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his *Social Contract and Discourses,* trans., by G.D.H. Cole, London: JM Dent, 1947.

44 David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature,* London: Oxford University Press, 2000, first published 1739. On this model Hume wrote his *History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution of 1688*, London: T. Cadell, 1754.

45 See Adam Smith *Wealth of Nations,* London: Pickering and Chatto, 1954. On the origin of the concept see Jacob Viner's "English Theories of Foreign Trade before Adam Smith" in *Journal of Political Economy,* XXXVIII, pp. 249-301.

46 Charles de Secondat Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws,* London: G. Bells & Sons, 1914.

47 These were the concepts working behind the late eighteenth century French Revolution of 1789. The French Revolution on the one way was influenced by the rationalism and on the other way by the romanticism. However, the great passion ism generated by classical romance became the leading cause of the mass scale revolution in France

richer in wisdom and experience. This progressivism[48] almost focused on the contemporary society and more or less neglected the ancient history. The role of reason and nature in the development of contemporary socio-political and intellectual cultures became central in this paradigm.

The concepts of scientific method and focusing contemporary history were into sharp contrast with traditional European view of religion and classicism, respectively.[49] The Scientific Revolution had already challenged the authenticity of religion. The rationalists' tradition of skepticism had also hit the Classicism.[50] Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) had established a tradition of higher criticism of the scripture and had denied the miracles. There was nothing sacred for him. Next to biblical history was classical history and literature.[51] Perizonius (1615-1715) had questioned the authenticity of Roman history. In 1722, Pouilly and in 1738, Beaufort contributed to this sort of criticism. Hume too added to this tradition of skepticism. In this way, "the reduction of the whole regal period of the Roman history to myth and legend was the sensation of the day".[52] In this tradition, although Voltaire (1694-1778) tried to co-relate the rationalism with classical history in his rational deistic-intellectualism, however Voltaire had a little idea of the continuity of history. His emphasis remained over the derivation of social laws from the experiences of human history or in other words on the establishment of a philosophy of history.[53]

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48 See for details J.B. Bury's *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origins and Progress*, London: Watts, 1968.

49 For details see Hill Makay & Buckler, *A History of Western Society,* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.., 1983.

50 Charles Wilson, *The Transformation of Europe 1558-1648,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976.

51 James Westfall Thompson, *History of Historical Writings,* p. 61, for further details see Howard Robertson's *Bayle the Skeptic,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1931.

52 *Ibid*.

53 See J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, *The Western Intellectual Tradition,* pp. 284-302.

The focus of enlightenment remained on rationalism. It emphasized the scientific method and mechanization of social sciences on rational and natural foundations, challenged the authenticity of religion and classical history, promoted the skepticism and focused on the contemporary history, neglecting classical and medieval history. Their mechanization deprived literature of its passion, fiction and imagination and, in this way, they hit the classical tradition of mythological literature. Rationalists' emphasis was more on quantitative values rather than on qualitative values. As a result they condemned the rituals, conventions and customs, either based on traditions or on supernatural religion.[54] In this context, the study of Islamic history seems to be discouraged as a traditional field of knowledge, but the contemporary importance of Muslim States kept the study of Islam alive, especially in the Indo-British scholarship. However, the rise of romanticism shifted the British interest from Indo-Muslim history to Hindu history.

Romanticism was a movement of varied scope and nature. It emerged out of enlightenment and was considered as a revolt against pure rationalism[55] and neglect of continuity of historical traditions. Although the romanticists idealized the enlightened concept of natural liberties, social contract, democracy, fraternity, natural laws and natural rights,[56] yet, they showed deep contempt for the ideas of mechanization of social behaviour, religious skepticism, neglect of literature, criticism of classical civilization and neglect of historical continuity. They emphasized on antiquity, literature and neo-classicism.[57] They focused on the study of ancient ethnic, racial and historical geography and demography and combined the working of all the modern institutions with ancient civilizations. The result was the rise of historical antiquarianism and a distant literary

54 James Westfall Thompson, *History of Historical Writings,* p. 60.

55 Bertrand Russell, "The Revolt Against Reason" in *Atlantic Monthly,* CLV, pp. 222-22.

56 S.N. Mukherjee, pp. 49-70.

57 James Westfall Thompson, *History of Historical Writings,* pp. 280-83.

passion. This historical antiquarianism and literary passionism found its classics in Greco-Roman history and literature and promoted neo-classicism.[58] The rise of romantic English poetry promoted literary passionism and Sir William Jones, and Robertson became the main exponents of historical antiquarianism based on mythological literature.

The rationalists already had contempt for medieval history as a time dominated by the success of the Muslims in all walks of life, and considered a "Dark Age" in Europe. Voltaire had an insensate hatred for medieval history.[59] In this context, the rise of romanticism and its deep involvement in the classical antiquity and literature almost shifted the interest of British historians from medieval to ancient history. The study of medieval history was considered "a foolish interference" with "the natural progress of civilization and prosperity."[60] Under the feelings of antipathy to medieval history, the British even ignored the study of their Middle Ages, based on national development.[61] The study of ancient Greco-Roman civilization became the sole criterion for the determination of scholarly calibre. In this perspective, European classical heritage, antiquarianism and literary passionism had a very close resemblance with ancient Hinduism than with medieval Islam.

In the chain of Semitic religious tradition, Islam presents a modern outlook and claims to be a modern religion, constructing its foundations on rational bases. It believes in a progressive world-view, neglecting and even condemning ancient world-view, deities and mythology, establishing a belief in the unity of world system and Godhood. Literary fables, distant passions and blind following, like that of

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58 Majority of the English historians of the time seems to be following the same approach. See for detail Legouis and Cazamian, *A History of English Literature,* London: Routledge, 1984.

59 James Westfall Thompson has quoted that in Voltaire's opinion the early Middle Ages deserve as little study as the quarrels of wolves and bears. For him the moral of the story of history was that man is slowly winning a victory over the fanaticism and brutality which soils the records of the race.

60 James Westfall Thompson, p. 280.

61 *Ibid*.

classics have a little place in the Islamic creed. Rather, it promoted the ideas of *Ijtihad* or innovations (through exerting one's self and making efforts and being considerate in matters of life). In this perspective, Islam believes in a purposive scholasticism and there is no concept of purposeless or immoral amusement or literary pursuits.[62] In this regard, the study of Islam or Muslim history was totally unmatched to the romantic mind make up. On the other hand, Hinduism had an ancient and primitive culture, a fabulous passionate and mythological literature and most important of all a relation with romanticists most appreciated classical antiquity.[63] All these elements became the source of shift in British intellectual interest from the contemporary Muslim India to the Ancient Hindu India.

Ancient Greco-Roman classical antiquity was the primary centre of romanticists' focused interest.[64] The discovery of some of the sources, indicating some early contacts and evidences of mutual interaction of Hindu and Greek-Roman civilizations upon each other, extended the interest of romanticists in the ancient Indian studies. The orientalists had begun to compare classical European sources with that of Indian sources. In this regard identification of Sanderocotus of the classical Greek sources as Chandragupta Maurya of Indian sources became not only the source of understanding Indian antiquity but also of understanding classical Greco-Roman relations with the Orient.[65] The success in locating Ptolemy's Polibothra

62 For a detailed study of Islamic culture see Afzal Iqbal, *The Culture of Islam,* Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1967 and Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthal, *Islamic Culture,* Lahore: Sheikh Mohammad Ashraf Publishers, 1961.

63 See Sir William Jones, *The Works.*

64 Its potential origin can be found in Gibbons' *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* London: Macmillan & Co., 1896-1900, which was published for the first time in 1778.

65 These efforts were primarily based on the works of Ptolemy and Magasthenes' *Historic Indica.* Then there were a number of other classical writers who had presented their views on India. Torgus Pompius had presented the Indian people as a war-like race and it had revived the Greeco-Roman concept of mythological warrior gods and heroes. Strabo

(Patliputra), the capital of Chandragupta Maurya, widened the British interest in Indological Studies.[66] On the same way the claims of antiquity led to the view that if Hinduism is so old a religion, there must be a resemblance with the Biblical traditions regarding the origin of mankind. It opened another area for seeking resemblance between the two communities.[67]

As early Indo-British demographic contacts developed in the areas of Hindu majority population, the studies, focusing the primitive Hindu culture, provided brilliant examples for the romantic theories of natural liberties and became helpful in diverting the attention of the British researchers to the study of the norms of Hindu society.[68] In this perspective, the concept of antiquity of India and its relations with classical Greco-Roman antiquity led to the study of resemblance between the two civilizations. This resemblance was taken and understood as the influence of Greco-Roman civilization on Indian culture, and as a symbol of European splendour and superiority over the rest of the world. In this way, Jones hoped that Indian studies would provide new foundations for another European Renaissance and philosophers like Aristotles and Platos, initiating new vistas of scientific knowledge.[69]

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and Arrian had presented India as an ancient geographical as well as cultural unit. With the revival of classical literature, all these concepts began to penetrate into British intelectualism. As a result in the eighteenth and nineteenth century a number of orientalists and romanticists were working on these concepts such as Rennel, Toland, Collins, A.H. Anquetil Duperron and Holwell. (S.N. Mukherjee, p. 105.)

66 In 1783, Rennel maintained that Polibothra the Capital of Sanderacotus, was located near Patna. However in 1788 on the testimony of local tradition he confirmed its local name as Patelpoother, Jones called it Pataliputra. In both the cases it has close resemblance with classical “Polibothra”.

67 In this way, Maurice derived a table Co.-relating biblical mythology with that of Indian. In this table, he identified Menu of Indian tradition as Adam of Bible. See for details Thomas Maurice, “Chronological table” in *Indian Antiquities,* New Delhi: concept Publishing, 1984, first published in 1795 and *History of India Ancient and Classical,* London, 1798. p.76.

68 See for example Maurice, *History of India its Arts and its Sciences*, London: D. S. Maurice, 1820. Colebrooke, *Essays.*

69 Sir William Jones, *The Works,* vol. 1, p. 344.

The areas of seeking this resemblance were very vast, almost covering all aspects of social, political, cultural, religious and intellectual life. The German, Dutch and Spanish orientalists had already begun to ponder over the origin of languages and causes of similarities and diversities between the languages. The idea of kinship among the languages had been accepted by the later quarters of eighteenth century and a Dutch orientalist had already presented the "theory of a common origin of Indo-European languages". In this perspective, the identification of Indian personalities and places became a source of inspiration for the study of Indian language and literature. The British romanticists found a number of similarities between ancient Sanskrit and Greco-Roman languages in forms, matter, themes, orthography, grammar, syntax and mythology and tried to revive the Sanskrit language as a part of classical heritage with a missionary zeal.[70] The revival of Sanskrit language ultimately opened the pleasure of fables and myths of ancient Indian literature to the romantic spirit. Romantic literary passionism was influenced by this view of Hindu literature, in which, stories were highly symbolized by super natural and religious enthusiasm and it became a source of satisfaction and pleasure to the romanticists' literary passions.[71]

The translations of *Puranas, study of Veda* and *Shastra* into European languages opened the Indian religion for the contemporary Europeans' religious and literary pursuits. They not only began to translate these pieces of literature into European languages but also compared Indian deities

70 In this perspective, a number of works appeared on Sankrit Language and Literature. For details see Bonfante's "Ideas on the Kinship of European Languages from 1200-1800" in *Journal of World History,* vol. 1, pp. 679-99.

71 In this regard a number of dictionaries on Sanskrit and Greek or Roman, grammars and translations of Sanskrit literature had begun by the time of Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's translation of *A Code of Jantoo Law* in 1774. Jones translated *Sacontala* (Shakuntla of Kalidas) and later some ancient religious tracts were translated. This trend became the focus of almost all the contemporary orientalists.

with that of classical gods and goddesses.[72] The view of a common astronomical origin of all the ancient religions also promoted the view of the similarity among the gods and goddesses of India, Rome, and Greece.[73]

However, the concept of similarity questioned the origin of centre of civilization. Hindu mythology has claims of an exaggerated antiquity and Hindu society proved to be a more primitive and ancient than Greco-Roman. In this regard, the rise of antiquarian logic in the late eighteenth century almost rejected the views of Egyptian, Babylonian and Greek origin of human civilization and postulated the view of the antiquity of Indian literature and culture as the sole origin of all the ancient civilizations of the world.[74] This antiquarian direction diverted all the attention of the romanticists toward Indian studies and almost neglected the Indo-Muslim studies to acquire a modern outlook.

In short, in the late eighteenth century, romanticists' neo-classical parameters were going to be considered as a standard to analyze and determine the place of a civilization in the development of human society. Discovery of some mythological, linguistic and cultural similarities between the ancient Greco-Romans and Hindus diverted all the attention of the Europeans towards Hindu history and the late eighteenth century antiquarianism even accepted the superiority of Hindu civilization over the Greco-Roman. As a result Hindus were elevated to a position of the most civilized nation in the world and ancient India appeared to be the sole focus of British historical pursuits in the late eighteenth century.

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72 See for example Jones' "On the gods of Greece, Italy and India", *op. cit.*

73 See Maurice's *The History of Hindostan,* introduction.

74 The main propagators of these views were Costard, Rutherforth and J. Braynt in the eighteenth century. However, the popularity of the view was, owing to the writings of Thomas Maurice. Thomas Maurice in his writings tried to conclude the debate on the question of the origin of mankind in accordance with the Indian mythology.

British Perception of Indian Scene and the Shift of Interest

The British had come into India as commercial adventurers. They had very keenly and devotedly watched their commercial interests in India from the establishment of East India Company to the late eighteenth century and had gained commercial benefits from all the Mughal emperors since the time of Jahangir.[75] The Mughal rulers granted them generous concessions in taxes and provided them an appropriate atmosphere for trade. In this perspective, on the one hand, if they had no interest in the understanding of Indian society, on the other hand, they had no vested interest in the history of India. What they wrote was directed by a desire of self-understanding and self-education for curiosity about an alien land with which the British were connected.[76]

However, there was another factor influencing the efforts of British historians. By the late eighteenth century, the British interest in the Indian politics had begun to replace commercial interests. Since the battle of Plassey (1757), they had begun to penetrate in the Indian political scenario. The political vacuum created by Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion of India provided the British with an opportunity to emerge as a mediator and broker between the rival powers of Indian politics and to become the major political power in India. The problems of Indian Empire especially of the relations of British Indian administration with that of government at home in Britain and with the local population and states, gave British historiography a purposive outlook.[77]

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75 Sir Thomas Roe was the British ambassador to the court of emperor Jahangir (1605-27) from 1615 to 1619. Jahangir granted to British liberal concession and in spite of some clashes between the imperial army and the British, the British enjoyed a very liberal atmosphere for trade in India. See Sir Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India* 1615-1519. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

76 C.H. Phillips, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon,* Introduction; J.S. Grewal, *op.cit.,* p. 63.

77 For details of the nature of problems by the British in the administration of India and in relation with local population of India see P.J. Marshal's

The British historians began to look back in Indian history for the solution of those administrative and political problems.[78]

[A long process of interaction between the British and local populace enhanced the capacity of the British observers and historians to access and assess the information and knowledge of common Indian masses and how to use this information and knowledge for the British interests. By the extension of British interests and contacts to local common people, the British writers became integrated with the common culture and the romenace of diversity and antiquity or primitivism over powered the British intellectual concerns].[79]

At that time, Muslim political power was on the verge of its decline,[80] and the Muslims had begun to react against the new forces contributing in the decline of their power.[81] Therefore, the British were well aware of the need of a powerful political ally in India. The Hindus were the only majority community and could be the only potent ally to the British. In this perspective the British historians relegated the Muslim India to a secondary place and began to elevate Hinduism as an ancient and potential civilization, presenting the Muslims as despotic and imperial power exploiting Indian resources and religion.[82] The concept of a common origin of

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Problems of Empire: Britain and India, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1968.

78 See Charles Grant's *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain,* primarily a report written in 1792 and published in 1813 form London by the House of Commons.

79 The issue is the major concern of C. A. Bayly's *Empire and Information Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India 1780-1870*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996 and I. Irschick's *Dialogue and History Constructing South Asia 1795-1895*, California: University of California Press, 1994.

80 See for details London: Luzac, 1922.

81 In the *Annals of Rural Bengal* written by W.W. Hunter a number of events highlighting the Muslim resistance to the British rule in Bengal are quoted. This resistance took a definite form in later years under the Peasant Movement of Titu Mir. A number of other Movements can also be traced from British sources.

82 The foremost example of this behaviour can be seen in Thomas Maurice, *Modern History of Hindostan,* London: the Author, 1809-10. This was one of

ancient European and Indian civilization became so popular that even Christian missionaries began to propagate that Hinduism too was an Indian form of Christianity. The Christians had contacts with India long before the arrival of modern Europeans and had established their colonies in India. Later, this view led to the concept that Krishna of Hindu sources was in fact Christ of Christianity. Propagation of this similarity also encouraged a lot to the study of Hinduism on the part of Christian Missionaries.[83] In the European intellectual tradition of the eighteenth century, Muslim rule in Europe and Asia had been propagated as despotic, foreign and imperial.[84] In the Indian context, it promoted the feelings of sympathy, for the supposed by suppressed Hindu subjects, in the mind of the British romanticists,[85] highly inflamed by the spirit of late eighteenth century European concepts *of* nationalism, natural liberties, and cultural laws. They applied all these concepts to the Hindu society. Simultaneously, the interest in indigenous studies projected against foreign Muslim rule paved the way for the neglect of the study of the Muslims' culture and their history.

In this way, the British assumed the idea of confrontation between two distinct civilizations in India[86] and propagated it very powerfully. This was a shift in the British historiographic interest from self-understanding of India to the purpose of promotion of British imperialism in India. Hindus were also ready to welcome any change, either in society or in system

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the important considerations in William Jones' laying emphasis on the study of Hindu India. See C.H. Philip, p. 102.

83 For details of missionary view of Hinduism see William Ward, *History of Hinduism,* Serampore: Serampore Mission Press, 1800. See for more details Father Heber, *Narrative of a Journey,* Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Carey, 1828.

84 See for details Edward W. Said, *Orientalism,* New York: Pantheon, 1978.

85 A defense of Hinduism against the missionary and Anglicans was the central goal of Indian romanticism. In this regard, a defense of Hindu state, society and religion seems to be the common subject of all the romantic writers.

86 J.S. Grewal, *op. cit.,* p. 63.

for gaining better position.[87] In response, the new imperial power, too, began to consider Hindus as its natural allies.[88]

The Implications of the Shift of Interest

The shift had far-reaching implications in historiography as well as in the Indian politics. It replaced the study of contemporary history with that of ancient history and added antiquarianism in the British tradition of historiography. On the foundations of Indian antiquarianism, Sir Henry Elliots (1777-1869), the chief librarian of British Museum, established the tradition of *English* antiquarianism. In 1813, he issued a new edition of *Popular Antiquities.* The political unit of historical studies was also dominated by a trend of the study of social and cultural aspects of ancient history. In this tradition, medieval history was almost neglected. These trends continued to dominate untill the publication of *A View of Europe during the Middle Age* by Halm (1777-1859) and emergence of utilitariansim as a potential rival to these romantic concepts. James Mill's *History of British India*, published in 1817, almost challenged the romantic thought and model of Indian historical studies and revived the enlightened model and views.

The elevation of Hinduism as an ancient and potential civilization led to the development of some abstract feelings among the Hindus. Initially, the British were inclined to focus on the regional culture of Bengal, but later they shifted their emphasis to the Hindu religion and the culture associated with it.[89] Hindus welcomed these new concepts and these new concepts became the root cause of the beginning of

87 For example see the writings of Rammohan Roy.

88 The issue is taken up at length and detail in the second chapter consist of article "Empire, Law and History: The British Origin of Modern Historiography of South Asia", in *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. XXX/2 (2010).

89 In this context majority of the British as well as Indian writers owe the beginning of Bengali Renaissance and Indian nationalism to the Beginning of Indological studies by the British romantic historians. See for example the article of Harihar Panda, "The beginning of Modern Historiography of Ancient India: Challenge and Response" in *Aspects of Indian History,* Delhi, 1990.

Bengali Renaissance and emergence of Hindu Nationalism. The British utilized this genesis of Hindu nationalism as a source to create a sense of harmony between the Hindus and the British.

The neglect of the study of Indo-Muslim history and culture decelerated the process of contacts and mutual understanding between the British and the Muslims and widened the gap between the two communities.[90] As a result, the dawn of nineteenth century saw large scale clashes of interests and discontent between the British and the Muslims.[91] On the other hand, the presentation of Muslims as a despotic, foreign imperial power, exploiting the Hindus, led to the assumption that there was a mass-scale confrontation between the Hindus and the Muslims on the communal ground in the subcontinent. A continuous propagation of this view gave rise to the differences between the two communities leading to a sense of hatred among the Hindus against Islam and Muslims and practically divided India on communal basis by the later decades of nineteenth century. Although, the communal division of India created a number of problems for Indian people, it facilitated a lot to the British in establishing their imperial rule in India.[92]

The shift in the British' interest from Indo-Muslim history to Hindu history was not a mere symbolic one. It was a shift not only in the field, but also in the mode, model, method and unit of Indian historical studies. On the one hand this shift replaced the facts with myths, reason with romance, empiricism with interpretations, institutions with passions and modern history with ancient history. On the other, it evolved new perceptions about an understanding of the part played by the historical forces in the development of human civilization through an analysis of Indian history. Its impact

90 For details of the views see W.W. Hunter, *Our Indian Musalman,* Calcutta: Trubner & Co., 1872. Also see Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, *Risalah Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind,* Lahore: M. Ashraf, 1998.

91 A number of events has been quoted in the writings of Sleeman, Malcolm and other historians of British India.

92 It can be taken as "divide and rule policy" of the British imperialism.

might be measured on the British historiographic tradition at home in Britain. Influenced by European classical romance and political vacuum in India, it was an indication of a visible change in British social and political policy in India. The shift in British historiographic interest was definitely subject to the social and political motives, which were instrumental in the revival of Hindu culture and civilization with a sense of nationalism as a potential indigenous challenge to Indo-Muslim political power. The shift almost changed the perception about the Muslims from initiators of a new 'civilization to a people responsible for the destruction of ancient Indian heritage. In this way it was an indication of the removal of the Muslims from the central scene to the periphery and appearance of the Hindus as the key agents of the imperialism in the British understanding of Indian scene.

3

Coalescing the Romance of Antiquity, Literature, Orient and Imperial Justice: Sir William Jones and the Birth of 'Indology'

During the last two centuries, 'Indology' has emerged as a dynamic discipline, encompassing all aspects of the study of 'things Indian', from places and people to history, culture, arts, literature and philosophy. This dynamism of 'Indology' is the outcome of a long process of application of western romantic thought to the Indian state, society and politics, in imperial and colonial perspective. Having genetic origin from 'Orientalism', 'Indology' emerged pregnant with its thematic assumptions, techniques, methods, purposes and ideas and brought fundamental changes in the intellectual and political outlook of the subcontinent. A number of identical aspects of the region such as the concept of 'Indian Nationalism', 'Hindu Tawa', 'Bengali Renaissance', and revival of Sanskrit language and literature along with the view that India is a potent centre of civilization since ancient times owe its origin to the emergence of 'Indology'. Yet, the concept appears to be a coinage of foreign intellect of British, same as the 'orient' is the coinage by the west on the foundations of 'self' and 'other'.

The recent interest taken in the 'Indology' as a dynamic field of study, by the literary circles and literary journals seems to be disseminating paradoxical perceptions. Although the underlying assumption appears to be the inculcation of literary romance of 'ancient India', to develop a

sense of harmony and socio-cultural unity within the region, it appears to be the application of 'self and 'other' approach to the public relations of Indian and Pakistani people and indicates a domination of current political themes on literature and history.

The general emphasis of the recent debate has been on the introduction of ancient Sanskrit literature and things attached to it or on a simple introduction of the contributors to the study of ancient India,[1] neglecting the emergence of 'Indology' as a dynamic discipline, with an extended scope to British imperial administration as opponent of Mughal Muslim Empire. The recent studies approach two hundred years of 'Indological Studies' with a linear view of 'antiquarian literary romance' and ignore the internal dynamics of 'Indology' as well as its communal-cultural and racial impact. The purpose of writing these pages is to explore such issues. A classical romantic foundation of British Romantic Movement against eighteenth century extreme rationalism, indigenous law's place in colonial British administration and British intellectuals' views about the ruling elites of India need to be explored to understand the specification of 'Orientalism' and 'Asiatics' to 'Indology'. These neglected aspects can best be analyzed through the study of life and works of Sir William Jones (1746-1794), the Orientalist and 'father of Indology'. It focuses on the thematic assumption that William Jones had a very broad spectrum of romantic ideas including antiquity, literature, orient and Imperial justice which could best be coalesced in 'Indian studies'. Therefore, William Jones devoted himself to 'Indology'.

Sir William Jones (1746-1794)

Sir William Jones has been honoured as originator of the theories which are considered as out come of 'Indology'

1 See for example, Rashid Malik, *Qadeem Hindustan ki taareekh ke chand goshay* (Urdu), Lahore: fiction House, 2002 and Dr. Rubina Tareen, Dr. Qazi Abid & Muhammad Abrar Ahmed Aabi, 'Indology (Hindustaniat) Ki Ilmi Riwayat Ka Farugh aur Mujalah 'Fanun' Lahore' in *Journal of Research Faculty of Langauges and Islamic Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, vol. 12 (2007)*, pp. 221-44.

such as 'Indian Renaissance', 'Bengali Renaissance' and 'Indian Nationalism'.[2] At an initial stage of the development of Indian studies, Jones and Indology appear to be two sides of the same coin. For a long time the Orientalists and Indologists of repute not only accepted and followed Jones' themes and theories but also elaborated his concepts on new models and evidences.

Born in a well-known Wales-origin family of London, in an age of enlightenment, William Jones was brought up by his mother. Her traditional approach to education at home inculcated a love for classics in Jones' heart, which was nourished during his education at Harrow and Oxford from 1753 to 1769 in classical languages, literature and history. Classical heritage of ancient Greek-Roman civilization, the simplicity of logic working behind the laws, customs, traditions and system of administration, reflected in literature,[3] had impresses upon his mind greatly.[4] The democratic nature of classical state, society and government inculcated in Jones' thought, a sense of individuals' rights and a love for liberty which developed devotion for the cause of English constitution, Whig philosophy and American war of Independence (1774-1778).[5]

Jones was 'charmed by old literature and inspired by ancient wisdom'.[6] On the model of Cicero[7] and Milton,[8] he

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2 Harihar Panda, 'The Beginning of Modern Historiography of Ancient India: Challenge and Response' in *Aspects of Indian History*, Delhi: The Concept Publishing, 1990, p.23.

3 For details see William Jones, *An Essay on the Law of Bailments*, London, 1781; *The Principles of Government in a Dialogue between a Gentleman and a Farmer*, London, 1791 in *The Works of Sir William Jones*, 13 vols., London: John Stockdale, 1807 and 'On the gods of Greece, Italy and India', in *Asiatic Researches*, vol. I, pp. 221-75.

4 He was a founder member of a society in the name of "Grecian". For details see S. N .Mukherjee, *Sir William Jones: A Study in Eighteenth Century British Attitude to India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp.17-24.

5 Jones' letters to his friends quoted by S. N. Mukherjee, *op. cit.,* p.25.

6 *Ibid*., p. 20.

7 A classical Roman poet of ancient Roman Empire.

wished young men to be educated a combination of the education of a gentleman, a man of letters and wisdom of the ancients.[9] Therefore, he tried to harmonize modern developments with that of the ancient history. History, for Jones, was rather a philosophy taught by 'the accumulated experience and wisdom of all ages and all nations', than merely a sort of knowledge to collect examples from the human past.[10] Jones saw history as the development of language and literature, reflecting even 'religious laws of society'.[11] The progress of arts, sciences and letters as well as virtue, wisdom and prosperity, were more fascinating and 'tangible achievement' of humanity for him than wars and conquests.[12] This perception developed a romance of geographical, linguistic and cultural diversities as bases for the human progress, promoting 'universal humanitarian values'.[13] Jones was interested in the preservation of this diversity through the placement of oriental civilizations in the world history in comparison with the Western.

Jones' literary career can be divided into two periods: period of his oriental romance (1770-1783) and as 'Father of Indology' (1784-1794). During both the periods of the study of Asian civilizations, classical age and literature seem to be central to Jones' thought and method.

Jones' Oriental Romance

Jones' romance of European ancient classics and his contemporary imperially motivated orientalism found a combination in the comparative study of relations between

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8 Milton (1625-1660) was a famous English poet of Reformation period and views.

9 S. N. Mukherjee, *op. cit.,* p.23.

10 Jones, *The Works*, vol. I, pp. 156-7.

11 This thesis seems to be working behind all the works of Jones, especially in his *A Grammar of Persian Language*, London, 1771 and in *The History of the Life of Nadir Shah*, London, 1773 in *The Works*.

12 Jones, *The Works,* vol. III, pp. 1-9.

13 A view that man is a basic source of unity in the universe and in this way man's rights should always be protected and all the institutions should work for the welfare of man.

ancient oriental and European arts, crafts, literature and institutions through the history of racial mythology, which extended the scope of his concerns to the ancient Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Roman, Italian, Indian, Chinese and Persian literature and language.

Jones' contemporary Orientalists were looking at the orient as a distant, primitive, irrational and inferior entity as compare to the European civilizations, ancient or modern. There was developing an opinion that this primitive and irrational entity should be replaced with that of the modern and rational European civilization. For Jones, Greek-Roman antiquity and literature were the basis of modern Europe, which could not be completely understood and sustained without a curious study of the orient. The writings of the Asians possessed pure reason and an Aristotle or a Plato;[14] therefore, were indispensable 'to complete the history of universal Philosophy'.[15] He insisted that the conquest of Constantinople by the Muslims was the potential date for the beginning of renaissance in Europe and hoped that spread of oriental learning would stimulate another renaissance in Europe.[16] He showed a complete agreement with Alexander Dow[17] on the view that there was a sort of religious prejudices, intellectual sloth, inability to learn oriental languages, ignorance of oriental literature and blindness to its merits among the Europeans. The absence of material incentives, lack of the orientalists of taste and scarcity of books on the orient had been responsible for this 'curious kind of self conceit'.[18] Through such arguments, Jones highlighted the pragmatic value of oriental learning for

14 G.H.Cannon, *Sir William Jones: Orientalist*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1952., p.7, writes that in 1774 Jones had emphasized in his Latin Commentaries that European indifferences to oriental literature meant an affront to the Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and Demosthenes of Asia.

15 Jones, *The Works,* vol. III, pp. 233-34.

16 Quoted in Grewal, *Medieval India: History and Historians*, Amritsar: Guru Nanak University Press, 1975, p. 39, (hereafter as *Historinas*).

17 Alexander Dow, *History of Hindostan,* III vols., London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1768-72, preface.

18 *Ibid*. preface. Also see Jones, *The Works*, vol. V, p. 165.

imperialism. The views provided Jones a high place among the orientalists. He became member of the learned societies and was assigned a translation work from oriental history by the King of Denmark in 1772 as his main interests were Arabic and Persian languages and literature.

'Arabic Jones'

Well versed in Arabic language, Jones analysed the ancient Arabic civilization as an extension of Greek-Roman civilization on the model of Edward Gibbon.[19]Considering pre-Islamic Arabia as a 'perfect society',[20] having 'exalted virtues',[21] Jones was much impressed by its simplicity, bravery and love for liberty as depicted in the pre-Islamic Arabic literature, especially, in 'Saba' Mua'laqat'.[22]

Jones' romance of Arabic literature was hampered by his division of classical and Islamic Arabic literature. Arabic language as an embodiment of Islamic precepts came in direct conflict with his romance of classical antiquity, mythology and literature as well as Christianity. Contrary to Gibbon's view, for Jones, Islam was responsible for blocking the way of literary and cultural progress in Arabia. The ideal of universal God of Islam came directly in conflict with his Christian, classical and romantic concepts of metaphysics and mythology. A centralized system of government established by Islam to achieve the purpose of political unity among the Arabs appeared, in Jones mind, as a check on the traditional Arab sense of liberty and natural way of life, especially when it serve the cause of Islamic conquests.

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19 Edward Gibbon had treated the Islamic empire as an extension of the Roman Empire in his *History of the Decline and Fall of Roman Empire,* Seven Volumes. London: Wildside Press, 1990.

20 Jones, *The Works,* vol. III, p. 30.

21 *Ibid*.

22 These were seven Arabic poems universally accepted as the classics of Arabic literature and hanged in Ka'ba. The authors of theses poems are called "Ashab al Mua'laqat" or authors of the poems hanged in Ka'ba. Among them are included Amraol Qais, Al-Zubiani, Abi-Sulma, Al-aashi qais, Al-Abasi, Al-Abd, and Ibn-Kalsum. See Jones, *The Works*, vol. X, p.10. Also see William Jones, *The Moallakat or Seven Arabian Poems*, London, 1782.

Therefore, he condemned the destruction of traditional Arab 'idolatry' and mythology by the Muslims. The perception of Islam as an anti-classic and relatively new religion, establishing non-traditional trends in the state, society and belief, Jones equally applied to the Arabic language and literature, which diminished his interest in the Arabic language and literature.[23]

'Persian Jones'

Jones' real interest seems to be attached with Persian language and literature having classical antiquarian origin and compatibility with the classical western world. He was of the opinion that Persians had been great theists, possessed metaphysics, great architecture and probably, sciences and arts. They were one among the civilized nations of the world and the Persia was 'the finest part of Asia'.[24] For Jones the growth of Persian civilization was the outcome of developments in Persian language, and the development of Persian language was due to the enlightened behaviour of Persian people, both passing through a long evolutionary process.[25] Jones, admiring Persian poetry, translated a number of poems into English and compared them with that of classical European poetry. He drew parallels between the oriental 'masters' and European 'classics'.[26] He translated *A Persian Song of Hafiz* and felt himself 'like a drop of water in the Hikayat-I-Sadi'.[27] He believed that Rumi in his

23 This expression can be found in the works of Jones very commonly. It is just because of his love for antiques and classics determined by the romantic criterion.

24 Jones, *The Works*, vol. XII, p.342.

25 In this regard he expressed his ideas in his *A Grammar of Persian Language* and *History of the Persian Language*. See Jones, *The Works*, vol. V.

26 Jones, *Works*, vol.V, p.424. Also see his discourse "On the Poetry of Eastern Nations", in *The Poetical Works of Sir William Jones,* 2 Vols., London, 1810.

27 Jones, *The Works*, vol.XII, p.342. Muslihud Din Sadi Sherazi (d. 1296) was a famous Persian poet. He is well known for his purposive and reformative poetry. His *Hikayat* or tales have been taken as a classic of Persian literature.

'Masnavi'[28] and Hafiz in his 'Ghazals'[29] had given an immortalized expression towards their beneficent Creator.[30] Jones romance of Persia goes so high that he found best of oriental despotic administration under Nadir Shah,[31] possessing universal value system of despots, conquerors and scourges all over the world, either in Europe or in Asia. Considering Nadir Shah a conqueror hero, Jones compared his conquest of India with that of classical conquests of Alexander the Great. His mild treatment of Mughal emperors and princes of Sind and restoration of their throne become fascinating examples of oriental despotism for Jones. S.N. Mukherjee is of the opinion that in his presentation of Nadir Shah, 'Jones was only eager to make Asia appear more acceptable to Europe'. However Jones had serious reservations about the Arabic and Persian civilization, language and literature. Jones' treatment of Persian was same as that of Arabic literature. Under the Muslim rulers and due to Persians' conversion to Islam, Persian language and literature was dominated by Islamic-Arabic literary themes, with which Jones had no affiliations.

Jones' Romance of Imperial Justice and Indian Law

Getting reserved his place as an orientalist, Jones' financial problems turned his eyes towards the East India Company's administration as an orientalist. By then India had a political identity known with Muslim Mughal identity and Persian nobility, demanding oriental concern with Arabic and Persian literature, which Jones readily had.

After a long struggle of ten years, he joined the East India Company's Bengal services as a Judge of Supreme Court in 1784. His Indian career turned him towards a focus area of oriental studies, which was "Indology". He continued

28 A term applied to long poems having a common subject.

29 A short lyric poem.

30 Jones, *The Works*, vol. II, p.13. Also see *Asiatic Researches*, vol. II, pp. 165-83.

31 Nadir Shah was the king of Persia. He ruled over Persia. In 1739 Nadir Shah attacked India and played havoc. His massacre and plunders of Delhi are well known in Indian history.

his classical, linguistic and oriental theme in the Indian studies. In this perspective, his perceptions had multi-fold purposes. He intended to guide the policy makers, apologize for his own conduct of the affairs of justice as a judge and to develop a harmony between the rulers and the ruled on the moral ground of classical relations between the Indians and the Europeans. It marked a prominent change in his literary and intellectual attitude. His romance of classical antiquity, literature, orient and his professionalism diverted his attention from Arabic-Persian romance to Indian romance that gave birth to 'Indology' and made him 'the father of Indology'.

Before his arrival in Indian, Jones had a very vague idea of pre-Muslim politics of India. He considered it divided into three parts and placed Assam on the map with Malayan peninsula. For him, India's ancient system was based on feudalism and contributed nothing important to human experience. However, after his arrival in India, within a short span of time, he came to the conclusion that European ideas about India were very vague. India had inherited a very rich ancient civilization. In this regard, there was an extreme desire to enhance the study of Indian sciences, arts, literature, state and society. It could be useful for the Europeans in bringing about both, another renaissance in Europe and a sound system of government to rule over India. J.S. Grewal is of the opinion that:

> Before Jones, Indian history had been almost synonymous with Indo-Muslim history, after Jones, it became almost synonymous with Hindu history. The Muslims were moved from centre to the periphery of the history of the subcontinent.[32]

Jones' Judicial assignment seems to be instrumental in the shift of his interests. At the time of Jones arrival in India, British administration at home was under the influence of a superiority complex against inferiority of the indigenous population. The British East India Company was facing a harsh criticism for mal-administration of the Indian affairs. The Company's officials were going to be charged with

32 Grewal, *Historian*, p.32.

corruption and lawlessness. The exploitation of indigenous population on the part of British 'Nabobs' (lord) was the burning question of the times.[33]

Jones as a Whig had faith in the rule of law, the separation of power, the sanctity of private property and mild government. The central theme of his ideas was the protection of the individual, his person, property and freedom.[34] He wanted twenty four million British-Indian subjects to benefit from his ideas at least by giving them their own laws. However, Jones was afraid that the people had never experienced the political freedom and if liberty could be forced upon them, it would make them as miserable as the cruellest despotism;[35] but in spite of all that, he rejected Bernier, Montesquieu and Dow's theory of absolute despotism. He believed that Indians could not have flourished, if the despot had to be the owner of all property, and if people had no experience of private property. The Indian princes never had been above the law, nor they pretended to have unlimited legislative powers. They were always under the laws believed to be divine with which they never claimed any power of dispensing.[36] His visit of the island of Johanna administered on Arab style, developed his opinion that an enlightened despot free of the pressure of nobility could administer the state well with the help of scholar-governors and ministers.[37] He argued that during the Muslim rule the provinces were governed according to the Muslim laws. However, the Muslim rulers recognized the authority of the Hindu laws between the Hindu litigants. On the rights of property, he observes:

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33 For examples see Thomas George Percival Spear, *The Nabobs:* A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India, London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

34 Jones, *Al-Sirajiyyah or the Mohammadan law of Inheritance*, Calcutta, 1792, p. xiii in *The Works*.

35 *Asiatic Researches*, vol. IV, p.8.

36 Jones, *Sirajiyyah*, p. xii.

37 Jones letter to Ashburton quoted by S. N. Mukherjee, *op. cit.,* p.126.

> …by the Mughal constitution, the sovereign be not the sole proprietor of all the land in his empire, which he or his predecessors have not granted to a subject and his heirs; for nothing can be more certain than that land, rents and goods are in the language of Mohammadan lawyers, property alike alienationable and inheritable… No Musalman prince in any age or country would have harboured a thought of controvert these authorities.[38]

On these evidences, he advised the Company that the Indian should be governed according to their own laws on the model of benevolent and enlightened despotism. He was of the opinion that it would be unworthy of the British government to impose their system on the Indians. For 'a system forced upon the people invincibly attached to opposite habits would in truth be a system of cruel tyranny'.[39] Therefore, as a judge in the company's administration, Jones was interested in the administration of justice according to the local norms, customs and rituals, which was almost a settled principle of justice in Britain. He was annoyed with the company's administrators' continuous interference in the affairs of justice and exploits of the local population through the interpretations of the indigenous issues in the western manners. By focusing the indigenous laws, Jones seems to be checking the growth of the involvement of the administrators of the Company in the affairs of justice. The conflict between administration and judges had already been crucial since 1770. Jones seems to be separating historical and customary evidences for the freedom of justice from the pressure of administration, and strengthening the British Empire in this way. Therefore, he advised that the British should follow the example of benevolent and enlightened despotism of Indian princes, [40]and it "will secure the permanence of our [British] dominion".[41]

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38 Jones, *Sirajiyyah*, pp. ix-xi.

39 *Ibid*., p.xii.

40 S. N. Mukherjee, *op. cit.,* p.126.

41 Jones, *Sirajiyyah*, p. xiii.

These ideas and perceptions of Jones strongly coalesced with his antiquarian, literary and oriental romance. As all ancient literature form some sort of religious belief and moral system, so Jones had a strong belief in the wisdom and strength of the ancient religions and moral systems as foundation of all modern developments, reflecting continuity in human history and interchange of belief system, sources, institutions, mythology and literature among the civilizations. Thus, relations between mythology, religion and rituals became equalized with the customary law supported by history, to promote a voluntary obedience of common people to religious leadership.

Jones felt his romance of antiquity, literature, and orient satisfied in the study of Indian customary law. He applied all his oriental theories to the Indian civilization. What the complaint he had about the Europeans neglect of oriental studies and what the plea he had taken for the promotion of oriental studies, Jones shifted to 'Indology'. For developing the Europeans' interest in Indology, he seems to be highlighting those aspects of Indian history, culture and civilization, which had close resemblance with the European culture, institutions and history. In this regard, he emphasized over ancient Indian history and culture and neglected his original plans of work on Muslim India.

Medieval Muslim and Jones' Contemporary India Ousted

On his way to India, Jones had planned a schedule of study to execute in India. In this plan of study, a large share was granted to the natural features of India. However, Muslim law, Mughal constitution and contemporary India were also the dominant fields of study. Developing his interest in the study of Indian law through the study of ancient Sanskrit literature, Jones not only neglected the history of Muslim India, but also neglected the contemporary India. Although, he referred to the history of Muslim India in his writings, made translation of *Al Sirajiyyah or Mohammadan law of inheritance* and wrote a treaties on the *Mohammadan Law of Succession to the Property*, but such works were mere translations to facilitate his work as a

judge. In these works, he did not accept the divine nature of Shariah Laws[42] but interpreted these laws in terms of Arabic culture. On the history of Muslim India, he could still suggest publicly that a perfect history of Mughal India could be compiled from the Persian sources beginning with Ali Yazdi's *Zafarnama* and ending with Ghulam Husain's *Siyar al-Muta'khirin*.[43] However, Jones set history of India before the Mohammadan conquests as his chief 'desideratum'.[44]

In Jones new scheme of research, the Persian and Arabic became the language of Islam and Muslims which did not formed his central theme. Jones treated Indian Muslims as a foreign imperial and cultural force which failed to dominate India. Therefore he suggested that the Muslims should be treated according to their own religious laws. The Muslim rulers in India patronized the arts, sciences and literature, promoted luxurious way of life and style of living, introduced the Persian language and literature in India, yet, contributed nothing remarkable.[45] This style had replaced the pure feelings and simple living style of Indians. This image did not match with Jones classical romance and imperial justice.

'Asiatic' Society of Bengal becomes 'Indological'

Very soon after his arrival in India, in January 1884, in a meeting of the learned men of Calcutta, Jones announced the establishment of Asiatic Society of Bengal. The main object of the society was to promote the research on Asiatics[46] and to provide opportunities to analyze, discuss and exchange the knowledge of, and views about Asiatics. Practically, its aim was to help the Company in administrating India through the understanding of indigenous ways, laws and methods, of which Jones was a devoted

42 The Laws of Islam.

43 Jones, *The Works,* vol. III, pp. 213-14.

44 Grewal, *Historian,* p.37.

45 *The Works*, vol. V, p. 424.

46 For detail, 'Asiatic Society' in *Mahnama Niya Zamana* (Urdu) Lahore, May 2009, pp. 46-48.

advocate. In his first discourse Jones stressed on the pragmatic value of Asia as a 'nurse of sciences' and the 'inventress of delightful and useful arts'.[47] All aspects related to Asiatics could be discussed from the platform of the society. The areas of interest included history, antiquity, numismatics, chronology, genealogy, religion, culture, politics, manners, customs, laws, soil, natural resources, products, wild life, relations and problems of the indigenous population.

However, by the time, Jones shifted the focus of society's activities to 'Indology'. As The East India Company patronized its activities, the Society established its office in Calcutta Supreme Court and Jones used his personal influence to promote the activities of the society. Its meetings were attended by high officials, some times by the Governor General, which helped promote 'Indology. The romance of 'Indology' became so powerful that it even neglected the original concerns of the society. In 1885 and 1887, Francis Gladwin, a founding member of the society and in charge of the Company's press, issued two journals: *Asiatic Miscellany* and *New Asiatic Miscellany*, focusing Persian language, literature and history in India. In the Preface he wrote:

> …while these works of imagination give us a title to the notice of lovers of poetry, the more solid productions of an historical and political kind afford us a claim on the attention of the learned and the curious.[48]

Gladwin did not place his name on the title pages of the Journals as editor. He wished that society should own the intellectual ownership of the journal, but Jones' nourished new administrative and intellectual elite, having concern with Sanskrit language and literature, was not ready to own a publication having interest in the medieval content or language. The tendency even overpowered the

47 *Asiatic Researches*, vol. I, pp. ix-x quoted by S. N. Mukherjee, *op. cit.,* p.81.

48 *Asiatic Miscellany*, vol. II, 1786, preface.

contemporary 'Hindustani language'[49] as it has more relevance with Persian and Arabic than Sanskrit.

Later, the society published its own Journal, devoted to ancient India, in the name of *Asiatick Researches,* which later took the name of *Journal of the Asiatick Society of Bengal*. In the early period, most of the papers presented in the society's meetings and published in the journal were written by Jones and his follower. A survey of the index of the papers published in the journal shows that during the fifty years after the establishment of the society, only a few papers related to the Muslims of India were presented in its proceedings. Among them some were related to numismatics.[50]

Indology Established

The Society and the Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, under the auspices of Jones, attracted the attention of a large number of the Company's officials such as Charles Wilkins, Nathaniel Halhed, John Shore, Francis Gladwin, John Carnac, Jonathan Duncan, William Chambers, H.H. Wilson, Charles Grant Duff, H.T. Colebrook, etc. For Asiatic Society, India meant Hindu India, therefore, Hindu civilization was their central focus. It adopted the Jones' pattern of the assessment of Indian civilization, on the model of antiquity, literature and relations and resemblance of Indian civilization with the classical European civilization, for the self education and self understanding of Europeans in India. Hinduism emerged as a more ancient system having a rich mythological literary heritage under this pattern. It found

49 The Jones did not produce any work on 'Hindustani' and the subject matter remained out of the focus of the society's concern for more than fifty year. The neglect of Persian even led to the neglect of translations from Persian to Hindustani, which later was termed as Urdu. However the translation work continued due to the interest of the Muslims and a few administrators. See for example Dr. Safeer Akhter, 'Farsi say Urdu Mein Tarjamey Ki Riwayat, Aaghaz Sey 1857 Tak' in *Akhbar-i-Urdu, (August 2008)*, pp.11-21.

50 A survey of the contents of *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*.

some sort of similarities between the classical Greek-Roman civilization and Hinduism.[51]

The society revived the classical romance of India through researches in classical literature. Under the auspices of Greek-Bactrian empire, Magasthenes' *Indica* had generated a romance of India as an ancient centre of civilization.[52] Trogus Pompeius had applied the Greek romance of mythological worrier gods and heroes to India.[53] Strabo and Arrian had promoted a perception of India as an ancient geo-political unit.[54] Diogenes had placed 'gymnosophists' of India on a high standard of scale of civilizations.[55] This Indian Romance had prevailed on the minds of European intellectuals throughout the middle ages. Revival of Greek-Roman arts and literature by European renaissance and rise of classicism had bridged this classical romance of India with that of modern romantic thought.

In this argument, 'Indology', on the model of 'orientalism' appears to be the product of eighteenth century Western intellectual mechanism which was nourished by the British pragmatic romance of customary law. Paradoxically, 'Indology' did not reflect the literary romance, rather a rational and utilitarian philosophical debate to understand the societal complexities and to solve the colonial administrative problems, at its early stages of development. Therefore, 'Indology' became a dominant part of British imperial debate, advocating the application of administrative mechanism of

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51 Jones, *The Works*, vol. III, pp .233-34.

52 Magasthenes, *Historica Indica*, London, n.d. Megasthenes was an ambassador of Syria in the court of Chandragupta about 302 to 291 B.C. *Indica* was his observations on Indian state, society and religion that has been reprinted as *Historica Indica*.

53 Thomas Maurice, *History of Hindostan: Classical and Ancient*, 2 Vols., London: The Author, 1795-1798, preface to vol. I.

54 Thomas Maurice, vol. I, preface.

55 The ancient Indian Yugis or religious mendicants who were well versed in Vedas or Hindu scripture. In this regard they were not only masters of philosophy, but also of physical science, which are now termed as Marshal Arts.

ancient indigenous Indian civilization to British colonial Indian administration.

The legal-administrative structure of 'Indology' coalesced with antiquity, literature, orient and imperial justice through a mechanism developed by William Jones as 'Father of Indology' which converted it into a 'romantic movement' having wider concerns with language and literature. Promoting mythological thinking, Jones rejected the long standing inter-cultural concern in India, narrowed the scope of Indian civilization, divided the Indian society into indigenous and foreigners, created a gulf between rulers and ruled, and marginalized the Muslim elite, races, culture, language and literature. This marginalization rather a conflict became a permanent mechanical part of South Asian states and society as well as the epistemology developed to study the region in terms of 'things Indian' and 'things non-Indian or 'things indigenous' and 'things exotic'.

4

Empire, Law and History: The British Origin of Modern Historiography of South Asia

Constructed on two thematic assumptions that pre-nineteenth century Indian society was ahistorical and modern historiography of South Asia owes the debt of its origin to the British, the analysis evolves around the view what is now called the Indian history in written documentary form, with modern paradigms and models, came out of the problem how to make imperial authority acceptable for the Indian masses during the last quarter of eighteenth century and first half of nineteenth century. Exploring the relations between the British Empire, Indian law and Indian history, it concentrates on the point that it was the British imperial need for the understanding of indigenous customary and religious law which led to the origin of modern Historiography of India. British administrator-jurists played the foremost important role in the modern construction of Indian past through a systematic and disciplined historiography. Whether it was simply a problem of colonial conquests or the problem to conquer and control the minds of the people for the establishment of imperial authority, are important questions. Post-colonial discourse is focused on the point that Imperialism always focuses to control the minds of the people to make the empire permanent and system of laws serves as a primordial tool for that. It is also a common belief that what is even now called the history of India, is mainly

the construct of British Imperial mind,[1] mainly by the administrator-jurists.

This is the context which provided modern India with an historical identity. Therefore, the Indians owe the debt of Indian Renaissance, Bengali Renaissance and Indian nationalism to the British contribution to the Indian studies[2] and that is why, Ranajit Guha, the founder of 'Subaltern Studies Group', is of the opinion that the emergence of modern Indian historiography was the result of legal researches of British imperial administration of India.[3]

The argument is constructed exploring the views on ahistorical nature of Indian society. The initiation of the modern historiography of India/ South Asia at the nexus of eighteenth and nineteenth century is approached through an analysis of relations between historicization of European thinking and growing British Imperialism in South Asia. On this basis, the British administrators' views on the relations between imperial authority, indigenous laws and history are explored. The final section of the arguments deals with the selected administrator jurists' researches on indigenous legal aspects which led to the establishment of relations between the historiography of South Asian laws and writing of general history of India and South Asia.

'Ahistorical' India and Modern Historiography

One popular historian of India, Romesh Chandra Majumdar, describing the general belief about the Indians' sense of history writes that 'historiography [in its modern sense] was practically unknown to the Hindus at the

1 See for details, P. J. Marshal, *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970. Also see N. B. Dirk, 'The Invention of Caste: Civil Society in Colonial India', *Social Analysis*, 25(1989), pp.42-52 and B. S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Form of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

2 O. P. Kejariwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's Past*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988.

3 Ranajit Guha, *An Indian Historiography of India: A Nineteenth Century Agenda and its Implications*, Calcutta: Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, 1988, p. 5.

beginning of the nineteenth century'.[4] However, for Mitra and Bhandarkar, Indians' ancestors' neglect of the past did not mean the denial of Indians' sense of history, altogether. The curiosity of the people for the past and logical need of understanding what is around in the society 'historically' was satisfied by the stories of legends.[5] That is why for Ashsih Nandy, pre-modern Indian society was 'ahistorical', having a rich past but a little sense of history in modern terms.[6] By the beginning of nineteenth century, a growing consciousness of history, not as record or source for understanding the past, but as a systematic and sophisticated narrative of past, seems to be taking place among the Indians especially Bengalis. One nineteenth century Bengali nationalist Bankimchandra, foreseeing the importance of historiography in modern system of knowledge sent a call to the Bengalis in the beginning of the second half of nineteenth century: 'We have no history! We must have a history'. The Subalterns have taken up the same phrase as their agenda.[7]

Historicization of Thinking

The conversion of 'ahistorical' South Asian society to 'historical' (historicization of thinking) in modern sense by the beginning of nineteenth century owes its debt to the late eighteenth century 'historicization of thinking' in the European west and contemporary European-Imperial interests in India. Gottlob is of the opinion that increased significance of experience of change in the understanding of

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4 Romesh Chandra Majumdar , *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, 3 vols, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1971, p.7, Also see Romesh Chandra Majumdar, 'Nationalist Historians' in C. H. Philips, ed., *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (Historical Writings on the People of Asia), London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

5 Rajendralal Mitra, *The Antiquities of Orissa*, 2 vols., Calcutta: Wyman & Co., 1875, p.1; Also see Ramchrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, *Early History of Deccan: Down to the Mohamedan Conquest*, 2nd ed., New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1985, 1st pub. 1895, p.1.

6 The view is presented by Ashish Nandy. See his article 'History's Forgotton Doubles'. *History and Theory*, vol. 34 (1995), pp.44-66.

7 For example see David Arnold & David Hardiman, ed., *Subaltern Studies VIII Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

world around in European mind and 'efforts to investigate the culture and society of India [by imperial masters] intensified at the same time, therefore influenced each other strongly.[8]

It were the oriental and romantic interests of western intellectuals, developed through a tradition of education of western classics of language and literature from the ancient and medieval history of Greeks and Romans, which were being considered the foundation of customary and religious laws in the West.[9] The democratic nature of classical state, a sense of individuals' rights and a love for liberty had developed a sense of sanctity of constitution, especially among the English which had promoted the appreciation for the American War of Independence 1774-1778.[10] Therefore the experience of change was being conceived as a 'notion of linear, irreversible and global process of evolution' by western intellectuals.[11] The emerging sense of historicism was supporting and strengthening this notion and vision of past and history for historiography. Therefore, history had emerged as a philosophy taught by 'the accumulated experience' and 'wisdom of all ages and all nations' than merely a sort of knowledge to collect examples from the human past. Yet, it could only be approached through the study and analysis of the development of language and literature, even to grasp the nature of 'religious laws'.[12] That is why legal pursuits of western intellectuals were closely linked with past to preserve the historical continuity and cultural diversity of customary law. The interaction of

8 Michael Gottlob, *Historical Thinking in South Asia: A Handbook of Sources from Colonial Times to Present*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, p.2.

9 See for example William Jones, *The Principles of Government in a Dialogue between a Gentleman and a Farmer*, London, 1791; and *An Essay on the Law of Bailments*, London, 1781 in *The Works.*

10 Muhammad Shafique Bhatti & Muhammad Mumtaz Khan, "Coalescing the Romance of Antiquity, Literature, Orient and Imperial Justice: Sir William Jones and the Birth of 'Indology'", *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, vol. 29/1 (2009), pp.91-100.

11 Gottlob, p. 4.

12 William Jones, *The Work of Sir William Jones*, 13 vols., London John Stockdale,: 1807, I, pp.156-7; III, pp.1-9.

western imperial mind with the people and culture of the region which is now called South Asia gave rise to the consciousness of what is termed 'historical' and 'history' among the Indians.

British East India Company Administration and Indigenous Law

The British East India Company (BEIC) administration had two types of juridical interests. **First:** as representative of the company, the administrators had the authority to conclude treaties with the native authorities who had to take the form of law, regulating the relations between the parties and break of such treaties was liable to harsh punishment, in the form of military intervention in the native states or the change of rulers through the promotion of palace intrigues. The BEIC used such treaties to achieve its end of expansion of its control on Indian territories. However, the validity of such treaties was subject to the armed strength or weakness of signatory powers and was usually implemented by force. **Second:** the prime concern of the BEIC administration, after the assumption of growing civil authority in Bengal by 1757, was the administration of revenue. Therefore, the BEIC had dual authority of administration and judicature. In this capacity, they had to work for the interpretation, formulation and promulgation of laws, especially relevant to the administration of revenue. Until the last quarter of eighteenth century, the company's administration carried different experiments to deal with the collection of revenue and to settle the disputes in matters of the land management, revenue collection and property rights, actually forming one problem.

For the British, the problem of land management was actually the problem of 'power', 'authority' and 'rule'. By continuing the traditional 'Mughal Mansabdari System' of laws, the British could not break the authority of the Mughal nobility and could not concentrate power into their own hands. On the other hand, Indian culture was alien to the new western concepts of individual property rights.

Contrary to the imperial claims to provide justice to masses, the period of administrative experiment from 1757 to 1784 under the BEIC created worst type of example of corruption and exploitation on the part of British administrators which attracted the attention of the home government to the issues in the Indian administration.[13] Warren Hastings (17 -178) recommended the solution to the problems of revenue administration in the adoption of the principle that Indian should be governed by their own laws.[14] The Parliamentary Act of 1781 recognized the Hindu and Muslim customs of inheritance and contracts as laws to settle the disputes in India among Indians on the English model of customary law and Christian model of Church Law.

Imperial Administration of Power and Justice, Hindu Pundits and Muslim Maulvis

The decision was an indicator of the limitations of BEIC's administrative and juridical authority, as they were alien to the local languages which could gave them access to the understanding of historical tradition of local customs of the region. It also made the BEIC administrators dependant of Muslim Maulvis and Hindu Pundits in matters of the administration of justice, especially of revenue and family affairs.

The problem was not too swear in matters of Muslims as under the Mughals, the Muslim laws had already taken a definite form to resolve the problems of the Muslim community and the authority of the state and administration of justice was, at the end of eighteenth century, still in the hands of the Muslims. The British had already observed this system of administration since their contacts with the Mughals in the late sixteenth century. On the other hand, a long and connected with the present, history of polemics between Islam and West had developed a much stronger

13 For details see William Bolts, *Considerations on Indian Affairs; particularly respecting the present state of Bengal and its dependencies*, London: J. Almon, 1772.

14 Edward Bond, *The Speeches of Managers and Counsel in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, 4 vols., London: Longman, 1861.

consciousness of Muslim laws and customs among the British. High level British administrators such as William Jones had secured their jobs in the BEIC due to their having working knowledge of Persian and Arabic.

The problem was more complex in matters of Hindu law for the British. The Mughals had left the administration of justice in the hands of traditional local mandatories with which the British had a very little interaction prior to the assumption of authority in Bengal. On the other hand, languages of Hindu law and the Hindu populace of 18th and 19th century were different. The language of Hindu laws was monopolized by the Brahmins who had an introvert social tradition which did not allow any non-Brahmin to learn the language of law: Sanskrit. Therefore, the British were not much familiar with the Sanskrit language to understand the nature of Hindu law. Still more important was the fact that there was a variety of customs and rituals observed as religious and social laws on the bases of variety of deities followed by the Hindus. An indigenously justified understanding of all such deities and, customs and rituals attached with the following of these deities was too much difficult for the British. Therefore, Warren Hastings in 1773 constituted a committee of eleven Pundits under the headship of Nathaniel Brassey Halhed (1751-1830) to work on the preparation of a digest of Hindu Law to facilitate the functioning of BEIC administration in matters related to justice. It was published in 1776 under the title of *A Code of Jentoo Law*. However, the efforts failed to win the popular acceptance either of the BEIC administrators or of Hindu public due to two problems:

First that the BEIC administrators failed to collect accurate information on Indian land management techniques. The British accused 'native agents' of deliberately refusing to transfer the techniques and withholding the intelligence for the collection of land revenue from their new masters.[15]

15 Ranajit Guha, *An Indian Historiography of India,* p. 5.

Second that the process of compilation of what a minimum of Sanskrit legal literature collected was a complicated one which had made the efforts useless. The Sanskrit texts were orally translated into Bengali and from Bengali into Persian and then from Persian into English. The process failed to communicate the meaning of Sanskrit legal texts into English.[16]

In this context, BEIC's assumption of administration of law and justice and establishment of Bengal Supreme Court in 1784, led to the specialized efforts to resolve the problem. At the time, European population in India, having a superiority complex and the British East India Company administration, were facing a harsh criticism for mal-administration of the Indian affairs, corruption and lawlessness by public at home in Britain. The exploitation of indigenous population through the interpretation of indigenous law on the part of British *Nabobs* (lord) was the burning question of the times.[17]

The Bengal Supreme Court began his work very devotedly and analyzed critically the then existing structure of administration of justice under BEIC. Chief Justice of Bengal Supreme Court, Sir William Jones (1746-1794) realized that legal codes for the administration and provision of justice were in complete disarray, therefore he began his efforts to compile a more authoritative text of *Halhed's Code* and get it attested 'as good law' by court Pundit.

Jones was convinced that Hindu Pundits and Muslim Maulvis were corrupt and untrustworthy and were used to give corrupt opinion.[18] He suspected that 'affidavits of every imaginable fact [could] be easily procured in the markets of

16 See Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribe European and British Writings on India 1600-1800*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 197.

17 See for example Spear, T. G. Percival, *The Nabobs A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India*, London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

18 Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imagining: James Mill's the History of British India and Orientalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 19; Bernard S. Cohn, 'The Command of Language and Language of Command', *Subaltern Studies IV*, 1985, pp. 276-329, at 293.

Calcutta'[19] as an article of trade, manufactured by Pundits, forged by traders and sold on the streets 'at reasonable rate'.[20] Jones was of the opinion that Pundits' fabrications subvert not only British authority and Hindu legal tradition, but the textual corruption having the authority of religion, lead to the moral corruption and injustice.[21] By the preparation of an authentic digest of Hindu and Muslim law from historical sources, Jones was expecting that BEIC administration could not only be able to come out of the exploits of the Pundits and Maulvis, but also could liberate the common Indians from the tyranny of the Pundits and Maulvis.[22] That was the cause of British legal researches through Indian history.

Indigenous Law and History

With this bent of mind, Bengal Supreme Court began its work with the assumption that Hindu Law was no longer evolving currently and could be codified from any point of past through history and could be fixed for all time to come in the future. By then India had a legal authority known with Muslim political identity and Persian nobility, demanding oriental concern with Arabic and Persian literature as the basis of religious and customary laws and history, which BEIC administration readily had. However, they were ignorant of the language of Hindu religious and customary law, Sanskrit.

The efforts to teach oriental languages and to disseminate the oriental knowledge had already begun. William Jones of Bengal Supreme Court focused all his attention to the learning of Sanskrit language. He also used his official influence on the company's officials to motivate them for the learning of Sanskrit language as the basis to understand the Hindu Law. Jones applied his classical

19 Jones, *The Works*, III, p.14.

20 Lord Teignmouth, *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Correspondence of Sir William Jones*, London: John Hatchard, 1804, p. 264.

21 Teltscher, 1999, p.196.

22 Guha, p. 7.

European and oriental themes of language, literature and law to the understanding of Sanskrit language and literature, through which he could develop an approach to the understanding of Hindu law. His letter to his friend Earl of Spencer II shows his devotion and excitement to achieve this end. He wrote:

> I now read both Sanscrit and Arabick with so much ease that native lawyers can never impose upon the courts, in which I sit. I converse fluently in Arabick with the Maulvis, in Sanscrit, with the Pandits and in Persian with the nobles of the country.[23]

Jones had no doubt in his mind that laws are sacred for the Muslims and Hindus and find authority from the religious texts which could be interpreted in the context of a fixed time span in the past known for the compilation of religious texts. His translations of Hindu and Muslim legal texts such as *Al-Sirajiyyah: or, the Mohammedan Law of Inheritance*; *Institutes of Hindu Law: or, the Ordinances of Menu* and *Digest of Indian Laws* were compiled, translated and interpreted in the historical context, keeping in view the lives and times of the Hindu avatars and Muslim prophet. Simultaneously, Jones was of the view that for a proper understanding of legal system, the understanding of religious system was necessary. This view linked him with the study of Indian mythology, especially during the time of the compilation of religious text *Manava Dharmasastra*. For, he prepared treatises such as *Chronology of Hindus* and *On the Antiquity of Indian Zodiack*. It led Jones to a more comparative analysis of Indian mythology in the form of *On the gods of Greece, Italy and India*.[24] The study of ancient Indian mythology impressed upon Jones mind greatly. He compared the system of Indian mythology with that of European and he was convinced that India was the heir of a civilization of highest level. Then Jones intended to guide the policy makers, apologize for his own conduct of the affairs of justice as a judge and to develop a harmony between the

23 Garland Cannon, *The Letters of Sir William Jones,* 2 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, p.742.

24 Jones, *The Works,* vol. II, 1807.

rulers and the ruled on the moral ground of classical relations between the Indians and the Europeans. It diverted his attention from Arabic and Persian language and historical literature to Sanskrit literature and ancient history of South Asia. Within a short span of his legal researches on Hindu laws, he concluded his views that European ideas about India were very vague, and need to be reformed through the study of ancient history.

In this context, history appears to be synonymized with customary law. Jones wanted twenty four million British Indian subjects to benefit from his ideas at least by giving them their own laws, explored out of their own past.[25] As Jones' primary concern was the administration of revenue which was closely connected with the nature of laws of ownership, therefore, Jones focused on developing an understanding of the nature of government and structure of laws of ownership through the Muslim history.[26] He had already prepared *An Essay on the law of Bailment* in England.[27] Rejecting the Bernier, Montesquieu and Dow's theories of absolute oriental despotism, Jones speculated that Indians could not have flourished, if the despot had to be the owner of all property, and people had no experience of private property. The Indian princes never had been above the law, nor they pretended to have unlimited legislative powers. They were always under the laws believed to be divine or customary with which they never claimed any power of dispensing.[28] He argued that during the Muslim rule the provinces were governed according to the Muslim laws. However, the Muslim rulers recognized the authority of the Hindu laws in matters between the Hindu litigants. On the rights of property, he observes:

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25 Mukherjee, *Sir William Jones: A Study in Eighteenth-Century British Attitude to India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

26 Jones, 1791.

27 Jones, 1781.

28 Jones, *Al-Sirajiyyah or the Mohammadan Law of Inheritance*, Calcutta, 1792, p.xii.

> …by the Mughal constitution, the sovereign be not the sole proprietor of all the land in his empire, which he or his predecessors have not granted to a subject and his heirs; for nothing can be more certain than that land, rents and goods are in the language of Mohammadan lawyers, property alike alienationable and inheritable…No Musalman prince in any age or country would have harboured a thought of controvert these authorities.[29]

Therefore, Jones advised the BEIC that the Indian should be governed according to indigenous laws on the model of benevolent and enlightened despotism. For Jones, 'a system forced upon the people invincibly attached to opposite habits would in truth be a system of cruel tyranny'. Therefore, 'as a judge in the company's administration, Jones was interested in the administration of justice according to the local norms, customs and rituals, which was almost a settled principle of justice in Britain'.[30] As all ancient literature forms some sort of religious belief, moral code and legal system, therefore, it provide foundations for all modern developments, reflecting continuity in human history and law. Thus relations between mythology, religion and rituals supported by history promote a voluntary obedience and following of law and leadership by common people.

British Tradition of Modern Historiography of South Asia

Jones wanted a scholarly revolution in the Indian studies, therefore formed a combined group of Indians and British to work on the more detailed study of the Indian religious and customary law. His more trusted disciple was H. T. Colebrook (1765-1837) who completed his *Digest of Indian Laws* after Jones' death which was later published by the government under the title of *Institutes of Hindu Law or the Ordinances of Manu …comprising the Indian system of duties, religious and civil*… Colebrook later published his *Treatise on Obligations and Duties* in 1818. However, it was the Asiatick Society of Bengal and its *Journal* which continued the task of Jones and gave birth to a new tradition of looking at India through the eye on remote past of

29 *Ibid.*, 9.

30 See Bhatti & Khan, 2009.

mythological-customary laws. One of Jones' friends in England, Thomas Maurice (1754-1824) also continued his theme of study of ancient Indian mythology to understand the state of society and laws among the Indians.

Jones set a hierarchical procedure for the understanding of the past of the region, beginning from language and literature to law and history. His assumption that Hindu law could be approached from any point of time in the remote past and could be fixed for times to come, became a general assumption of future British researches on Indian history. In this connection, Charles Wilkins (1747-1836) translated *The Bhagvat-Geeta* into English in 1785.[31] Elizabeth Hamilton translated the letters of a Hindu Raja.[32] There were so many other people who worked on the same theme.

The missionaries responded to the Jones' views very immediately and took the assumption in a different perspective. Serampore Missionaries, William Ward, John Carey and Joshua Marshman, focused on the primitive and savage nature of Indian laws.[33] They insisted that to make the Indians civilized, the introduction of Christian religion [Law] was necessary. The same plea was used by the Utilitarians to develop their case for the introduction of modern Western and British institutions and system of law in India. James Mill's *History* was written to serve this end.[34]

The approach was challenged by the Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779-1859) who served almost forty years in India on the administrative/ judicial posts. During the first

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31 Charles Wilkins, *The Bhagvat Geeta or Dialogues of Kreshna and Arjoon*, London: C. Nourse, 1785.

32 Elizabeth Hamilton, *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Raja*, 2 vols. London: Millar and Cadell, 1796.

33 See for example William Ward, *Account of the Writings, Religion and Manners of the Hindoos: Including Translations from their Principal Works*, IV vols. Serampore: Serampore Mission Press, 1811; *View of the History, Literature and Religion of the Hindoos: Including a Minute Description of the manners and Customs and translations from their Principal Work*, Serampore: Serampore Mission Press, 1819.

34 See for details James Mill, *The History of British India*, 3 vols., London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1817.

phase of his observations, Elphinstone focused on the Multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of Indian state and society. Serving in the different parts of India, he came to the conclusion that India was a multi-cultural region and should be governed cautiously, keeping in view the differing customs and laws of different nations.[35] Therefore, Elphinstone encouraged the study of the Indian laws and administration through the study of regional, ethnic and cultural history. The approach resulted in the emergence of classics of ethno-regional histories by John Malcolm (1769-1833), Charles Grant Duff (1789-1858) and James Tod (1782-1835).[36] However, after his retirement, in his *History of India*, Elphinstone totally rejected the Jones' view of static and fixed nature of Indian state, society and law. He discussed at length the evolutionary nature of Indian state, society and laws through the history and impact of imperialism on the Indians.[37]

The debate established 'history' as the most popular form and method for the claims to authenticity of arguments as well as for the rejection of arguments, thus for making judgments on Indian affairs. In this context, Mill's *History* had become officially recommended book for the trainees of British East India Company at Hailbury College. It was replaced by Elphinstone's *History* in 1840s. Simultaneously during the process, the history was introduced as medium of instruction to influence the colonized Indians at school level. John Clark Marshman compiled first book of history for Indian schools[38] and after the war of independence for the

35 Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Cabul*, 2 Vols., Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1975, first published from London in 1815. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *History of India*, 2 vols., London: A. Spottiswoodi, 1841.

36 Grant Duff, *History of the Marhattas*, London: Longman, 1828.

37 Elphinstone, *History of India*.

38 See for example works of J. C. Marshman, *The History of India from Remote Antiquity to the Accession of the Mughal Dynasty, Compiled for the use of Schools*, Serampore: Serampore Mission Press, 1841; *Outline of the History of Bengal Compiled for the Use of Youth in India*, Serampore: Baptist Mission Press, 1844.

university students,[39] making discipline of history established. He had already published a number of his own works relevant to administrative law and regulations.[40] The evidence indicates that British's primary concern was the administration of laws, rules and regulation which they sought to be verified through history. Therefore, history and historiography served at length the purpose of imperial administration.

Affirming the subjective nature of historiography or the writing of history, the arguments reflect a mutual dependence of history and law on each other. An 'ahistorical society' provides a larger space to imperial powers or colonizers to construct the past of 'colonized people' according to their own purposes, methods and tools, mostly related to the administrative and revenue laws, therefore, history becomes subject to law and administration. On the other hand law finds its legitimacy from the customs and religion, which always connect it with some point of historical time and space. The British's basic concern in India with the administration of revenue according to indigenous customary and religious law, and distrust on the intentions of indigenous jurists (Maulvis and Pundits), led to the promotion of a policy of encouraging British officials for the exploration of the past of Indian people, Hindus and Muslims alike. The policy developed by Bengal Supreme Court became a currency for the success of British administration.

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39 J. C. Marshman, *The History of India From the Earliest Period to the Close of Lard Dalhousie's administration*, London: Longman, 1863.

40 His works of this nature include Marshman, J. C., *The Darogah's Manual Comprising Also the Duties of the Landlords in connection with the Police*, Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press , 1850; Marshman, J.C., *Guide book For Moonsiffs, Sudder Ameens and Principal Sudder Ameens Containing all the Rules Necessary for the Conduct of Suits in Their Courts*, Calcutta: 1832; Marshman, J.C., *Guide to the Revenue Regulations of the residencies of Bengal and Agra Containing all the Unrepealed Enactments of Government in Revenue Matters*, 2 vols., Serampore: Baptist Mission Press, 1835; Marshman, J.C., *Guide to the Civil Laws of the Presidencies of Fort William, Containing all the Unrepealed Regulations, acts, constructions and Circular Orders of the Government and Select and Summary Reports of the Sudder Courts*, Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1842.

Almost all histories of India written by the British on modern paradigm, from the end of eighteenth century to the middle of nineteenth century, seem to be the outcome of the legal researches of British administrator-jurists in the Indian past. The primacy of 'historical method' in the understanding of indigenous customary and religious law and in the British debate on Indian administration necessitated the introduction of history as an academic discipline. Thus modern historiography of India appears to be a bye-product of British administrators' legal researches.

[The use of history for imperial purposes brings to light a number of anomalies inherent in the British claims and intellectual construction. The centralization of 'historical' in the western intellectual tradition appears to be subordinated to the 'imperial' motives and this conflict can be perceived as a conflict of 'intellectual' and 'imperial' mind. The imperial motives subverted the claims that India was being seen under the western intellectual paradigm and that British were presenting what they had observed. The romance of the exploration of an ancient and sister civilization, appear to be challenged by an imperial distrust on the indigenous people and system. This nature of imperial motive seems unable to differentiate between the 'human curiosity' to understand human society and its past and interest base interpretation of colonized people's past. This nature has prevailed in the post colonial indigenous understanding of South Asian Past.]

5

Antecedents, Precedents and Tradition: The Early Nineteenth Century English Historiographic Literature on India

Literature and history evolve around every aspect of life. Although, modern scientific classifications have separated the two fields, yet, the concern of the two approaches with the human experience combines them together. History and literature come together in two ways: First that history is the part of literature, if literature is the 'use of a language for human expression'. Thus, historiography is a sort of literature restricted by the evaluation of facts; second that all literature is history as history even deals with the fictions and imaginations of the people and nations as well as literature reflects the facts of authors' contemporary times, either verifiable or not. In this perspective, whatsoever may be the interpretations of two concepts, they interact very closely with each other. In the same way, literature becomes baseless without a reference to a significant fact. Even myths and fictions represent a psychic reality of human mind and mental calibre and approaches to life. That is the context in which this paper focuses on the English historiographic literature on India.

The British interaction with India had begun by the time of Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1605-1627) and a lot had been written on the aspects of India in English language till the end of the eighteenth century, all by the British. However, these writings were 'historical' in the form of observations but

did not come into terms with the restricted form and discipline of history and historiography. These historical writings began to come into the form of historiography by the end of the eighteenth century.[1] Therefore, to grasp the British tradition of historiography of India, this is an attempt to explore the antecedent and precedents of the early English historiographic literature on India, contributed by the British.

The British tradition of historiography of India has been widely criticized for the views it has generated about Indians, either Hindus, Muslims or ethnic identities. It had played a vital role in the formation of public opinion in Britain as well as in the formation of the policy of the British East India Company in India. Therefore, if on the one hand, it has been recognized as 'imperial literature', 'colonial historiography' or 'masks of conquests', on the other hand, it has been highlighted as 'vehicle of change', 'tool of modernization' and as a commitment to 'make the world civilized'. So the evaluation of the early English historiographic literature on India, in the perspective of antecedents and precedents and the formation of the historiographic tradition, becomes utmost important.

The British tradition of historiography of India seems to be connected, on the one hand, with the pre-British tradition of historiography in India and, on the other hand, with the British perception of history in general and Indian history in particular. Therefore, the pre-colonial Indian tradition of historiography was antecedent and the early-colonial British tradition of historiography of India was precedent for the early English tradition of historiographic literature on India.

Antecedents for the Early English Historiographic Literature on India

Pre-British tradition of Indian historiography is considered synonymous with medieval Muslim

1 See Muhammad Shafique Bhatti, 'British Historiography of India: A Study in the Late Eighteenth Century Shift of Interest', Quarterly *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society,* vol. L, no. 3, July-September 2003, pp. 85-104.

historiography of India.[2] The ancient Indian society did not have a very strong sense of historiography. As a result there is a dearth of historical literature on ancient period. Hindu tradition of history was based on mythological compilations such as Vedas, Shastaras, Mahabharta, and Ramayana or on numismatical and archaeological evidences.[3] Therefore, the early English historians either neglected the early history of India or tried to interpret it in fictional and mythological terms.[4] The tradition of historiography in India began with the establishment of Muslim rule in India.

The Muslims imported strong and vibrant tradition of history-writing to India[5] which seems to be a continuity of Arabic-Persian Muslim tradition of historiography. The Muslim historical literature was in the form of biographies, chronicles, political history, contemporary history (ma'athir), or administrative rules, or, in the form of travelogues. Some of it was strictly official history and some of it was politically sponsored. There was, however, a corpus of non-sponsored and unofficial historical literature as well.[6] This tradition has been divided into Sultanate and Mughal periods of Muslim rule. History of Sultanate period or medieval India 'meant for the historians of medieval India political history and only has meant political history'[7]. It seems to have administrative purposes. Naturally, it focused on the contemporary history in terms of dynasties, individual rulers, distinguished nobles,

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2 J. S. Grewal, *Medieval India: History and Historians*, Amritsar: Guru Nanak University Press, 1975, p.32.

3 See R.C. Majumdar, 'Idea of History in Sanskrit Literature' in C. H. Philips, ed., *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 13-28; A. K. Narain, 'Numismatists and Historical Writing' in C. H. Philips, *op. cit.,* pp. 94-102. Also see James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han*, 2 vols., Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1982, vol.I, p.1-3.

4 See Muhammad Shafique Bhatti, *op. cit*.

5 C. A. Bayly, "Modern Indian Historiography", in Machael Bentley, ed., *Companion to Historiography*, London: Routledge, 1997, p.679.

6 Peter Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India*, London: Luzac, 1960, passim.

7 *Ibid.,* pp. 6-7.

sufis and officials.[8] Although, their subject matter remained confined to the activities of ruling elite, matters related to wars and conquests[9] and to the suggestions and admonitions for the rulers and ruling elite,[10] yet, all histories begin with a firm declaration, on the part of rulers and writers, of belief in Islam[11] and have contents related to cultural history.[12] However, a number of poetic sources, religious and mystical literature and travelogues, too, have been considered as a great contribution to medieval historical literature. All these sources appear to be in Persian, the cultural language of Muslim political elite, who were a minority religious and ethnic community in India.

The historians of Medieval Sultanate period 'critically evaluated the activities of the rulers in the light of the dictates of religion as endorsed by the 'Ulema' and the 'best practices, they themselves acknowledged'.[13] However, 'not criticizing individuals and personalities directly' but 'critically evaluating actions' along with the identification of personal belief of the people under evaluation, seem to be their guiding principle.[14] In this perspective, medieval historiography had a purposive outlook to strengthen the Muslim empire in India. It was a means 'to inform the Sultan, the Ulema' and the Umra' of the actions of the past rulers and their consequences, so that they could plan their actions and role in the light of memories of past and to make the

8 See for example Ziya' al-din Barani, *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Urdu trans. Syed Moin ul Haq, Lahore, 1969; Minhaj al Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasri*, Urdu trans. Ghulam Rasul Maher, 2 vols., Lahore, 1985; Hasan Nizami, Ta'j-al Ma'sir, English tr. Hasan Askari, *Patna University Journal*, 1963, pp. 49-127 and Yahya ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah al-Sihrindi, *Ta'rikh-i-Mubarak Shahi,* Urdu trans. Aftab Asghar, Lahore, 1986.

9 P. Hardy, *op. cit.,* p. 3.

10 Ali Hamdani, *Zakherah-tal-Muluk*, Amritsar, 1905; Amir Khusrau, *Khazain al-Futuh,* Eng. trans. M. Habib, Madras, 1931.

11 Khurram Qadir, 'Medieval Historiography of Muslim India: The Sultanate Period (1206-1451 A. D.)', in *Quarterly Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. L, No. 3 (July-Sep. 2002.), pp.23-53, p. 25.

12 P. Hardy, *op. cit*., pp.iv,

13 Khurram Qadir, *op. cit.,* p. 25.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

public aware of the achievements and failures of the rulers.[15] This purpose attached the Muslim historians with what P. Hardy called 'general history of the Muslim World'[16] and led them to draw inferences and principles from history which is called 'philosophy of history'.[17] This attitude was largely influenced by the religious and mystical belief system of Islam.[18]

The later historians of South Asia, whether Mughal or British, adopted this 'ready made'[19] tradition of medieval Muslim historiography for the development of modern historiographic premises.[20] It had politico-administrative leaning, with a focus on contemporary history, with the same purpose of guidance and information for rulers and the public in the exotic Persian language of minority ruling community.[21] Yet, the Mughals brought about a big change in this tradition as a result of two centuries of freedom from external invasions and an enduring peace within the empire that provided a requisite environment for the socio-cultural

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15 *Ibid*., p.30.

16 P. Hardy, 'Some Studies in Pre-Mughal Muslim Historiography', in C. H. Philips, *op. cit.,* pp. 115-27, p. 117.

17 The same type of work on a higher scale and more systematic method was being done by Ibn Khaldun in North Africa about the same time. Ziya al-din Barani's *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* has been considered as a complementary to his *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* same as Ibn Khaldun's *Prolegomena* and Macheivelli's *Prince* are complementary to their histories.

18 See Abdur Rashid, 'The Treatment of History by Muslim Historians in Sufi Writings', in C. H. Philips, *op. cit.,* pp. 128-138. Also see Dr. Khurram Qadir, *op. cit.* pp. 24-26.

19 R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946, p, 234. According to this theory, the essential things in history are memory and authority. History is thus believing someone else when he says that he remembers something.

20 P. Hardy, *op. cit*., p. 7.

21 21 There are so many works written on the model of sultanate historiography such as Khond Mir's *Habibus Siyar, and Dastur-ul-Wuzra*, Abbas Khan Sarwani's *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, Ahmad Yadgar's *Trikh-i-Shahi*, Harawi's *Tarikh-i-Khan Jahani*, Nizamuddin's *Tabaqat-i-Akbary*, Abul Fazal's *Akbar Nama*, etc. For a view of the Persian language influence on Mughal historiography see Humaira Arif Dasti, 'Persian Influence on the Historiography of Mughal India', in *Journal of Research (Humanities), Bahauddin Zakiriya University, Multan,* vol. 21 (2003), pp. 59-68.

advancement, economic prosperity and all round development. The Mughal rulers were fond of literary pleasures and this peace and tranquillity strengthened this attitude. They strengthened the tradition of memoirs in autobiography and biography by the members of ruling dynasty, both male and female, and focused on the cultural aspects of the dynasty along with political aspects.[22] Akbar's reign provided stimuli to the innovative trends. On the one hand, he promoted the culture of translation[23] and on the other hand, simultaneously with translations, a tradition of collection of records seems to be developing during the reign to systematize the administration of the government. Khwand Amir had already written a treatise entitle *Qanun-i-Humayuni* (Humayun's Laws). Abul Fazal edited *Ain-i-Akbari (*The Constitution of Akbar) and collected his official letters under the titles of *Ruqat-i-Abul Fazal* (Abul Fazal Papers) and *Muktubat-i-Allami* (Letters of Allami). The tradition seems to be followed by the early English historians of India.[24] This was the beginning of a 'rational secular' tradition of Indian historiography which has been taken as a source of transformation of Mughal Empire into a nation state by a large number of modern historians, Western as well as Indian. From that time a sort of conflict in terms of dialectics between Islam and Hinduism, empire and regionalism secularism and communalism and between orthodoxy and modernism, in the approaches to understand the Indian history, is clearly visible, which seems to be inherited by the British. However, a number of historians widened their scope to whole dynasties or tried to evaluate a broader period of past as a process of history. Badaoni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh (*Selection from Histories) was a comprehensive

22 *Tuzak-i-Babri*, *Humayun Nama* and *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* can be taken as examples of this tradition. See Annette Susannah Beveridge, tr., *The Babarnama,* London: Luzac, 1922; *The History of Humayun (Humayun Nama)*, Oriental Translation Series-1, 1901, Indian reprint, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1972.

23 For example Badaoni translated *Ramayna* from ancient Sanskrit to Persian and translated one half of *Mahabharta*.

24 See for a discussion on the subject Abdur Rashid, *op. cit.* pp. 128-38.

history of India from the time of Ghaznavids to the fortieth year of Akbar's reign. A history of the Muslim world up to one thousand years of Hijra era was compiled by the orders of Akbar by Maulana Ahmad Badaoni and others. This trend of evaluation of a complete span of time culminated later in the history written by Muhammad Qasim Farishta. His *Tarikh-i-Farishta (History by Farishta)* became very popular among the generations coming after.

The same tradition seems to prevail during the later Mughal period. The emphasis of historians was either on the contemporary political history or on the religious aspects.[25]

Precedents for the Early English Historiographic Literature on India

The British historians of India were impressed by three-fold tradition of historiography: historiography at home (in Europe and Britain), in colonies other than India and in India. The early tradition of English historiography, primarily, was based on folklore, cultural traditions, travelogues, biographical sketches, memoirs and official or personal records. It was dominated by a religious sense of understanding of history. Since the 16th century, under the influence of the renaissance and the reformation, a sense of classical history (on the model of the art, literature and civilization of Greece and Rome) had become the ideal of the European intellectuals. However, enlightenment turned this antiquarian attitude back to the track of contemporary and political history.

The enlightenment introduced some powerful elements in the concept of historiography which has continued to dominate the historians' mind, method and morality to date. It shifted the focus of historical narration from divine forces to the arena of human activity. Social and cultural aspects of history gradually gained popularity. History became the tool for the consolidation of human thought rather than just an

25 Mir Ghulam Hussain Tabatabai's *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, tr. John Briggs, London: General Book Club, n.d. First published 1832; Shah Waliullah's (1703-1762) writings on religious matters represent these two trends.

element of amusement for people.[26] It secularized every department of human life and thought and in this way emerged as a 'crusade against Christianity' in the writings of Vico, Voltaire and Hume.[27] In this sense, Hume's *History of England* had become a symbolic expression of rational enlightened trends.[28] It resembles the conflict which had emerged during the reign of Akbar in the historiography of India. By the beginning of nineteenth century, history had acquired a form of philosophy (a philosophy of history) in Europe's intellectual tradition. Montesquieu saw the history in term of a natural process and Gibbon explained it in the form of historical laws of nature. Yet, religious spirit with a shift to new symbols continued to work in European mind.[29] A trend of using history for the derivation of principles and patterns of behaviour became dominant. The philosophers, theorists and politicians, all applied the historical evidences for the evaluation of their premises and policies.[30]

The French and the German romanticists seem to be widening the scope of history. Rousseau extended the understanding of the role of man from men in power to common man and revived the culture of Renaissance.[31] His focus was on the diversity of culture and civilizations in the world. Herder saw human life closely associated with natural world.[32] It was Kant who tried to combine the Enlightenment and Romanticism through his *An Idea for a Universal History from the Cosmopolitan Point of View* published in 1784. His themes had become popular at the end of eighteenth century, which also promoted the themes of Orientalism.

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26 See Patrick Gardiner, ed., *Theories of History*, New York: The Free Press, 1959, passim.

27 R. G. Collingwood, *op. cit.,* pp.76-78.

28 Hume, *History of England*, London: Davis, 1785.

29 R. G. Collingwood, *op. cit.,* p.81.

30 G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1988, p. 8.

31 R. G. Collingwood, *op. cit.,* pp. 86-7.

32 *Ibid.*, p.89.

In this perspective, the first half of nineteenth century seems to be a period for the growth of divergent historical assumptions and premises with a widened spatial and temporal scope. German romanticists' focus on ancient Greece and Roman culture, civilization and politics along with languages and religion linked historical studies with the medieval times.[33] The spirit of inquiry and method of criticism began to develop new social science, which seems to be greatly influencing the tradition of early English Historiographic literature on India.

[This tradition was cultivated by then contemporary political concerns of the West, equally relevant to the British concerns with South Asia. Passing through a religious conflict in the form of Hundred Years War, Europe has begun a struggle for colonies. This struggle was basically a part of rise of trade and commerce and the emerging sense of nationalism was sustaining this struggle. The conflict of new intellectual forces and paradigms with traditional political system has taken the form of the conflict between liberals and conservatives, led by France and England. Since the American War of Independence 1774-1778, India had been the centre of this conflict, but by the rise of Napoleon I, Europe became the theatre of War. Although the decline of Napoleon was considered the triumph of traditional conservative system, a dialectics between traditional system and new forces had become permanent part of European politics. This division has promoted a polar system or what is called 'alliance system' in Europe to maintain the balance of power. The understanding of these developments was potentially influencing the historiographic purposes and premises.]

The British historiographers, during the first half of nineteenth century followed the same tradition. Politics, language, literature, laws, customs, ethics and human nature seem to be the dominant fields of interest among all schools of thought and had become burning issues. These aspects

33 See for details G. P. Gooch, *op. cit.,* pp. 14-120.

of then contemporary philosophical-intellectual debate in Europe, were generating motivations for early English Historiography of India. Three main themes seem to be dominating the mind of British historians: First was association of contemporary British society with the continuity of historical process as was presented par excellence by Hallam in his *Sketch of Europe in the Middle Ages*;[34] Second was a tendency of writing biographical works to identify the role of man in history which seems to be done by a lot of historians and can best be seen in Carlyle's *On Heroes and Hero Worship*[35] and third was the presentation of religious history in a secular way, as was best done by Macaulay as *History of England*.[36] These trends seem to be determining the approaches of the British historians.[37] However tradition of writing on the colonial subjects seems to be dominating during the period and *History of England* was being viewed in its relations with the British colonies. In the tradition of historiography of colonies, America and West Indies seem to be dominating the British interest. Three examples of such interests were P. Colquhoun's *A Treatise on the Wealth, Power and Resources of the British Empire in the every Quarter of the World, Including East Indies*,[38] Bryan Edwards' *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies*[39] and John McGregor's *British America*.[40] However Robertson's *History of America* remained a classic on

34 See Hallam, *Sketch of Europe in the Middle Ages*, London: Alex Murray & Sons, 1869, first published 1818.

35 See Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship and Heroic in History*, London: H. Milford, 1928, first published in 1841.

36 See T. B. Macaulay, *History of England*, London: Heron Books, 1967, first published, 1846.

37 Legouis and Cazamian, *History of English Literature,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 1030-41. Also see G. P. Gooch, *op. cit.*, chapter xiv and xvi.

38 Second edition, London, 1815.

39 Two Volumes, London, 1793.

40 Two Volumes, London, 1832.

colonial history[41] and after the independence of American colonies, India seems to be making the core of interest for colonial historiography.

In this tradition of European and particularly British historiography, a particular vision of India seems to have emerged. A criticism of state, society and religion, identified with the Muslims, was a common practice among the authors of this school. However, a sense of world history had been developed among the European historians since the 15th century. The understanding of the phenomena of decline and fall of empires, states and societies had been the most popular form of narration of history.[42] Liberalism,[43] romanticism, humanitarianism and industrial revolution[44] were the forces influencing then current streams of historical thought. In spite of all this, European expansionism and colonialism continued to dominate all these enlightened trends in thought and action.[45]

The Early English Tradition of Indian Historiographic Literature

The Muslim rule in India lasted for several centuries. In the nineteenth century, the British gained complete power in India. Aiming to preserve the British interest in Eastern trade through colonial expansion, the British East India Company had begun to expand its control over the Indian states since 1757 and occupied the entire Indian subcontinent within a century. During the second half of eighteenth century, the British extended their influence to local politics and the

41 William Robertson, *History of America,* Edinburgh: T. Cadell, 1771.

42 One popular example of this trend is Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. It was published in seven volumes. First volume appeared in 1776 and last in 1788. It has been reprinted for several times.

43 For details see D. Forbes' *The Liberal Anglican Idea of History*, Cambridge, 1952.

44 For a detailed study of industrial revolution see W. Cunningham*, The Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1882.

45 Also see chapter one, pp.

nineteenth century brought the supremacy of British power in India into sharp focus.[46] A long period of political contacts with India had developed the interest of British writers in the subject of Indology[47] and especially in Indian history, which was considered a part of the discipline of Indology.[48]

The British also inherited the tradition of historiography along with government and politics from the Indian Muslims.[49] Their understanding of Indian history was confined either to contemporary political and cultural history or to 'ready made history' in the form of translations of works on Muslim period by the Muslims. Fraser's *The History of Nadir Shah* published in 1742, was an embodiment of British interest in the contemporary Indian history.[50] Francois Bernier's *The History of the Late Revolution of the Empire of Great Mogol*[51] and Francois Catrou's *The General History of the Mogol Empire*[52] had already been translated into English in 1671 and 1695, respectively. By the late eighteenth century, the British began to add to the Muslim tradition and combined it with the traditions, methods, techniques, premises, ideas and problems which were being applied or discussed in then current European intellectual community. Robert Crane is of the opinion that:

> Of the published volumes on Indian history, probably, the largest part has been contributed by English historians… the great English

46 See for details P. E. Roberts, *History of British India under the Company and Crown*, ed. by T.G.P. Spear, London: Oxford University Press, 1958.

47 The British interest in India was so high that they began to consider Indian state, society, religions, politics, culture, manners, customs, arts, sciences, natural resources, soil and produce a specified field of study. It was termed as Indology. Sir William Jones is taken as the Father of Indology. For details see S. N. Mukherjee's *Sir William Jones,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 73-121.

48 See chapter 2 and 3.

49 Michael Bentley, ed., *op. cit*., p.680.

50 See Fraser, *The History of Nadir Shah*, London: W. Straban, 1742.

51 Francois Bernier, *The History of the Late Revolution of the Empire of Great Mogol,* Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1891, first published in English 1671.

52 Francois Catrou's *The General History of the Mogol Empire*, London: Trubner, 1826, first published in English, 1695.

> Orientalists of the nineteenth century who recovered much of the basic material of India's past... certain biases …tended to characterize… part of the product of English scholarship on India… [Partly] from the importation of European attitude… [and partly due to] a tendency to put too much reliance -especially for the period of British Indian history-upon [the] official viewpoint, and an emphasis on purely political or quasi-dynastic history. Some of the best known volumes [stress] what the rulers were doing…

In practice, it has meant that British histories of India had tended to under emphasize Indian social history, or Indian economic history. Being the rulers of India for a long time, the information collected by the British was considered reliable and authentic. Without the images projected by them, European and American intellectuals would know very little of the history of India today. Even though, initially, other European nations such as Portuguese, Dutch, Germans and French, contributed a great deal to the knowledge in this field, yet the attitude of the English speaking people towards India was affected largely by the British historiography.[53]

What Edward Said has written about the nature of Orientalism, may equally be applied to the nature of British historiography of India. The British, saw the history of India through folk tradition, observations, journey, and through fable. There were biases and interests working behind their premises. He writes: "under the general heading of the knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of Western hegemony" a complex concept of the Orient emerged which was "suitable for study in academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction on the colonial office… for instances of economic and sociological theories of development....".[54] Even more relevant are his comments in his concluding chapter. Now, one of the important development in nineteenth-century Orientalism was the distillation of essential ideas about the Orient — its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality,

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53 Robert I. Crane, *The History of India: Its Study And Interpretation*, Washington: Service Centre for Teachers of History, 1958, pp. 5-6.

54 Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conception of the Orient*, London: Routledge, 1985, pp.8-9.

its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness, — into a separate and unchallenged coherence; thus for a writer to use the word Oriental was a reference for the readers sufficient to identify a specific body of information about the Orient.[55]

British study of Indian history and the resultant emerging tradition of historiographic literature were primarily a political need[56], which later adopted the form of social and cultural history.[57] Mill[58] and Elphinstone[59] made it into a comparative study of the three civilizations. It was an active response to the problems of Indian administration. Initially it aimed to satisfy British self-interest and curiosity about India. In the nineteenth century, it became a tool to influence the government policies toward India in Britain and in the subcontinent. In this way, primary importance in British tradition of Indian historiography was given to British Indian Empire. Its focus was the contemporary discussion in administration, in religion, in politics and in philosophy. The first institution under the British auspices for the promotion of English language among the local people was established in 1834 at Bombay.[60] About the same time, in 1836, Persian language was removed from the government offices. One can deduce that British historiography of India was in fact responsible for moulding British opinion in matters relating to

55 *Ibid.*, p.205.

56 And early British works on Indian history were aiming at an understanding of Indian system of state, society and religion. So it were primarily translations from the histories written by the Indian Muslims. For example Alexander Dow's *The History of Hindostan* (London, 1968-72) published in three volumes was based primarily on Muhammad Qasim Farishta's *Tarikh-i-Farishta*. Elliot & Dowson's *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, London: Trubner, 1867-1877 is the sole example of this trend of translating Indian history written by indigenous writers for political needs.

57 See for example Thomas Maurice's *The History of Hindostan; Its Arts and Its Sciences*, London, 1795.

58 James Mill, *History f British India*, 3 vols., Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1817.

59 Mountstuart Elphinstone, *History of India*, 2 vols., London: A. Spottiswoodi, 1841.

60 J.S. Cotton, *Rulers of India: Mountstuart Elphinstone*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892, p.196.

Indian policies. There was a very small class of locals in India (at this time) who could read and understand the English language. But there was a large British community with definite opinions on matters in India. It, therefore, makes sense that British historiography, at the beginning of the nineteenth century should be considered with reference to home consumption.[61] We could say that it was a statement by the British administration and for the British readers. What Robert Crane writes about the post War of Independence 1857 British historiography can equally be applicable to the period prior to the War of Independence. He writes:

> ...there was a tendency among the English writers, many of whom had been officials, to act as apologists for the government of India. As Indian nationalism developed and the nationalist attacks on the administration increased in vigor [vigour] and frequency, there was almost perceptible movement by the beleaguered British to close ranks and defend the record.[62]

Perhaps it would be too harsh to say that British historiographers were apologists for the government of India. However, their works provided a justification of British expansionism and for the satisfaction of European readers and intellectuals. All schools of the British thought were in conformity with the colonial agenda. However, their differences were visible on the issues of identity of Indian communities, nature of administration and British relations with, and the treatment of the Indian subjects. To argue and decide on these matters European themes of thought were forming the central structure of their works. C.H. Philips, in the introduction of his famous edited volume *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* writes that in the British historiography:

> ...Indian past, for instance, was assumed to be much the same like the European present and European categories of thought, not only in the field of history, were automatically applied. Moreover as the

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61 A number of British writer seem to be focusing the interest of the British readership in Indian affairs as a motivating force working behind their literary skill. For example see Ms Meer Hasan Ali*, Observations on the Mussulmauns of India*, London: Parbury & Co.., 1832.

62 Robert I. Crane, *op. cit.*, pp.6-7.

> idea of progress became identified with the extension of European influence, throughout the world this Europocentric [Europe Centric] view became characteristic also of Western historians, generally, whatsoever their field of inquiry... .[63]

This tendency led to the establishment of new socio-political and philosophical schools, which not only influenced the British Indian policy but also influenced European intellectual tradition as well. This activity was influenced by a number of intellectual traditions: enlightenment,[64] romanticism, liberalism,[65] utilitarianism,[66] evangelicalism, etc. By the beginning of nineteenth century, four trends were under sharp focus: oriental romance, ethno-regional romance, utilitarianism and Christian mission. Liberalism and paternalism were influencing all four trends and traditions. Oriental romanticists accepted the civilized status of Indian society and, in this way, were anxious to preserve it. They were the great arbitrators for the policy of non-interference and non-intervention in Indian society. In this regard, they were called champions of local cause. The writings of William Jones, Colebrook, Thomas Maurice and Mountstuart Elphinstone are considered the classics of the early English writings on India. The ethno-regional romanticists focused on the diversity of Indian cultures and, in this way, were identifying India as a continent or subcontinent inhabited by a number of nations, having a common civilization. The writings on the regions and ethno-cultural groups were the contribution of that group to the early English historiographic literature on India.

The Utilitarian was the new socio-political reformist school, analyzing the socio-political institutions through the

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63 C.H. Philips, *op. cit.,* p.8.

64 For a detailed study of the trends developing during the enlightenment see Harold Nicolson's *The Age of Reason 1700-1789*, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961.

65 The influence of English liberalism on historiography is discussed in detail by J.W. Burrow in his book *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

66 See for details Eric Stokes' *The English Utilitarians and India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982.

concept of "utility" of historical institutions for the society on the "principle of happiness". They claimed the superiority of European civilization on Indian civilization and were the champions of the cause of importing western civilization to India. They accepted the challenge of "white men's burden to make the world civilized". For that, they were the advocates of radical social change in India. Mill and Macaulay were the great exponents of this schools.

The Missionary school saw the superiority of Christian religion in the form of European imperialism. They presented the European expansionism as a divine proof of the righteousness of Christian religion. So they were the propagator of Christian creed in India and wanted to Christianize the Indian society.[67]

In this context, the early tradition of English historiographic literature on India appears to be based on the antecedent of Muslim historiography of India. It took the purpose, contents and forms from the Muslims and set its model and premises on the late eighteenth century European model of thought system. Although, the early English historiographic literature took different forms, yet, it was motivated by the political and imperial motives with a sense of superiority of Western especially British civilization on the rest of the world. As the nineteenth century was developing a contest of ideas among the western intellectuals, therefore early English historiographic literature on India provided a battlefield for that contest. By the introduction of English language in India, western approach began to dominate the mind of the Indian people, either Hindu or Muslims. Simultaneously, the western approach converted the early British understanding of India as Muslim India to Hindu India. The contribution of these schools of

67 Among the missionaries a number of writers contributed to the English historical literature on India. Among them Carry, William Ward, J. Marshman, John Clark Marshman, Heber, Massie, Henry Martyn and East India Company's so many servants working for the Christianization of India are well reputed. Their contribution to English Historiographic literature on India needs an extended research on academic level.

western thought need elaborated studies to understand the modern western mind make up with reference to the region now called South Asia.

6

Discourse on Christianisation of India: William Tennant's British Self-Righteousness and Future Impression

The postmodern structuralists and revisionists, on the model of Edward W. Said[1], Michel Foucault[2] and Subaltern Studies Group[3], have associated the Christian missions very closely with the colonial mission. An indigenous Indian Christian Jacob S. Dharmaraj believes that "colonizers and missionaries sailed on the same boat" and "gun and gospel were carried on the same ship". Therefore, he finds a close relation between the "European Christian mission in India" and "the wider colonial structure of which it was a part", especially in "monetary injustice". He write:

> This economic injustice, which was in practice consciously or unconsciously within the missionary structure during the colonial era, is not completely absent in Western mission involvement in developing societies even today.[4]

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1 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Concept of the Orient*, London: Routledge, 1985.

2 Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge, tr. Colin Gordon, Brighton: Harvester, 1980. pp.80-81.

3 Founded by Ranajit Guha, an Indian Bengali Historian, the group stresses on the study of history of the social groups and constructs of the past the contribution of which are generally ignored.

4 Jacob S. Dharmaraj, *Colonialism and Christian Missions: Postcolonial Reflections*, Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1993, pp. xvi-xvii.

In the same way, Wishwanathan considers the British missionaries' educational pursuits as "the Masks of Conquests"[5] and P. J. Marshal[6] and Robert Eric Frykenburg[7] owe the "Discovery" and "Construction" of Hinduism to the missionaries' supported imperialists, especially, the bureaucratic hierarchy of the intellectuals. Jaffery Cox approaches the current problems of the Christian communities in the non-European world in its relation to the emergence of the Christian communities through the work of the imperial missions. He seems to be of the view that the missionaries found converts from the lower classes of society who had very little concern with the Christian religion than their concern to find benefits from the Imperial ruling class. That "Imperial Fault Line", he takes as a blow to the diffusion of Christian creed in India.[8] These themes are applied to the main stream nineteenth and twentieth century missionary-colonialists interrelation and interaction. However, prior to this era, the eighteenth century is considered an era of conflict between the missionaries and the government of the British East India Company. It was considered the culmination of anti-religious, deistic trends in the Western thought and politics. A reactionary romance of Christian religion escalated the evangelical revival which gave birth to the Evangelical Party in the Church of England, 'Clapham Sect' and to the 'multiplication of the new denominations of Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodism', which became an 'integral part of the colonial political structure and accumulated result of Western cultural practice'[9]. In this context, Stephen Neil observes that the economic and imperial upsurge of Europe was accompanied

5 Wishwanathan, *The Masks of Conquests*, London: Faber, 1990.

6 P. J. Marshal, ed., *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

7 Robert Eric Frykenburg, "Construction of Hinduism at the Nexus of History and Religion", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 23/3 (winter 1993), pp. 523-50.

8 Jaffery Cox, *Imperial Fault Line: Christianity and Imperial Power in India 1818-1940*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

9 Jacob S. Dharmaraj, *op. cit*., p. xix.

by an unforeseen religious awakening that affected almost every Christian dominion in every country of the West.[10] However, the enlightened deism made the church and the missions man-centred. Simultaneously, failing to affect and answer the quarries of the rationalist mind potentially and facing crucial problems in Europe, the church shifted its centre of activities to the non-Christian world.

The Western trading companies, expanding their interest to the imperial and colonial goals, had very strong reservations on the missionary activities in their monopolised and subdued areas and regions with a view that any attempt to convert the indigenous population to Christianity could create antagonism against the Western trade companies among the indigenous people. Therefore, the British East India Company had officially restricted the missionary activities in the areas administered by the company. Yet, the company's servants continued to work in collaboration with the missionaries in their personal capacities. These servants not only initiated a discourse to open up the company's territories for the missionaries, rather they themselves supported the work of Evangelisation and tried to seek the company's support for the missions and the missionaries. Although, a number of missionaries and officials contributed to the discourse, the role of the company's officials becomes more acute in the sense that they internally influenced the policy of the company. By the efforts of the company's officials in the Charter Act of 1813, the missionaries were allowed to work in the territories of the British East India Company. The shift in the policy of the British East India Company can best be understood through the contribution of officials who had been attached with the company in this debate and discourse on the importance of missionary work for the Christianisation of India.

By the initiation of the campaign for the role of the British East India Company in the Evangelisation of India, there

10 Stephen Neil, *A History of Christian Missions*, London: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 250.

began a series of apologetic writings to influence the British public opinion as well as the company's policies. Among these apologetic writings, William Tenant (1756-1813) developed an extended argument on the bases of British self-assertion. William Tennant refused to accept the view of exploitations of the company in India and presented Evangelisation as a compensation thereof for Indians. He was of the opinion that the Company's rule was ever best in India and evangelisation of India was indispensable for the permanence of the British rule in India.

The study is constructed with a combination of enlightened man-cantered personality-oriented approach, historical dialectics and post-modern structuralist discourse. A deductive approach forms the core of this model as explained in the introduction. Therefore, ethical assumptions and thematic approach to the relations between religion and empire, working potentially behind the colonialist- missionary alliance in historical perspective of Muslim Rule in India, mark the central argument of the study. This theme cannot be digested without the understanding of colonial tautology and historical hermeneutics of imperial epistemology. In this context, a comparative analytical method, consists of then contemporary and now current issues, images, ideas, either conflicting with or associated with each other, is being adopted to approach the question of nature of discourse on the Christianisation with an emphasis on William Tennant's concept of history and unit of historical studies.

William Tennant (1756-1813)

Although not very famous, William Tennant had been taken as a 'preacher Willie'[11] and a very staunch advocate of missionary activity in India. He spent only a few years in India; however, his observations on Indian affairs were considered worth to the extent that won him the Buchanan Prize for the writings contributing to the intellectual cause of Christian missions and also a Doctorate in mission

11 *The Burns Encyclopaedia*, William Tennant.

theology.[12] Born in a Scottish family, the Tennants, known for their nationalist and Evangelical view, William Tennant was brought up in a very traditional way. Although very little can be found about his personal life, yet famous Scottish poet Robert Burns' poetic Encyclopaedia[13] contains some information about his early life as he was a good friend of William Tennant's brother James Tennant . Educated in a traditional religious-rational system, William Tennant emerged as a religious and Evangelical, devoted all his energies to the cause of preaching of Gospel and became known as "Preacher Willie" in the family and the suburb and later, in the company's hierarchy. During the last decades of the eighteenth century, under the Evangelists' influence, he set sail for India and served about seven years on a temporary post of Chaplain of British Indian Bengal Army at Burhanpur from 1788 to 1795.[14] In 1795, his services were terminated, probably due to his Evangelical zeal, which the East India Company was taking as a threat to its commercial monopoly. He may have got his services confirmed, had he contacted Charles Grant in London, but it seems that he had no contacts with the Company's Evangelical hierarchy at London. Although he submitted a petition for the renewal of his services in 1797, to the company's administration, but in spite of his being only and experienced candidate against a vacant post of Chaplain, he was not allowed to avail the opportunity.[15] His return home in 1803 seems to be an

12 William Tennant, *Thoughts on the Effects of the British Government on the State of India Accompanied with Hints Concerning the Means of Conveying Civil and Religious Instructions to the Natives of That Country,* Edinburgh, n.p., 1807 (hereafter as Tennant, *Thought*), p. vi.

13 Robert Burns wrote the history of the family in a poetic way for the brother of William Tennant, James Tennant under the title of "Epistle to James Tennant" which is published in *The Burns Encyclopaedia*, James Tennant and William Tennant. The Encyclopaedia consists mainly of the history of Scottish houses and is available on line.

14 The Company's Chaplain records at India Office Library, London had no record of William Tennant's services. However his memorandum for his reappointment against a vacant seat of Chaplain to the Company's high official is quoted by Henry Barry Hyde, *Parochial Annals of Bengal*, Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co.., 1901, p. 258.

15 *Ibid.,* p. 251.

indication of his disappointment of winning employment under the Company as well as for missionary activities under the Company's rule in India. He returned to Scotland with a commitment to create public awareness for the need of Evangelisation in India and wrote two books in this context, which won the Buchanan Prize and a Degree of Doctorate in Theology for him.[16]

The purpose of his writings was to express his views, on the basis of his Indian experience, on the issues of the failure of Christian missions in India and to lay down some "suggestions for improvement of the natives through the introduction of western institutions", especially, Christianity. In this perspective, Tennant wanted to guide the missionary institution so that "the application to practice must be safe, if not useful, in forwarding the benevolent intentions" of these excellent institutions.[17] Although taking the then modern western developments as a result of Christian reformation, William Tennant did not considered the development of then emerging modern western institutions as synonym with Christianisation and stressed the need of Christianisation of India[18] in social, political, commercial, colonial, cultural and administrative terms. He had a firm belief in the Christian and British self-righteousness. He divided his arguments in sections called 'stricture'[19] in which he took one issue in every section and tried to analyse that issue through a comparative methodology, with a predetermined view of the superiority of the British and Christianity over the world. He strongly favoured the existing arguments for the conversion of heathens to Protestant Christianity in view of its

16 University of Glasgow granted him a degree of Doctor of Divinity for his work.

17 Tennant, *Thought*, p. vi.

18 In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, their began a trend to equate the development of modern western civilization with the impact of advancement of Christian religion. See for example.

19 This approach was very harshly criticized in the *Edinburgh Review*. See for details "Review of Dr. William Tennant's Indian Recreations", *Edinburgh Review*, vol. IV, 1804, pp. 303-29, vol. IV, 1804. pp. 303-29, p. 315.

importance for the strengthening of the British Empire. His arguments were based on historical pattern.

Tennant's Concept of History

In Tennant's thought, history and experience appear to be one providing lessons to mankind. Tennant saw the history of the world in terms of a predetermined progress of human society "coincide[d] with the intimations of scriptures",[20] like St. Augustine's City of God. The growth and spread of knowledge, through a "more enlarged intercourse between the different nations of the world",[21] seem to be his criterion to evaluate the progress of human society. That is why Christianity appeared in his thought system as synonymous with knowledge and civilization and by the spread of Christianity, he tried to evaluate the progress of knowledge and civilization. In this perspective, the process of history depicts a gradual "down fall of pagan system" and rise of Christianity in the form of the growth and expansion of Christian "common wealth" since the last few centuries of growth of European colonial Empire.[22] The "high attainments of antiquity" seem worthless to Tennant as compared to the achievements of modern civilization, which he identified in its relation with Christianity.[23] Therefore, Tennant's concept of civilization evolves around the religion and morals and he saw the worth of character and role of rulers in society in their relation with the religion and morals. Common people appear to him mere disciples of ruling or religious leadership. In this way, he seems to be advocating the unity of religious and political purpose and leadership to support the cause of the British Empire as well as Christianisation of the world. He believed that a religious harmony among the subjects and rulers could bring peace in society and stabilization in political and administrative system.

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20 Tennant, *Thought,* pp. 200-201.

21 *Ibid.,* p. 201.

22 *Ibid.,* p. 200.

23 *Ibid.,* pp. 200-201.

As an Evangelist, Tennant wanted to convince the British public as well as authorities that mere political and commercial success was not enough for the strength of the British Indian Empire. The strength of the empire lay in the spread of Christian religion. So, relation between religion and Empire was his basic unit of historical studies and a comparison of Hindu, Muslim and British impact on Indian society appears to be his basic focus, attached to the apology for promoting Christianity in India. He studied the state of animal husbandry, products, trade, commerce, administration, territorial limits, people's attachment with the ruling authorities, religious liberties, development and revenues in British India and concludes that India was far better and more developed under the British rule than under the Muslim rule. However, he does not take this success as a source of permanence of the British rule in India and thus tries to suggest the way to prolong or make the British rule permanent in India. For, he discusses the role of religion in the strength of colonial rule and almost comes to the same conclusion, as was that of Ibn Khaldun.[24] Religion, Empire and political economy, especially, agricultural, appear to be his central focus.[25]

India or Muslim rule in India did not form the core of Tennant's thought. He uses large symbolic paradigms such as Asians, Muslims and Eastern to understand the Indian people. He criticises the social and cultural aspects of the Hindu society and political aspects of the Muslims.[26] His views seem sympathetic to the Muslims in a sense that he treats the Muslim rule in India as one of the leading promoters of prosperity among the subject-people through a systematic administration. The picture of a prosperous subject-people indicates good terms between the Muslim

24 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddima, An Introduction to History*, 3 vols., trans. F. Rosenthal, New York: Pantheon Books, 1958.

25 *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1802, Tennant. Also quoted in "Review of Dr. William Tennant's Indian Recreations", *Edinburgh Review*, vol. IV, 1804, p. 314.

26 William Tennant, *Indian Recreations*, Three Volumes, Edinburgh: C. Stewrat, 1803-1808 (hereafter as Tennant, *Recreations*), I, p. 235.

rulers and the Hindu subjects which, Tennant believes to be the result of sound administration. However, Tennant's construction of thought seems to be developed under the influence of his contemporary Evangelical movement as well as historicism, nationalism and colonial motives.

Indian Situation

Tennant was worried about the spread of thought of the French Revolution in India, challenging the British supremacy and increasing the influence of the French. Tipu, the Sultan of Mysore, was a major exponent of French influence as well as the key figure to establish a confederacy to stop the growth of British power.[27] Such attempts were not only harmonious to the existence of the British in India, rather to the Indian people. Tennant rejects the view that comforts of millions of colonized people were injured under the British rule. He highlights a visible progress of natives in knowledge, wealth and happiness under the British.[28] However, the "oriental character and manner", "inveterate prejudices of the Asiatics" and "their habitual and natural indolence of mind" were the hurdles in their progress along with the prejudices of the westerners working for them.[29] Tennant criticizes the "artificial and unnatural division of people" and "ingenuity of man" in India, especially, among Hindus.[30] This criticism expands to the means of subsistence, agriculture, commerce and system of government of the Indians. He declares Indian society backward and rude as compared to the British, even under the Muslims. That is why the system of Indian government was shaken by the expansion of British Indian Empire and by the Company's monopoly.[31]

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27 Tennant, *Thought,* p. 16-17.

28 *Ibid.,* p.2.

29 *Ibid.,* pp. iv-v.

30 "Review of Dr. William Tennant's Indian Recreations", *Edinburgh Review*, vol. IV, 1804, pp. 315-16.

31 *Ibid.,* p. 309.

Tennant takes the improvement of the province of Bengal as important as that of Middlesex and Dublin. To "preserve India and England together" was the most important task for Tennant, which could be achieved through the preservation of the rights of Indian subjects with regard to personal rights and civil liberties.[32]

Tennant's Understanding of Muslim India

Tennant's understanding of Muslim India appeared to be a continuity of traditional Evangelical view of the Muslim society and politics. He considered Muslim India as a model of relations between the Hindus and the non-Hindus and tried to derive principles for the British-Indian relations in the perspective of Indo-Muslim relations, in different ways such as economic, religious and social. Tennant rejected the view that by the unlimited migration of Englishmen, mother country will be depopulated, while the minds of the natives will be alienated by the disrespect, which the European settlers will show to the religion and customs of the country. He negated the view through the interpretation of history of India under the Muslims and tried to generate the view that Muslims, instead of respecting the Hindus, did every thing in their power to show their detestation for the worship, their contempt for the feelings of the Hindu inhabitants and in this way, maintained an unlimited control over the Hindus for many centuries. However, he was of the opinion that the effects of the Muslim conquests must have blunted the feelings and moderated the prejudices of the Hindus. He identified such impacts of "Islamism" in the African countries also.

Tennant perceives Muslims as a religious community and seems to be taking this foundation as the cause of their success. He wanted a place for Christian religious devotees in the policymaking. He believed that: '…By the effects of the Muslim missions, customs of Islamism were adopted and a great degree of comparative civilization and security were

32 *Ibid.,* pp.303-5

introduced on the laws of Quran…'.[33] In this perspective, he advocates a harsh policy to reform and convert the Indians Hindus. However, Akbar appears to be an exception of this policy:

> The reign of Akbar was distinguished by a degree of tolerance altogether uncommon under Mohammedan [Muslim] government. That monarch revered as "Agustus of Asia", not only afforded equal protection to the adherents of every sect, but discovered a strong inclination to become acquainted with the peculiar tenets of Christian doctrines.[34]

As a whole, Tennant presented all oriental system including Islam, as full of defects and devoid of morality.[35] Yet, he emphasised the adoption of the religio-political policy of the Muslims, in spite of its defects on the ground that sound Christian morality along with the benefits of European developments will contribute to the strength of the British Empire.[36]

Comparison of Indian State and Society under Mughals and British

Tennant very minutely compared the state of Indian commerce, trade, products, communal relations, happiness and administrative efficiency under the Mughals with that of the British to draw inferences for evaluation of British rule in India and for the future policy suggestions. Tennant applied Patton's *Principles of Asiatic Monarchies*[37] and Volney's statements[38] regarding the Turkish Sultans, identifying them as stationary, semi-barbarous, having absolute powers, suppression and tyranny, to the Indo-Muslim rule and criticised the absence of check and balance, deficiency in

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33 *Ibid.,* p.327.

34 Tennant, *Recreations,* vol. III, p. 337.

35 *Ibid.,* vol. III, p.234.

36 *Ibid.,* vol. III, p.217.

37 Patton, *Principles of Asiatic Monarchies, Politically and Historically Investigated and Contrasted with those of the Monarchies of Europe, Showing the Dangerous Tendency of Confounding them in the Administration of Affairs of India*, London: J. Debritt, 1801.

38 C. F. Volney, *The Ruin, or A Survey of the Revolutions of the Empire*, tr. by James Marshal, Otley: Woodstock Books, 2000.

affording the protection to the people and loss of virtue and spirit due to the despotism in the Mughal Empire. However, he accepted that the regulations of the Mughal Empire might be excellent.[39]

Tennant showed his surprise at the extent of the Mughal Empire and on its prosperous state, [40] despite the fact that the Indians were "never raised to the character of commercial people".[41] Taking natives and Hindus synonyms for each other and Muslims as foreigners, he confessed that under the Mughals, the natives (Hindus) were living a prosperous life. He discusses the property, security, land revenue system, judicial system, police system and such problems in details and accepted that the Hindus were in a better state under the Great Mughals.

Tennant found the seeds of the destruction of the Mughal Empire in its structure. There was a sort of political instability, warfare and destruction of social and political system during the later period of the Mughals. The princes and administrators were promoting lawlessness and contributing a greater share in the violence.[42] This state of affairs had become worse because of divine punishment in the form of natural plights such as famines and diseases.[43]

Discussing the extent of those calamities, which the native provinces had suffered from their subjugation by the British, and answering 'whether the comforts of millions of our fellow creatures are to be injured by the great increase of Western influence in the East — a question of more importance, Tennant appears as an apologist.[44] He was of the opinion that the Indians and the British were on good terms with each other. Their government was based on a liberal and humane treatment of the natives and was

39 Tennant, *Recreations*, vol. III, pp.70-80.

40 *Ibid.,* vol. III, pp. 168-69.

41 *Ibid.,* vol. III, pp.68.

42 *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 356, vol. III, pp.104, 44-57.

43 *Ibid.,* vol. III, pp. 206-210.

44 *Ibid.,* vol. III, p.125.

founded on the principle of benefit and mutual affection rather than force or fear.[45] Subjugation by a civilized nation was a blessing for Indians. Conquests were an historical phenomenon producing positive effect on semi-barbarous nations and, in this regard, Indians were in better conditions under the British.[46] Indian property was more secure under a Permanent Settlement of land and land revenue assessment and collection was more moderate. The sum of money collected in terms of revenue was increased even more than the collection of revenues during the reign of Akbar. Judicial, military and administrative structure was more improved than the times of Akbar. The corruption and defects were being resolved through a permanent administration.[47] The British restored consistency, efficiency, devotion, patience and law and order in the society.

Tennant also defended the relations between the Indian states and the British Empire. Contrary to his views about the Mughals, he considered the Indian princes very hostile to their people and to the British and, in this regard, he tried justifying the overthrow of Tipu Sultan.[48]

Christianisation of India

Tennant understanding of Indian situation and comparison of Mughal and British rule was primarily the part of discourse on Christianisation of India. Tennant had an agreement with the traditional eighteenth century enlightened colonial approach on the points that:

First, the Muslims were the religio-Political elite of Indian.

Second, Muslim political success was primarily based on the religious foundations of the Mughal Empire.

Third, the Muslims had imparted the peace, tranquillity and prosperity among the Indians.

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45 *Ibid.,* vol. III, pp. 37-39.

46 *Ibid.,* vol. III, p.167.

47 *Ibid.,* vol. III, pp. 80-103.

48 *Ibid.,* vol. III, p. 9.

Fourth, the British were the political successors of the Muslims.

Fifth, the British were far better even than the times of Muslim Augustus.

In this perspective, Indians appear to be uncivilized and the Muslims and the British were the real political contestants.

However, this political discourse was a ground-formation for the discourse on the nature of missionary work in India. There were a few type of apologetic arguments, religious, commercial-imperial and ethical-imperial for the Christian missions in India as a response to the British East India Company's policy of banning the missionary work in the company's territories on the plea that missionary work will create resentment among the Indians against the British rule.

The Portuguese Catholic missionaries had propagated the view that Christian Indian contacts had begun by the initiation of Christian missions. Saint Thomas had made India the centre of his activities during the second century of Christ. Therefore, Christianity had very strongly influenced the Indian religion and culture. In this argument, the image of Indian deity of 'Krishna' was considered a reflection of 'Christ' and a concept of 'trinity' was found operative, Indian in manifestation. In this context, the missionary work in India was presented as a reformation of Indo-Christian religion, which could bring better effects to the British rule in India.[49] However, this argument was overlapped by a universal view of immoral, unethical and uncivilized state of Indian state and society, universally accepted by all schools of Europeans.

The second, commercial/imperial view was brought forward by the Protestant Christian Missionaries. The company was fearful about its commercial monopoly in case of religious resentment in India. Protestant missionaries

49 The Christian missionaries began their efforts with this view. The argument seems to be operative even in the current Indian Christian missions' logic.

floated the view that the rise of modern commercial activity was the result of protestant Christianity. Commerce and Christianity were indispensable for each other. Therefore, if the Company grants permission to the missionaries for the Christianisation of India, it will help boast the British commercial monopoly in India.[50]

However, Tennant's views seem to be a replica to Charles Grants views. Charles Grant had prepared a report on the Indian affairs in 1792 and its extracts had been published time and again by the missionaries and the British policy-makers.[51] Having close relations with the evangelical movements, Charles Grant had harshly criticized the state of morals and mal-practices of the East India Company officials in India. During his stay in India, he had struggled hard for the reformation of the Company's administration through the revival of religious activity. He had agreement with the commercial-imperial motives of the missionary work. Grant tried to resolve the conflict between moral and material, evident in the series of miseries of Indians under the British through the theory of a 'vital experimental religion', continuous self-examination, private exercises and good work'.[52] Grant maintained that the British rule in India had remained unsuccessful in dispersing the prosperity among the Indian people compared to the period of the Mughals. He accepted that the house of Taimur had ameliorated the government of India. Prosperity of India under Aurangzeb as a model for Grant and he tried to assess later developments on this model. However, he had sufficient prove to believe

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50 See for details of the view Andrew Porter, 'Commerce and Christianity: The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth century Missionary slogan', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 28, Issue 3 (Sep., 1985), pp. 597-621.

The view seems to be taking the form of a capitalist/ Christian philosophy under Max Weber. See for details his *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York: Bedminster Press, 1968.

51 Charles Grant, *Observations on the State of Society Among The Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals; and on the means of Improving it*, London: House of Commons, 1813, pp. 27-29.

52 Ainslie Thomas Embree, *Charles Grant and the British Rule in India*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1962, p. 52.

that India was prosperous under native rulers even during the most disastrous times than under the company's administration at any time in India. Bengal was, in fact, in a much better state under the last two regular Mughal viceroys, Murshid Quli Khan and Shuja Khan.[53] 'The country and the people were not in so good a condition [now] as that in which we found them',[54] which was due to the drainage of wealth from India to Europe. Under the Mughals: '…[E]ven the rapacious exactions went again into circulation and tribute formerly paid to Delhi …was little felt. But tribute paid to us extract every year a large portion of the produce [products] of that country without the least interest...'[55] Therefore, Charles Grant, stressed the need of a universal radical social and religious change on political ground. Relating the disastrous political environment to the immorality prevailing in India, Grant attached cause of social change with the strength and permanence of British rule. Simultaneously, Grant by his criticism of British rule drew the moral that Britain owes a debt to India: '…how that debt could be paid — by promoting western education in the English language, thus weakening the 'fabrics of falsehood' and facilitating the spread of Christianity…' .[56]

Through these arguments he confirms his opinion that 'the communication of Christianity to the natives of our possessions in the East' was a way for the strength, permanence and progress of British dominion.

William Tennant differed with Charles Grant regarding these arguments, on two points: his model for the evaluation of the Muslim rule and his assessment of the British rule in India. Grant' model was based on the religio-political personality of Aurangzeb and Tennant focused on economic

53 Charles Grant, o*p.cit.,* p.27.

54 *Ibid.,* p.36.

55 *Ibid.,* p.37.

56 K. A. Ballhatchet, 'Some Aspects of Historical Writings on India by Protestant Christian Missionaries During the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Centuries' in C. H. Philips, ed., *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 344-56, p.345.

political aspects of Akbar's reign. In the same way Tennant appears to be an apologist for the missionaries as well as for the company. He finds the conditions better under the British. Although his logic for the introduction of missionary work for the christianisation of India appears to be a little different from Grant, his conclusion remains same. He writes:

> Independent of the intimation of scripture, which announces the decline and ultimate downfall of pagan system, there are circumstances in the very progress of human society which seem to lead to same conclusion. Almost the whole continent of America has within a few centuries been added to the 'Christian Commonwealth', and the blessing of Knowledge and civilization are not now, as they were in the days of antiquity, confined to a single nation, to one community, or to a small portion of community. If we are to trust the lesson either of history or of experience, they coincide with the intimation of scripture and demonstrate that there is a tendency in knowledge to spread itself, and in human association to improve.[57]

In this context, Tennant not only presented a religious case for colonization of India by defence of Indian authorities, rather tried to prove that the spread of Christianity was the tendency of time, even if the company did not support missionaries.[58]

In this perspective, William Tennant emerges a religious devotee, having keen interest to serve the cause of the spread of Christianity through his intellectual contribution. He seems to be converting his pessimism, which had developed since his failure to find a job under the company, into an optimism to influence the policy makers. The force of his optimism had developed a sort of self-righteousness and self-responsibility rather a self-ordained sense of duty that he was not only trying to play his role for the future of Christianity, but also to synthesise the conflict of religion and rational or Christian-self and imperial interests. In this context, he was very minutely representing the British public opinion.

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57 Tennant, Thought, p. 200.

58 "Review of Dr. William Tennant's Indian Recreations", *Edinburgh Review*, vol. IV, 1804, pp. 303-29, vol. IV, 1804, pp. 303-29, p. 306.

The power of rationalism seems to be confining his arguments to worldly manifestations. What was missing in his arguments is the creedal presentation or comparison of the Christian faith with that of Indo-Muslim. His focus on imperial motives and contrast with Charles Grant's ethical arguments indicates a very hard-line, strict observation of tautological understanding of the history of Christianity in its relations with the other religions which lead to the question about epistemological nature of the discourse. The discourse was based on a predetermined view of the superiority of Christianity, religion as a focal point. However, solely rational and imperial nature of arguments certainly raises the question of internal strife among the subject people resulting in the association of Christianity with the Empire. That was the intellectual challenge posed against Islam, which made Islam and Christianity two sides of one coin and created hard-core challenges for the Christian missions. The discourse resulted in the triumph of missionary arguments in the Charter Act of 1813. The missionaries and the company's officials were allowed to work for the Christianisation of Indians and the subsequent policies, tools and methods almost completely made missions and Empire dependant on each other. The modern western institutions became the tool for Christianisation and Christianisation a force for the colonization of South Asia.

All this indicates that religion was the basic unit of historical, imperial, commercial, cultural and intellectual understanding and the concept of secularism makes no sense in this system even today. If it was considered a sense of equality and tolerance, it could only be possible in the countries with one religion or it could suit to the continent of Christian dominance. The multi-religious Indian society had no place for the secularism even for the British.

The discourse was primarily originated on the concept of self-righteousness and one way vision of future of Indian people and Christianity. It seems to be supposed that Indians, Muslims as well as Hindus, were very much annoyed with their religious system. May the British be sure

in the sense that they had begun to observe a sort of political annoyance among the Hindus against the Muslims and same model be applied to the religion. However, the imperial and ethical models generated two different types of ideals, representing imperial and religious legitimacy of policies.

7

Contesting Criteria: Colonial British Scaling of Indo-Muslim Civilization

The largest sum of material contributed to the study of Indo-Muslim civilization has been written by the British[1] during the colonial period. The post modern vision of the world about the Indo-Muslims, by and large, is based on the sources, themes, theories, techniques, approaches and contexts developed in this bulk of material which make the study, analysis and understanding of British evaluation of Indo-Muslim civilization necessary to grapple the now current images of the Muslims of South Asia. The British have been evaluating the Indo-Muslim civilization on multiple scales which vary, contrast or contest with each other due to the conflict of criteria adopted for the formation of these scales. The same sort of variance, contrast and contest can be observed in the process and practice of placement of Indo-Muslims to a position, level or point on the scales derived for that purpose. As the British practice of developing criteria for the evaluation of a society on any specific or general scale involved some practical and policy purposes,[2] therefore, British scaling of Indo-Muslims appears, primarily, a contest of criteria to win colonial

1 Robert I. Crane, *The History of India: Its Study and Interpretation*, Washington: Service Centre for Teachers of History, 1958, p.1.

2 See for details, John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, London: Pearson Education Ltd., 1999, passim.

masters favour for some specific purposes, the logic of which seems to be applied to evaluate the Indo-Muslim civilization and to assign them a level on the scale. In this perspective, the difference of scales and levels was based on the conflict of criteria, which seem to be the core of administrative, intellectual and academic debates in British India as well as in Britain.

This study explores some of the major contesting criteria in the perspective of varying scales and levels of scales, developed to measure the status of Indo-Muslims in the history of India and in the history of mankind. It is supposed that the contest of criteria working behind the conflict of scales was also working behind the placement of a civilization to a level on the scales. Civilization is considered one standard level on these scales in a sense of contribution to the history of mankind.[3] Although, the main focus shall remain on assigning the Indo-Muslim civilization a level on the scales, yet, the purpose cannot be achieved without understanding the difference among the scales. Therefore, the differing scales shall be seen in this context without considering them as a focal point. The word "scaling" is applied to the process and assignment of a place to a civilization from the levels of a scale developed for the measurement of the status of societies. In the British context, the contest of criteria and difference of scales is supposed to be based on European experience which were tested in the social, political and cultural situation of India and found great strength from the policy debates on Indian issues in India as well as in the Britain.

Famous French historian Lucien Febvre, exploring the origin of the concept of civilization, explains the word in terms of a standard level on the scales developed for the evaluation of societies against savagery and barbarianism.[4] However Lucien Febvre integrates the concept of civilization

3 Lucien Febvre, 'Civilization: Evolution of a Word and a Group of Ideas', in Peter Burke, ed., *A New Kind of History from the Writings of Febvre*, tr. K. Folca, London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, p. 225.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 225.

and understanding of the concept of civilization with the late eighteenth century concept and understanding of history, with a fast expanding context of the territories of the subject.[5] Based on the facts of political and imperial importance, history had begun to be seen in terms of contribution of a state and society to the issues of public and social importance and to the behavioural and institutional developments in the society. In the same way, G. P. Gooch traces the concept of "the history of civilization" to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century concept of history[6] that was the product of a sense of historicism, through which every development was being seen with a sense of evolutionary totality of things historical, from its beginning to current form, with a voyage in time to future prophecy.[7] So, the history of civilization and scaling of civilization emerge in the perspective of evaluation of civilization for future purposes of determining the level of allegiance and loyalty to, and influence of, one civilization in its relations with the other civilizations, thus promoting the sense of comparative method.

As the modern concept of history and concept of civilization both belong to the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century socio-political, cultural, intellectual and policy debates, applied to and testified in the Indian situation, therefore posterior debate of current discussion focuses on the British scales used for the evaluation of Indo-Muslim civilization and the contest of evaluation criteria for the placement of Indo- Muslims in the colonial British historiography during the same period.

Two basic approaches to understand the evolution and nature of human society, the concept of the progress of

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5 Lucien Febvre, 'A New Kind of History', in Peter Burke, *op. cit*., p. 27.

6 G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1968, pp.523-42.

7 Historicism has been applied to an attitude of perceiving things in historical context. The concept has been considered a bi-product of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century romanticism. See for details Karl Popper, *Poverty of Historicism*, London: Routledge, 1986.

Mankind as a whole from the beginning of human society to current age which may be called 'historical progressivism', focusing the contribution of varied temporal and geographical civilizations to human race in history and, comparison of the progress of a particular civilization with other contemporary civilizations in temporal and geographical context seem to be determining the criteria as well as purposes for the scaling of Indo-Muslim civilization.[8] In this perspective, the criteria for scaling have been determined on geo-cultural, temporal, and religious grounds, the term Indo-Muslim seems to present a compound of all three approaches. However these approaches indicate underlying themes of contest among the different schools of thought. None on the themes seems self-expressive and need to be explored in terms of its relations with the other themes or with tautological or ontological terminology working behind the formation of these themes and scales.

History of India during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was, mostly, written by the high level officials of the British East India Company or by their critics who primarily addressed the administrative problems of British East India Company in the context of future applications. Therefore, the issue of British scaling of Muslim India is being approached through the question what was the base of the difference of scales and on which grounds the British intellectuals, attached to the East India Company services, and amateur rather than professional or academic historians, through publications, mainly in English, were articulating their views for the contest with the opposite blocks of officials on the constituents of civilization and its scales as exemplified through history.[9]

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8 Both the aspects have so many ontological and tautological conceptual intricacies which are not the subject matter of current discussion.

9 One example of study on similar method is Avril A. Powell's 'Modernist Muslim Responses to Christian Critiques of Islamic Culture, Civilization and History in Northern India' in Judith M. Brown and Robert Eric Frykenberg, ed., *Christian Cultural Interaction and India's Religious Tradition*, London: Routledge, 2002.

The British Scaling of Indo-Muslim Civilization

The modern concept of scaling of civilization seems to be emerging out of the eighteenth century theory of progressivism[10] which was formulised by Condorcet on the concept of continuous development of human society.[11] The medieval out look was deterministic and world was viewed in terms of religious pools: one always right and other or others always wrong. It was strongly dominated by a context of the culture of crusades between the Muslims and the Christians, which was the major criterion for the scaling of then contemporary human societies.[12] In this perspective, India was considered a part of Muslim geo-religious community of non-believers and heretics.[13]

The enlightenment shifted the focus to man, matter and mental[14] with comparative approach, in analytical way, and on a method of diversification and classification of human cultures. Earlier, enlightenment intellectuals had focused on the understanding of the world in geographical and racial terms[15] which seem to have promoted a divided view of the then contemporary world into the poles of West and East, Occident and Orient, Europe and Asia, and civilized and uncivilized by the rise of colonialism.[16] As during this period,

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10 Progressivism is a term applied to behaviour of seeking an evolution in society and finding some sort of advancement and contribution by every posterior or modern development in human society.

11 The concept was theorized by Condorcet, the author of *Sketch of a Historical Picture of the Progress of Mind*, trans., J. Barraclough, London: Weidenfweld & Nicolson, 1955.

12 See for details Baha, ed., Din, *The Life of Saladin*, London: Adam Publisher, 1897.

13 The Muslims were considered a world community of believers with one political centre which was focused by the crusaders. Therefore pre-Mughal Christian records do not mention any reference of the Indo-Muslims. Concentration remains either on the creedal debates or on Abbasids or Ottoman Empires. See for details Glory E. Dharmaraj, *Christianity and Islam: A Missiological Encounter*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1999.

14 The concept is the focal point of James Mill's *Analysis of the Phenomena of Mind*, London: Longman, 1868.

15 See for example writings of the period, especially of Sir William Jones.

16 See Harold Nicolson, *The Age of Reason 1700-1789*, London: Doubleday and Company, 1968. Also see Lawrence Goldman, 'The Origins of British

Europe was passing through a transition to all walks of life and the 'East' still had its 'splendours', therefore India was considered a rich and civilized land. However, people were being recognized on geographical, religious or racial bases, on the scale of political dominance. In this perspective, India was considered a synonym for 'Mughal India' with its Muslim identity. With the growth of the concept of people, culture and civilization, as a result of the late eighteenth century romanticism and historicism, Hinduism began to come into focus and, in later developments, political India seems to be differentiated from the cultural India. The Muslim India lost its enlightened place in 'Europe's Conscience'.[17] The Muslims as foreign political elite are seen in terms of their relations with the Hindus since that time. Therefore, the scaling of Muslim India and its criteria seem a by-product of the British scaling of Hinduism and its criteria. The Indo-Muslims are seen in comparison with the Hindus and the Christian and the British.

The British have scaled the status of Indo-Muslim civilization on the early nineteenth century concept of civilization and understanding of Indo-Muslim history. Dominant scales appear to be divided into two poles "civilized" and "uncivilized" or five poles, savages, barbarians, uncivilized, semi-civilized and civilized. Commonly, first three units of the five ladder scales have been used in one bracket. Only one historian, James Mill, has used the term 'semi-civilized'. However, the division of 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' is commonly applied by a plenty of writers, either historians or not.

On geographical level, India is considered one civilization from the remote antiquity to modern times[18] and

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Social Science': Political Economy, Natural Science and Statistics, 1830-1835', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 26, Issue 3 (Sep., 1983), pp. 587-616.

17 Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed European and British Writings on India 1600-1800*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995. The phrase as a term is the title of chapter third.

18 The best example of the approach can be seen in Crawfurd's *History of the Indian Archipelago*, London: Archibald Constable, 1820.

had been divided into Ancient and Modern periods of civilization with a view of changing geography during the late eighteenth century.[19] However, the British began to replace this scheme on the religious bases to the periods of dominance of Hindu, Muslim and Christian civilization in India.[20] The Christian civilization has been replaced with the "British" in terms to secularise and nationalize the history.[21] This division seems to be creating a new point of 'medieval period' to differentiate between the two claimers of modernity, Muslims and the British. The British became sole modernists and Muslims seem to be placed on the ladder of 'medieval'. By the coinage of the term 'medieval', the history of the dominance of the Muslims seems to be separated from the scaling point of 'modernity'.

However, these concepts do not prove to be temporal scales. This temporal division of history and civilization has been approached through normative qualitative scales with prominent ladders of "civilized" and " uncivilized", former always for the West and latter always for the "other", with the practice of addition of 'semi civilized', 'barbarian', 'savages' and 'far behind the savages'.

The same practice of scaling has given birth to all the modern scales for the determination of the levels of civilization, especially, developed and under-developed. The secularised and nationalized temporal scale of ancient, medieval and modern has become permanent since the formation of scale. 'Civilized' 'semi-civilized' and 'uncivilized' seem to be replaced by the 'developed', 'under-developed' and 'non-developed'. These concepts, from the late eighteenth century to the late twentieth century, are

19 See for example Thomas Maurice's works.

20 See Marshman, J. C., *The History of India from Remote Antiquity to the Accession of the Mughal Dynasty, Compiled for the use of Schools*, Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1842.

21 Marshman, J. C., *The History of India From the Earliest Period to the Close of Lard Dalhousie's administration*, Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1863.

synthesized by Toynbee in his Magnum Opus *A Study of History* as historical levels of civilization.[22]

Contesting Criteria

This was not a self-generated scaling. It was the result of a contest of criteria to promote and prove a view valid and authentic or to develop a view on methodological bases to contribute in the contemporary Indo-European intellectual discourse which was tinged with imperial-administrative issues.

The medieval outlook was religious. Enlightenment changed the trends with contemporary rational thought. However, these trends were following the unilateral themes for the understanding of human civilization. By the end of the nineteenth century, rational practice evolved a number of criteria and there began a contest among the criteria to promote the intellectual activity and to influence the government policies.

One common theme has been "Empire" in contemporary context as the model for the study and evaluation of the civilization since the enlightenment.[23] As the Muslims had established an empire in India, so the Indo-Muslims were considered "civilized" in this context.

The enlightened concept had a rational, institutional and man centred approach to contemporary history which have been challenged by a view that mythology, literature and antiquity indicate a level of civilization without which the progress of a society can never be measured. The British

22 Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, 12 vols., London: Oxford University Press, 1978. Handling of this wide range of criteria and scaling is not possible in one short article. Therefore, a number of issues are considered out of scope of current study which is confined to the dominant and leading criteria and scaling trends of Indo-Muslim civilization defined on territorial, religious, historical and ideological grounds, mostly by the British as the imperial masters of India since the late eighteenth century.

23 See Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 7 vols., London: Macmillan, 1896, first published 1778, and Robert Orme, *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, From the Year MDCCXLV*, London: John Nourse, 1763.

Romanticists such as sir William Jones,[24] H. T. Colebrooke,[25] James Forbes,[26] N. Halhed,[27] William Robertson,[28] Wilkins[29] and the most of the early members of Asiatic Society of Bengal[30] developed the scale to measure the status of a civilization on the state of literature, antiquity and mythology, and focused on either one of the three, or all three in integrated form. In their efforts to find the centre of the origin of human civilization, the romanticists focused on the antiquity which linked them with the ancient mythology. Or they were much impressed by the 'explicitly fantastic imagination'[31] and logic of the fables and fiction of literature which were not mismatched with the diversified expression, and explorations of their contemporary travellers. However, the approach allied the modern romanticists with the significant literary expression of ancient mythology. Considering the 'pleasure' as the ultimate purpose of human efforts in life, the romanticists saw the literature and mythology as the origin of human civilization and the most common source of the 'pleasure'. The religious viability of mythology declared the myths 'sacred or divine'[32]. Simultaneously, they saw these three symbols in their relations with the geography. Their belief in the concept of diversity of cultures in the world developed an understanding of the existence of a number of civilizations at a time in the world. However, all this can best be analysed keeping in view that ancient Greek-Roman Institutions, mythology and

24 William Jones, *The Works*, XII Volumes, London: John Stockdale, 1807.

25 Colebrooke, H.T., *Miscellaneous Essays*, ed. by T.E. Colebrooke, London: Gewrge Allen and Unwin, 1873.

26 James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, Four Volumes, London: Richard Bentley, 1834.

27 William Robertson, *The Works of William Robertson,* London: Whitmore and Fenn, 1817.

28 Charles Wilkins, trans. *The Bhagvat-Geeta*, London: Nourse, 1785.

29 William Jones, *The Works,* vol. XII, p.434.

30 See for details O. P. Kejariwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's Past*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988.

31 M. C. Lemon, Philosophy of History, London: Routledge, 2003, p. 16.

32 M. C. Lemon, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

literature had become a permanent part of British thought and thinking, idealizing them as Classical. Therefore, the enlightened-rational concepts were taken as a challenge to the romance of classics and the romanticists were contesting the enlightened views in this context. This approach had very prominent implications in colonial perspective.

The concept of diversity of human cultures and antiquarian mythological literature as the origin and foundation of human civilization, most prominently observed in the works of Jones, brought all ancient societies to same focus on the level of civilizations. Therefore, the romanticists were of the opinion that Indian administration should be based on indigenous cultural and/or religious norms and the colonized people should be treated as civilized. They integrated the people, culture and civilization with geography and distinguished between 'colonial' and 'colonized' civilizations. The radical impact of 'colonial' civilization over colonized was taken as harmful for colonial purposes and an interactionary mutual influence was idealized by the romanticists.

For them, Islam was not an ancient religion than the Arab mythology and literature and had aborted the progress of ancient Arabic literature.[33] In this way, Islam had developed a civilization, but it was not at the level of Greece or Rome. Rather it had destroyed the ancient civilization. Therefore, on the one hand, Indian Muslims appear to have not developed a viable civilization and then they were not Indian.[34] They were considered a part of the tradition of Muslim imperialism and colonialism, neither the part of

33 William Jones, *op. cit*.

34 See for example the basic theme of Thomas Maurice's *Indian Antiquities or Dissertation Relative to the Ancient Geographical Divisions, the Pure system of Primeval Theology, the Grand Code of Civil Laws, The original Form of government and the Various and Profound Literature of Hindostan, Compared Throughout with the Religion, Law, government and Literature of Persia, Egypt and Greece. The Whole Intended as Introduction to the History of Hindostan Upon a comprehensive Scale*, 7 Vols., London: H. L. Galabin, 1793-1800.

ancient, mythological or literate world nor the part of rational modernity.

The view was contested by the utilitarian philosophy. The Utilitarians contested and criticised the romantic antiquarian-mythological-literary criteria, romantic understanding of classical world and relations among the classical civilizations and application of romantic criteria to the Indian and Indo-Muslims society.

The Utilitarians revived the rational-enlightened approach. They were of the view that ancient civilizations had no factual records of their past, therefore, ancient mythology and literature were the record of fables, superstitions and baseless imagination, which could not be relied as history. Even the savage people had their own mythology and literature and most of the religions were based on fable, superstitions and mythology.[35] Therefore, it could not be a viable criterion for evaluating a society as civilization. Contesting against the romantic criteria, the Utilitarians considered historical and institutional, constitutional, and democratic as well as rational philosophical side of a society, as the criteria for the determination of the civilized status of a society. They were of the opinion that record of past events or history of a society could keep a society connected with the current times and could preserve the institutional structure of a society against mythology and literature. Reason and philosophy were two basic elements as the outcome of the record of history which distinguish between fable, superstitions, myths and facts and presents an institutional perspective for the evaluation of a society as civilization. Therefore, for the Utilitarians, the achievements of the classical world were not in the field of literature and mythology, but in the field of history and philosophy. So, ancient classical Greek-Romans were civilized but not the ancient Indians. They were savages.[36] The Indian Muslims

35 James Mill, *Essays*, London: J. Innes, 1828, and *History of British India*, Nine Volumes, ed. H.H. Wilson, London, 1840-1848, vol. II, pp 100-110.

36 Mill, James, *History of British India*, ed. H. H. Wilson, vol. I, passim.

had developed viable institutions which were based on the religion, not philosophy; therefore, they were far behind the level of classical civilization. However they were not savages. Thus, for Utilitarians, Muslims and Indo-Muslims were Semi-civilized.[37] In this context, the Utilitarians opposed the indigenous base administration and policies. Believing in universal system of norms, values and civilization, for them, the purpose of colonization was to make the 'colonized', 'civilized', through the radical application of universal British institutions and spread of Western philosophy.[38]

The Romantic and the Utilitarian, both criteria were in marked contrast with the concept of revealed religion, life hereafter and religious metaphysics. Therefore, the religionists focused on the concept of salvation hereafter death, ignoring the material side of the civilization. For them, the developments of modern world, especially, Europe were the product of Christian religion and western civilization was in fact Christian civilization.[39] Therefore, Christian scripture and the concept of salvation was their sole and universal criterion for the scaling of the status of any civilization. Any society devoid of Christian religion was liable to what the earlier criterion applied to 'non-civilized world'.[40]

However, attempts to synthesise these criteria have always been made by a number of historians through determining the minimum level of civilization to mythology and maximum to philosophy, and most recently, to technology. Mountstuart Elphinstone seems to be assimilating religious and geo-cultural criteria to one, placing Indo-Muslim society on the level of civilization, without

37 *Ibid*., vol. II, pp.424-28.

38 *Ibid.*, passim.

39 see for example the basic theme of Thomas Babington Macaulay, *History of England*, London, 1856 and Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs,* London: John Murray, 1849.

40 See Charles Grant, *Observations on the State of Society Among The Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals; and on the means of Improving it*, London: House of Commons, 1813 and Henry Martyn, *Memoirs of the Rev. Henry Martyn*, London: J. Hatchard, 1819.

demarking the concept of difference between "civilization" and "nation". His Indo-Muslim appear to be an assimilation of religious, cultural, geographical as well as historical criteria in the context of theory of progress and development.[41]

In this perspective, the British scaling of Indo-Muslim civilization during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century seems subject to then contemporary intellectual, political and colonial interests and policies. However, the scaling seems to be very vague, yet, not flexible and vary from one writer to other, very sharply, due to the difference of criteria working behind the formation of scales and process of scaling. The scales and criteria seem to be emerging out of a contest among the different schools of thought, especially romanticists, Utilitarians and missionaries. However, major part of it appears to be the result of a dialectics between the romanticists and the Utilitarians. The process of scaling had a number of constant underlying geo-cultural assumptions with implicit normative and qualitative criteria, measurement of which has always been subjective and the same trend seem to be dominating the British scaling, such as "self" and "other", West and East, Europe and Asia, and Britain and India, former as "superior" and "civilized" and later as "inferior" and "uncivilized". On this principle, Indo-Muslims are placed on every level of the scales, from the savages to civilize. As the Hindus has been placed by the romanticists on the level of 'highly civilized', the Indo-Muslims have been considered foreigners and imperial rulers and has never been placed on this level.

The scaling had a lasting impact on the British treatment of the Indo-Muslim people, politically, socially, culturally, and economically. The Muslims were treated gently and their culture favourably when considered 'civilized' and the Muslims were treated harshly and their culture was suppressed when considered 'savages', 'barbarians' or 'uncivilized' or 'semi-civilized' by the writers and policy maker

41 Elphinstone, Mountstuart, *History of India*, 2 vols., London: A. Spottiswoodi, 1841.

who were determining the level and attempts were frequently made as a policy to 'make the Muslims civilized'. The theme seems still current in the world politics.

The era and the issue seem to be providing a foundation to the later European schemes, developed for the understanding of history and civilization. The classification of history of civilization on the scale of Ancient, Medieval, Modern or Hindu, Muslim and Christian or British have become very common in the recent past. The same contest of criteria seems to be visible in the thoughts of Spengler,[42] Max Weber, Lord Acton, Croace[43] and Collingwood.[44]

One attempt to synthesize all the dominant criteria and scales has been made by Arnold J. Toynbee. His criterion appears to be literature, religion, philosophy and Empire, assimilating all themes of classification and scaling of civilization. His approach begins from barbarians and ends with the rise of universal religion, and he still looks for a universal religion in future by the assimilation of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jewism, Christianity and Islam. In his understanding, Indo-Muslims fail to find a place of their own, but an alien intermixture of Hindu and Muslim civilization.[45]

42 Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, London: Collins, 1968.

43 B. Croace, *History as the Story of Liberty*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1941.

44 See for a view of the historians, G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, London: Oxford University Press, 1978.

45 Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, vol. XII, appendixes.

8

Historiography and Identity: A Mid-Nineteenth Century Perspective for Postmodern South Asia

The postmodern writers, especially anti-colonial and subaltern, have very sharply criticised the current state of knowledge, being disseminated in the third world, with a belief that it is based on the paradigm developed through colonial construction of history.[1] Current politico-geographical identities form the crust of this sort of knowledge.

Writing of history or historiography reflects the development of 'historical consciousness' and aims at developing a 'historical consciousness'; rather it is a process of 'identifying the facts making an intelligible sense of continuity' to understand an existing identity or to develop one for the future of the society. For John Lewis Gaddis, this sense of continuity is 'the landscape of History' and this sort of historical consciousness reflects 'the maturity of history' as a process. Therefore, historiography primarily tends to

1 See for example Ranajit Guha, *An Indian Historiography of India: A Nineteenth Century Agenda and Its Implications*, Calcutta: Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, 1988; Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies,* vols. 1-6, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982-89; David Arnold & David Hardiman, ed., *Subaltern Studies VIII Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Explorations in Connected History From the Tagus to the Ganges*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

understand 'identity' and project some sort of mature identity: an identity perceived through historical process and the consciousness of that process.[2]

The large sum of material on South Asian history is contributed by the 'colonial masters', the British.[3] It is believed that modern construction of South Asia is based on the colonial understanding of South Asian history. However, the hypothesis ignores aspects of the development of British Empire and historiography for the empire. In the same way, an ignorance of the difference between the evolution of understanding of South Asian history and British Indian policy seems pertinent. This is to open a window to the exploration of evolution of British view of South Asian identities projected through history. The period of the British Crown is generally focused to understand the colonial construction of modern South Asia and the period of Company's rule is generally neglected in this respect. This pursuit shall focus on the pre-crown period of British administrative-intellectual understanding of South Asian identities reflected in the British Historiography, to prepare a ground to compare it with the mature colonial[4] construction of post-colonial South Asia and for the analysis of the relations between two periods which reflect two different approaches.

The significance of the study emerges out of the nature of British rule. The British had almost established their rule over India and they were trying their level best to understand

2 John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History How Historians Map the Past*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, First chapter.

3 Robert I. Crane, *The History of India: Its Study and Interpretation*, Washington: Service Centre for Teachers of History, 1958, p.1.

4 The history of colonial South Asia needs a sort of time scale to measure the evolution of socio-political and cultural identities in the region. In this context the period of British contacts with the subcontinent can be divided into five spans: commercial, commercial colonial, colonialism and mature colonial; commercial: before 1757; commercial colonial to 1857; colonialism to 1935 and mature colonial which became the legacy for the independent states of the region to 1947. This division can be debated in the academic circles which may help determine the place of colonial legacy in the current socio-political and institutional state of the region.

the racial, cultural and national characteristics of the people in order to rule them in accordance with their national traits and create a rationale for making the British rule permanent. Although, some Utilitarians and Missionaries were anxious enough to apply the western liberal and Christian model to the administration of British Indian Empire,[5] yet an overwhelming majority of the administrators, having a feeling of romance with Indology, were graciously devoted to administration of Indian affairs according to indigenous traditions, customs, laws and belief system.[6] The term 'Indian tradition' was elaborated in two ways:

First that India is a Continent or a subcontinent and should be treated in this way and; second that India is a civilization and should be treated in this context.

However, the view of India as a continent or subcontinent went through a revolutionary suppression after 1857, under the consciousness of the strengthening of imperial rule. Rather than developing an understating of South Asian identities to administer the region, the British began attempts to construct a uniform Indian identity according to their own interests, on the western imperial paradigm. Therefore, the search for a much unbiased view of the British brings the mid-nineteenth century into sharp focus.

The term mid-nineteenth century, in this perspective, is used in a very loose format, with a view that by the year 1850 a crucial change had begun to emerge in the British perception of India, which became mature very soon after the events of 1857. So, the mid nineteenth century, in the current context, represents 1830s and 1840s or second quarter of the nineteenth century.

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5 See for Example James Mill, *History of the British India*, 3 vols., London: Cradock & Joy, 1817; William Ward, *View of the History, Literature and Religion of the Hindoo: a minute description of their manners and customs and translations from their principal works*, Madras: J. Higginbotham , 1863; G. D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India 1784-1958*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.

6 See for details Aronson, *Europe Looks at India, A Study in Cultural Relations*, Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1946.

Early British Concept of South Asian

The early British concept of identity of the region now called 'South Asia' was primarily based on a psychic phenomenon of political and commercial exploration and expansion, in the backdrop of 'dynastic imperial' perception, with a vague and loose geographical sense. The region was perceived through a vague ancient idea of world geography in its combination with medieval dynastic-imperial-political structure, indicating greatly fluctuating geographical boundaries, as 'Mughal Empire'.[7] In the mid-eighteenth century *English Universal History,* the region was considered synonymous with the Mughal dynasty as followers of Muslim political and religious creed.[8] Robert Orme's idea of 'Indostan' was limited to Deccan and Delhi.[9] However, by the end of the eighteenth century a shift from political to cultural contents of history began, which distinguished between political and cultural aspects of the region,[10] resulting in the emergence of the concept of 'Hinduism" and 'Hindu India' as a civilization, still with a vague idea of geographical boundaries. The main exponents of this idea were William Jones, Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Romantic school, all linked with a centralized form of administration. Thus the concept has a centralized imperialism in its core.

As the idea of cultural identity was initially disseminated from the British centre of politics, Bengal, therefore, a growing sense of 'Bengali Renaissance' and 'Bengali nationalism' was the main undercurrent of the idea,

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7 See the map of the Mughal Empire in Irfan Habib, *The Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982, Map OA.

8 John Swinton, "A Description of Hindostan or the Empire of the Great Mogol", in *English Universal History*, London: T. Osborne, 1759. Also see J. Rennel, *Memoirs of a Map of Hindostan or the Mughal Empire*, London: M. Brown, 1783.

9 Robert Orme, *A History of Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, London: John Nourse, 1763.

10 Muhammad Shafique Bhatti, 'British Historiography of India: A Study in the Late Eighteenth Century Shift of Interest', Quarterly, *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. L, No.3, July-September 2002, pp. 85-104.

challenging the concept of the perfect uniformity between 'civilization' and 'nation'.[11]

The challenge was not a new one. A number of empiricist administrator-intellectuals had either presented their observations on the geo-political, racial, cultural and linguistic divisions of the regions or had shown their disagreement with the romantic school of administrators. A number of works had been published on different geo-cultural identities, contesting the concept of nation in this context.[12] In the early Nineteenth century the trends had become prominent. Marks Wilks' *Historical Sketches of the South of India* (1806), John Malcolm's *Sketch of the Sikhs; a Singular Nation who Inhabit the Provinces of the Punjab, Situated between the River Jumna and Indus* (1812), Charles Stewart's *History of Bengal* (1813) Charles Grant Duff's *History of the Marathas* (1828) and James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829-32) are the best example of the British perception of the nations inhabiting the continent of India. The trends were systematized by a noble British administrator, Mountstuart Elphinstone, in the mid nineteenth century. Elphinstone tried to harmonize these views about differing Indian nations with a concept of Indian civilization through a framework of unity of the region as a 'subcontinent' and 'unity of civilization'. The perspective can be explored through a vast range of historical literature. As the views of Mountsuart Elphinstone encompass all contending views, therefore, his understanding of the region forms the central part of ongoing debate.

Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779-1859) and South Asian Identities

Mountstuart Elphinstone as a most able diplomat, administrator and historian of the British India, is well known for his sympathetic approach towards indigenous Indian

11 See reference no 1.

12 See for example J.Z. Holwell, *Interesting Events Relative to the Provinces of Bengal and the Empire of Indostan*; Hamilton, *History of Rohillas (1776?);* Francis Gladwin, *A Narrative of Bengal*… (1788).

cultures and history,[13] harmonizing oriental romanticism, utilitarianism and ethno-regional romance. The romanticists were propagating the status of Indian civilization on the level of classical civilizations, which was destroyed by foreign Muslim rule. The Utilitarians were propagating a very barbaric and rude picture of the ancient Indian civilization, which was, to some extent, brought to a better point than the ancient, by the foreign Muslims rule. Elphinstone's own contemporary ethno-regional romanticists had challenged the concept of the unity of Indian civilization.

Elphinstone accepted the romantic view of the classical status of the ancient Indian civilization. Differentiating between the Muslims and Indo-Muslims, Elphinstone depicts a sense of continuity in Indian history and civilization and brings the Muslims into the fold of Indian civilization. He looks at the Muslim Empire in India as an evidence of the process of evolutionary advent of a whole Indian civilization of different racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious nations.

Elphinstone, educated in Scottish philosophical and intellectual tradition, had to face a conflict between enlightenment, evangelicalism, romanticism and utilitarianism.[14] His Indian career[15] not only provided him an opportunity for deep observations into the different regions and sections of Indian society, but also provided him opportunities to visit adjacent countries such as Turkey,

13 See for details T.E. Colebrooke, *Life of the Mountstuart Elphinstone*, London, 1884, p. 357; Also see J. S. Cotton, *Rulers of India: Mountstuart Elphinstone*, Oxford, 1892.

14 His father was the Governor of Edinburgh and his uncle was one of the directors of East India Company. Elphinstone got his upbringing during a period when The Enlightenment was being divided into the issues of its sub-interest. Elphinstone's environment was under the influence of Scottish enlightenment. If this enlightenment had produced Benthamite utilitarianism during the period of Elphinstone's growth, a reaction to The Enlightenment's extreme rationalism had emerged in the form of romanticism. However, the emergence of evangelical thought had also been taken as a reaction to the Enlightenment's deistic formation of thought. See for details J. S. Cotton, *op. cit.,* chapter II.

15 Elphinstone spent more than thirty-one years in India from 1796 to 1828. During this long stay in Indian, Elphinstone served on different posts in the Company's administration from the assistant to the Governor of Bombay.

Persia, Afghanistan and Egypt. The contemporary intellectual debate on British Indian administration, through the study of Indian history, as seen in the different schools of British thought, attracted his attention.[16] The classical background combined with the ground realities of British Indian administrative environment attached Elphinstone with the Scottish romantic school.[17] The formation of the Literary Society of Bombay boosted this romantic interest in Elphinstone's thought. Elphinstone not only learnt the Sanskrit and Persian languages, but also got a thorough understanding of Indian cultures and civilization.[18] However, his years after retirement formed real bent of his mind for writing a history of India. The contemporary hot debate on Indian affairs in the perspective of Mill's *History of British India*,[19] along with Duff[20] and Tod's works[21] on Marathas and Rajputs led him to write his *History of India*,[22] which has

16 Elphinstone had developed a thorough taste for reading. By the 1805 he had read a lot of works written on all aspects of intellectual curiosity including, philosophy, classics, literature, languages, history, geography, etc.

17 See for details Jane *Rendall*, "Scottish Orientalism: From Robertson to James Mill", *The Historical Journal*, vol. XXV/1, (June 1982), pp. 43-69.

18 Elphinstone's Papers present his deep attachment with Indian culture and civilization. At a number of occasions Elphinstone expressed his deep attachment with the Indian culture in written. For examples see Elphinstone Papers, MSS. Eur. F 88 in Oriental and India Office Library at British Library, London.

19 James Mill's *History of British India* was published in 1817 in six volumes and was considered a master piece on Indian affairs. It has been published several times all over the world since 1817. It occupied the place of a compulsory book of reading for the officials of the East India Company until the publication of Elphinstone's *History of India*.

20 On the back up of Elphinstone James Grant Duff, a Scottish and relative of Elphinstone, wrote *History of Marathas*, on the basis of original sources which was published in 1828.

21 Tod wrote *Annals of Rajhistan* and *Travels in Western India*.

22 Mountstuart Elphinstone's History of India was first published between 1839 and 1842. Since its first publication, so many editions of the book has been published. For the current study, 1889 edition of Elphinstone's History of India, with notes and additions by E. B. Cowell, published by John Murray, London, is used for references.

been considered 'the summing up'[23] of debate on Indian affairs. It has policy-oriented purpose, having an apology for the company's activities and policy guidelines for the future of British Indian Empire.

Purposive view of Elphinstone's history combined the romantic 'amusement'[24] with utilitarian, philosophical or theoretical pursuits.[25] Not ready to treat mythology as history, he sharply criticized Mill's pure rational and Euro-centric approach[26] and saw history as a narration of events in terms of cultural environment. For a comparative methodology seems to be a priority for Elphinstone. That is why Elphinstone was more interested in the minute details to draw solid theoretical conclusions on the regional basis. He emphasized the use of facts with judgment to make a consistent and coherent sense of history out of a mass of fables and gossip.[27] Elphinstone saw every history in its connection with the general history of human species. However, cultural differences appear to Elphinstone a phenomenon worth studying.

Elphinstone widened the romantic criterion for the study of a civilization and nation from William Jones' literature and mythology[28] to James Mill's institutions and philosophy. Religion appears to be only one expression of socio-cultural phenomena. Therefore, he evaluated religious leadership as social devotees and Indian identities were indigenous social cultural and geographical realities for Elphinstone.

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23 J. S. Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India: The Assessment of British Historians*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 130.

24 Elphinstone Papers, MSS. Eur. F 88, Journal dated, 7.12.1829.

25 His History of India presents theoretical as well as philosophical concepts related to all aspects of Indian civilization. The division of the history into books and chapters in evolutionary way reflects a clear sort of theory and he philosophizes it for the administrative purposive.

26 T. E. Colebrook, *op. cit.*, II, p. 355.

27 Elphinstone's Letter to Grant Duff dated 20 April 1822, Elphinstone Papers, MSS. Eur. F.88.

28 See for detail S. N. Mukherjee, *Sir William Jones: A Study in Eighteenth Century British Attitude to India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, chapter I, passim.

Elphinstone was interested in the political history of the Mughals as predecessors and legitimate rulers of India and in the history of the dominant nation of the area in which he was serving since long: the land of the Marathas.[29] As his colleague, James Grant Duff undertook the project of the *History of the Marathas*, Elphinstone diverted his attention towards Mill's unit of historical studies, civilization. Although, for Elphinstone, civilization was considered an integrated approach to society, his focus remained on politics and empire as embodiment of nation and civilization. Elphinstone adopted a comparative approach to measure the development of civilization and nation. His treatment of the Indian Muslims is sympathetic in the sense that he accepts Indian Muslims as a separate nation within the Indian subcontinent and antithetic in the sense that he does not believe in the unity of Muslim "Ummah"[30] as a nation. This formed the basis of Elphinstone's treatment of Indian identities and administrative as well as policy treatment of these identities. Combining the national traits with the civilization, Elphinstone had a deep rooted understanding of difference among the nations and national traits of the people of South Asian region and identified the common traits or spirit as civilization. In this way, he propagated the view that the Indians should be treated in accordance with their national traits and the imperial relations with the Indian subjects should be established on this principle. So, administrative policies as well as authority should be deputed on this principle. Elphinstone rejects the view of the establishment that the control of the crown's parliament on Indian administration should be upheld. Rather, he supports the monopoly of the company on the ground that parliament could not understand the indigenous Indian situation. Therefore, British Indian administrators should be given maximum authority to deal with the indigenous situations. In this sort of perception, nation was considered a people

29 Elphinstone Papers, MSS. Eur. F.88, Journal dated 1.1.1834 to 1.3.1834, p.133.

30 Community consists of all who believe in Islam.

united through language, culture, tradition, and politics, having a sense of organized indigenous system of government with a mature leadership, either under Imperial rule or independent self-rule.[31]

Elphinstone's treatment of India was determined by European romantic philosophical vision as well as by the concept of geographical, cultural and linguistic nationalism, supported by political leadership. Scottish Enlightenment led him away from the concept of divine religion and emerging historicism linked him with the method of historical treatment of culture and current issues for their solution in western nationalist context. The boundaries of India were determined by natural means[32] and Indus formed the Western frontiers of India with its tributaries.[33] Afghanistan, Punjab and Sind were considered the 'areas adjacent to India' and Balochistan never a part of Indian subcontinent. Hindu civilization was perceived as a 'sister civilization' of Greeks, based on mythological beliefs and system of deities[34] and India was considered a 'sub-continent' rather a 'continent'[35], consist of four major geographical units: Hindostan, Deccan, Gujrat and Bengal.[36] Bengal and Gujrat were considered independent natural units.[37] However, the region northward from the Vindhiya range, Hindostan, was identified to consist of four major natural geographical units: basin of Indus, basin of Ganges, the Desert and high tracts called central India. The region south of Vindhiya, known as Deccan was

31 This view of nation is very well applied to the Marathas in his policy treatment as well as in his history. For details see *Rise of the British Power in India*, London, 1842 chapters on Marathas.

32 Mountstuart Elphinstone, *History of India the Hindu and Mahometan Period*, ed. E. B. Cowell, London, 1889, p.1 ib.

33 *Ibid.,* p.1.

34 On this point Elphinstone agrees with Colebrooke. *Ibid*., p.

35 *Ibid.,* p. 234.

36 *Ibid.,* pp. 1-3.

37 *Ibid.,* p. 3.

seen to consist of Nerbudda valley, Tapti, Ghats and the South.[38]

These four regions were inhabited by a number of nations; three occupying independent regions: Bengali, Gujrati and Kashmiris; six in Deccan: Tamil, Canara, Telgu, Mahrattas, Uriya and Andhra;[39] four in Hindustan: Rajputs, Jats, Rohillas and Malawi;[40] the Muslims were treated in usual British manner of foreign invader composed of four nations: Tartars, Arabs, Afghans and Persian, framing a new identity as Indian Muslim.[41] In this way Elphinstone identified at least thirteen nations in the continent of India. The major part of Elphinstone's understanding was framed by Elphinstone's personal experiences in the South and South West of India. Yet, he had a well enough view of Eastern parts of India. However, like the majority of British men, Elphinstone had not conceived the concept of Indian nations inhabiting the Northern highland.

However, by 1857, the western frontiers of India were extended to Makran and Balochistan, including Punjab and Sind. Indian mythological civilization took the form of one religious nation as counter part of Muslims, suppressing the identity and liberty of mythological religions.[42]

The mid-nineteenth century observed a grass root level conflict between newly emerging European politico-intellectual institutions and the imperial objectives. Although romaticization or criticization of ancient Indian civilization proved to be one of the most influential tools of imperialism against the Muslim rule for the British, yet, the people like Charles Grant Duff, James Tod under the mentorship of Mountstuart Elphinstone and J. D. Cunningham tried their level best to apply new western thought and institutions such

38 *Ibid.,* pp. 2-3.

39 *Ibid.,* pp. 237-45.

40 *Ibid.,* pp. 226-35.

41 *Ibid.,* book V.

42 See any Map of British Empire in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909.

as nationalism, liberalism and utilitarianism to the Indian scene. Elphinstone observed a grass root level social, cultural, linguistic and political differences among the Indian population and identified at least thirteen nations in the region, focusing Eastern, central, southern and western India and neglecting the northern India. Although the people like Duff, Tod and Cunningham had to face a harsh criticism of the British East India Company's administration on the charges of neglecting the cause of the company and its colonial commercial interests, through the promotion of the cause of indigenous national traits yet, Elphinstone's *History* was made the part of curriculum of East India Company's administrative services college, Haileybury, that he had maintained the integrity of the Indian Empire through the concept of unity of Indian civilization. Inspite of the fact that the subaltern and post colonial intellectuals have sharply criticized the colonial construction of knowledge, they seem to following the same paradigmatic model of civilization to consolidate modern imperial trends or the legacy of the British Empire. They seem to be neglecting the concept of indigenous nationalisms in India and feel themselves not at ease to apply the modern nationalistic perception of Duff, Tod, Elphinstone and Cunningham to the construction of modern South Asian political, cultural and social identities. Rather, they seem to be committed with the continuation of colonial paradigm to establish a specific cultural and political hegemony over the region.

As the intellectual foundations of the thought system which was the base of Elphinstone and his school has become mature now, there is sufficient reason to believe that neglect of such type of identity politics forms the crux of the chaos and discontentment prevalent in the region and the solution of the issues seems connected with the issue of the maturity of the sense of history, closely associated with political identity. Maturification and recognition of such identities in political terms can be expected to produce a peace-congenial environment in the region, defaming the current state of conflicts and resurgences of disunity.

9

Modern Concept of Civilization: A Reassessment of its Origin, Nature and Development

[This paper is added to the debate with a view to highlight the paradigmatic developments in the European West corresponding to South Asian historiographic perceptions. In the backdrop of the chapter seven and eight, this paper exposes that the concept of civilization with multiple scales of categorization was not only developed for South Asian society and its development rather this scale had been applied to South Asia long before the application of the concept of civilization to the modern European West. The same South Asian experience seems to be applied to develop the concept of European Civilization. In this context, the paper exposes that not only western intellectual developments were working potentially behind the formations of the British and European concepts about South Asia, rather, the South Asian experiences were working to inform a new European self identifying itself as a single coherent unit of civilization against a divided 'other' on the South Asian Scale in the form of Hindu and Muslim.

Written and published on the occasion of the death of Samuel P. Huntington, the originator of the theory of 'Clash of Civilization'[1], this paper, through a comparison with the

1 S. P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs*, 72/3 (Summer 2003), pp. 22-49.

other papers, can reflect the role of imperial experience in the development of modern western dynamics of socio-political construction. It determines that 'civilization' as we are using it today in so many divergent forms in our current debate on comparative cultural studies, is a modern concept. Thematic framework of the paper is constructed on the assumption that concept is 'historians' craft' and the result of an underlying eighteenth and nineteenth century 'historical process' in the Western intellectual tradition in the backdrop of Colonial experience. Inherently, the germs of 'clash' seems to be dominating the concept, as the concept unifies the smaller units of political identity-'nations' into a broadly coherent conceptual and cultural space of 'civilization', disintegrating more wider meta-geographical assimilatory unit of religious or class affiliations such as 'Muslim Ummah', 'Christian Community' and 'Proletariat'. However, the concept does not remain limited to this purpose; it becomes a mechanism to place the societies of different regions onto a hierarchical scale. In this context, it seems a broader application of the understanding of the concept of civilization coming out especially of the South Asian Experience.]

During the last two centuries the concept of 'civilization' has emerged as one of the most influential tools of political hegemony, cultural penetration, technological development as well as comparative academic studies. Representing the inheritance of Hegelian method of dialectics to the Western thought, the concept is utilized in three dynamic forms since 1990s. **Firstly,** it emerged as a concept reflecting the end of 'polar system of international politics' and supremacy of Western European system of institutions, synthesized as universal civilization, negating the emergence of any new form of anti-thesis for the future structure of power struggle as ' The End of History'.[2] **Secondly,** the concept represented a form of anti-thesis to Fukuyama's theory of 'the End of History' in the form of 'The Clash of

2 See for details Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992.

Civilizations'[3], endorsing traditional theory of permanent state of warfare in the society, reserving a permanent place for the European West as a liberal, progressive and humanitarian entity and replacing socialist Russian pole with the Muslims as fundamentalist, conservative and orthodox. **Thirdly,** the concept is depicted as a uni-linear, all embracing espousal development of universal human society in the form of 'Globalization' or 'Global civilization'.[4]

Although the middling theory of 'clash of civilizations' by Samuel P. Huntington has gained a wider popularity as representation of most common trends of human history and world politics, yet, three dimensional debate on the concept of civilization involves a number of ontological and tautological understandings which are inherently vague and raise a number of fundamental questions about the nature of the concept. Most important questions, which emerge in this context, are about the neutrality of the concept such as: What are the pre-requisites and what are the limitations of the concept? Is 'civilization' so neutral a concept that every one can use it in its own perspective? How a coherent understanding of the concept can be achieved? As three usages are quality-laden and depend upon the socio-cultural and institutional discrimination among societies, therefore, the concept of civilization involves a sort of scale developed to determine the status of a society in its relations with other societies. The differences of criteria for the development of scale to determine the status of a society create deep-rooted conflict and clash among these scales which convert into the conflict and clash of the propagators, the followers or users of these scales for end achievements. In this context, understanding of the concept of civilization needs an analysis in the post modern perspective of criticism along with the method of discourse analysis with historical approach. It requires an understanding of the origin of the

3 S. P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs*, 72/3 (Summer 2003), pp. 22-49.

4 Mircea Malitza, 'Ten Thousand Cultures, a Single Civilization', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 21/1 (2000), pp. 75-89.

word; socio-intellectual perspective for the development of the concept; relation of the concept with History; civilization as a scale to evaluate the status of a society and criteria for the determination of scale.

The purpose of following pages is to explore the nature and scope of the concept of civilization in this context with a thematic assumption that historically the concept of civilization, originated in the eighteenth century, is the product of a dialectical process which has in born leaning towards the representation of conflicts, controversies and clashes as well as towards the similarities among the societies. The idea of the linear progression of human society, the modern concept of 'global civilization' as well as religious concept of unity of followers (Ummah) seem to be at variance with the concept of civilization.

Origin and Nature of the Word

The word 'civilization' derives its meaning from the Greek word 'civil' which has been used in so many divergent ways such as civilian, civilized, civilize, civilizer, etc. However, its use as 'civilization' seems to be the product of the eighteenth century epistemological and socio-political structural developments in the west. In the early eighteenth century, the word 'civilization' was being used to communicate the process of assimilation of British Common Law with the Civil Law. It was perceived as an 'act of judgement' rendered to change the behaviour of a criminal in accordance with the civil responsibilities. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, the word had conceived a popular meaning of 'general growth of refinement'.[5]

The early nineteenth century saw a comparative approach to the word. It appears to be used to demarcate the 'spontaneous origin, among tribes of savages, of the various arts of life one by one'. This sense of the word, first of all, was used by Victor Hugo against a state of war in his

5 *The Oxford English Dictionary* , vol.2, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, p.448

literary contributions.[6] M. Guizot used the word in a very broader meaning of 'a people in a course of improvement and melioration' in 1842.[7] Sir Thomas Munro used the word to compare the state of European society with the Indian.[8] Yet, a more clear use of the word appeared in the works of Thomas Buckle in 1857.[9] He used the word to denote a 'striking contrast with barbarism'. In this context, by the last quarter of nineteenth century the word has attained a meaning 'humanization of man in society', integrating the all individual achievements with the species' achievements.[10]

In this evolution, the word 'civilization' seems to be taking the form of a manifold concept. It not only demarcates the evolutionary steps of a society, but also indicates the use of a comparative method for geographical and cultural expressions. However, the word civilized remained more popular until the mid nineteenth century than the word 'civilization'. The comparative and geographical meaning of the concepts seems to be originated in the consciousness of social and political developments of Europe since the fifteenth century renaissance.[11]

The Eighteenth Century Socio-Intellectual Perspective

The eighteenth century development of the concept of civilization indicates a crucial epistemological change in the structure of knowledge and understanding as well as in the consciousness of cultural and political identity among the European intellectuals. The medieval structure of knowledge was based on the 'ecumenical foundations' with the claims of universality of Christian religion and of the spiritual unity of

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6 See www.wikipedia.com/victorhugo.[dated.12.06.2008]

7 M. Guizot, *General History of Civilization in Europe*, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883, p. 23.

8 *The Oxford English Dictionary,* p.448.

9 Thomas Henry Buckle, *History of Civilization in England*, Two Volumes, London: J. W. Parker & Son, 1857, vol.I, p. 45.

10 Lucien Febvre, "Civilization: Evolution of a Word and a Group of Ideas" in Peter Burke, ed., *A New Kind of History from the Writings of Febvre*, trans., K. Folka, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, p. 225.

11 M. Guizot, pp. 20-26.

the followers of the Christ,[12] a deterministic world-view, with the division of world into 'the city of God' and 'the city of Satan'.[13] The political structure was based on the concept of 'Empire' with feudal institutions. The European society was disintegrated on class, cast and clan bases.

The eighteenth century 'Age of Reason' and 'the European Enlightenment' critically challenged this form of the construction of knowledge and resultant political-cultural identity. The age of reason challenged the concept of 'the City of God', and universality of religious system. The emergence of nation state theoretically challenged the imperial structure of European politics and the emergence of man-centred 'theory of social contract'[14] shifted the focus of intellectual pursuits to man, matter and mental[15] through the comparative and analytical method and culture of political and religious diversifications and classifications. This development gave birth to another system of poles such as West and East, Occident and Orient, Europe and Asia.[16] The concept of basic human rights challenged the 'privileged and non-privileged' based division of society through the popular slogans of the French Revolution 1789: liberty, equality and fraternity.[17]

This structure of knowledge and power seems to be destroying the vary basis of mutual relations among the European societies by the late eighteenth century and

12 For the details of the concept see Stephen Neil, *A History of Christian Missions*, London: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 14.

13 See for details, H. A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, passim.

14 See for details, Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. G.D.H. Cole, London: J. M. Dent, 1966.

15 See for example James Mill, *Analysis of the Phenomena of Mind*, London: Longman, 1868.

16 See Harold Nicolson, *The Age of Reason 1700-1789*, London: Doubleday and Company, 1968. Also see Lawrence Goldman, 'The Origins of British 'Social Science': Political Economy, Natural Science and Statistics, 1830-1835', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 26, Issue 3 (Sep., 1983), pp. 587-616.

17 Grant and Temperley, *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century 1789-1905*, vol. I, ed. Agatha Ram, London: Longman, 1984, pp. 14-31.

creating a room for the establishment of mass-base socio-political institutions as well as for the emergence of new social sciences with new concepts to operate the mechanism of inter-cultural relations among the European states. It also seems to be necessitating for the development of an intellectual concept establishing unity in diversity of nation-states, contesting all conflicting structures. [18]

Simultaneously, the emergence of the eighteenth century theory of progressivism[19] formulised by Condorcet on the concept of continuous development of human society seems to be converting the meaning of the word into the concept of civilization[20] in two ways: through the idea of the progress of mankind as a whole, negating the geographical and temporal divisions as a process of history; and the idea of the progress of a particular society in comparison with other societies in temporal and geographical context as prominent and active contributors to the development of humanity. Such developments seem to be contributing to the emergence of a dynamic concept of 'civilization'. However, the concept took a more clear form through the historical consciousness coming out of the impact of the concept of progress.[21]

The Historians Craft

Changing paradigm and tools of knowledge, vacuum emerging out of collapse of religious and imperial structure of unity, progressivism and resultant experiments generated a strong need for the development of a system of evaluation and authentication for new epistemological and political structure in the early nineteenth century. The need seems to be fulfilled through the emergence of 'Historicism' and

18 Lucien Febvre, "A New Kind of History", in Peter Burke, *op. cit*., p. 27.

19 Progressivism is a term applied to behaviour of seeking an evolution in society and finding some sort of positive advancement and contribution by every posterior or modern development in human society.

20 Condorcet, *Sketch of a Historical Picture of the Progress of Mind*, trans. J. Barraclough, London, 1955.

21 M. Guizot, p. 23.

history as an academic discipline.[22] This new place of history in the culture of knowledge and power seems to be re-structuring the concept of civilization, continuously, since the mid-nineteenth century. Therefore, famous French historian Lucien Febvre is of the opinion that the concept of civilization 'basically and in its origin' belongs to historians and a civilization is 'civilization of historian'.[23] The historians seem to be contributing to the development of the concept in three ways.

First: integrating the concept of progress with the events of 'historical significance' required an idea of 'process' or continuous chain of happenings having cause and effects relations with each other, from the emergence of 'human species' to the present time with a perception of course of future happenings. This nature and scope of history broadened the canvas of history in temporal terms.

Second: although "significant events" make the substance of the subject matter of history, yet what appears as a result of the sequence of events, and what a society achieves from this sequence of events, forms the core of historical understanding and consciousness. This consciousness originated a space for a philosophised and maximally generalized concept of history, as "philosophical history"[24], "speculative history"[25] and "philosophy of history"[26], intelligible minimally in terms of 'history of civilization'.[27]

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22 For details M. C. Lemon, *The Discipline of History and the History of Thought*, London, 1995.

23 Lucien Febvre, "A New Kind of History", in Peter Burke, *op. cit*., p. 27.

24 The concept of philosophical history has been owed to religion, however in modern times it were Germans historians who adopted the philosophical approach in history and gave rise to historicism.

25 See G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, London: Oxford University Press, 1978.

26 The term "Philosophy of History" has been applied in three ways: First, it has been considered the derivation of laws of history on universal level in deductive way. Second, it is applied to the understanding of some intelligible patterns in a society. Third, it deals with the method used to derive laws from history or applied to the understanding of intelligible

Thirdly: the discipline of history had to face, on the one hand, a sort of disintegrated structure of Empires which it had to integrate and, on the other hand, challenges from the concept of rationalism. Both the concepts posed serious challenges to the discipline of history in the early nineteenth century. In one way, if history is based on 'event' which is considered a singular unit of human understanding with limited scope, in the other way, the concept of 'totality' and 'wholeness' is inapplicable to the historical understanding. This challenge necessitated the emergence of a new intelligible unit of historical understanding, which the historians seem to be developing in terms of the concept of civilization.

This nature indicates that the concept basically emerged out of new challenges of universal generalizations and diversified nationalist out-look toward politics, resolving the problem through a middling approach. Yet, the middling approach by itself appears to be a problem and require a 'scale' based on some intelligible 'criteria'. Therefore, the historians seem to be facing a controversy over scales and criteria for scales, generating so many conflicting scales.

Scaling of Civilization

As the concept is the out come of historians' trade, therefore, the historians' concept of scaling works potentially behind the formation of scales for the evaluation of a particular society as civilization. The scaling of societies applied to the concept of history of civilization emerges out of historical nature of the word 'civilization' and development of the concept of 'civilization'. The nature and scope of historical knowledge tend to evolve around human society and classify the people according to hierarchical structure on temporal, geographical or conceptual basis. This hierarchical understanding always involves a sort of scaling on the basis

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patterns. See for details of the issues Lemon, *Philosophy of History*, London, 2003.

27 See for details G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1968.

of a method of comparison of similarities and dissimilarities on quantitative or qualitative grounds. As temporal and geographical classifications are considered prerequisites for historical knowledge, therefore, the concept emerges in the form of scales for hierarchical understanding of human societies.

The varieties of historical consciousness and historical understanding along with diverging scope of historical models converge themselves to contesting scales for the evaluation of societies and for the determination of the status of a particular society as 'civilization'. Thus such scales pre-requisitely negate the concept of universality, assume a wider unit of dialectical process for the understanding of human progress, reject the theories dividing the world into two poles, and ladder system to determine the place of a society on the scale of civilization. However, a diversity of base-line can be seen permanent as an amalgamation of geographical, temporal, ideological, cultural, religious, political, normative and technological grounds, or, on the bases of individuality of any one of them.

Medieval structure of scaling was based on the dynastic structure and geo-political unit of historical studies were dominant such as 'Mughal India' and 'Stuart England'. Gradually, a differentiation between political and cultural unit began to emerge by the end of eighteenth century and political unit lost its place into 'cultural conscience',[28] as political elite could be imperial and foreigner. Yet, growth of colonialism and religious challenges to the colonizers revived the religious scale of civilization such as Christian, Muslims and Hindus,[29] having a system of priorities as per colonial interests. In this structure, "civilized" and "uncivilized" appear to be a common division. The two ladder

28 Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writings on India 1600-1800*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995. The phrase as a term is the title of chapter third.

29 See Marshman, J. C., *The History of India from Remote Antiquity to the Accession of the Mughal Dynasty, Compiled for the use of Schools*, Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1842.

scale seems to be broadened for six ladders: savages, barbarians, uncivilized, semi-civilized, civilized and highly civilized, generally used in group. The division of 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' is commonly applied by a plenty of writers, either historians or not. First three units of the six ladder scales have been used in one bracket, very commonly. Some of the historians such as James Mill, use the term 'semi-civilized'. In this scheme, geographical units are considered representatives of different levels of civilization from the remote antiquity to modern times[30] and has been divided on the model of Ancient and Modern periods of civilization, with a view of changing geography, since the late eighteenth century.[31] The differentiation between ancient, religious and modern seems to be creating a new point of 'medieval period' to differentiate between the two claimers of modernity: the Muslims and the West. Among the Westerners, the English became sole modernists and Muslims seem to be placed on the ladder of 'medieval'. By the coinage of the term 'medieval', the history of the dominance of the Muslim seems to be separated by the temporal point of 'modernity'. This temporal division of history and civilization has been approached through normative-qualitative scales with prominent ladders of "civilized" and " uncivilized", former always for the West and latter always for the "other", with the practice of addition of 'semi civilized', 'barbarian', 'savages' and 'far behind the savages'.[32] These concepts, from the late eighteenth century

30 The best example of the approach can be seen in Crawford's *History of the Indian Archipelago*, Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1820.

31 See for example Thomas Maurice, *Indian Antiquities or Dissertation Relative to the Ancient Geographical Divisions, the Pure System of Primeval Theology, the Grand Code of Civil Laws, The Original Form of Government and the Various and Profound Literature of Hindostan, Compared Throughout with the Religion, Law, Government and Literature of Persia, Egypt and Greece. The Whole Intended as Introduction to the History of Hindostan Upon a Comprehensive Scale*, 7 vol., London: The Author, 1793-1800.

32 See Muhammad Shafique Bhatti, 'Contesting Criteria: Colonial British Scaling of Indo-Muslim Civilization', *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol. XXVII, No 2 (July-Dec. 2006), p. 120.

to the late twentieth century, are used by so many historians. Handling of this wide literature presenting the divergent scales for the determination of the place of a particular society in relation to the concept of civilization is not possible. However, the following table shows selected scales used during the last two hundred years. Most of the examples are taken from Indo-Muslim-British tradition.

Table of Popular Scales

#	Devisors of Scale	Date/ Period	Base-concept	Ladders	Scales
1	Serampore Missionaries	1798	Contemporary Religion	Three	Christian, Muslims, Hindus.
2	William Jones	1785-1795	Geo-Religious	Four	Muslim Arab, Hindu India, Christian Europe, Modern West
3	Thomas Maurice	1801	Geo-Temporal	Three	Antique, Ancient, Modern
4	James Mill	1817	Progressive/ Utilitarian	Three	Hindu Savage, Muslims Semi-civilized, European Civilized
5	Romanticists	1800-1843	Racial-Lingua Regional	three	1-Ancient, Medieval, Modern 2-Arabs, Turks, Indians, African, Caucasians, Germans, etc.
6	Toynbee	1930-1965	Combined	Six	Savage, barbarian, abortive, Semi-civilized, Civilized, Highly civilized.
7	UNESCO	1971	Temporal-Geographical	Three	Asia, Europe, Africa, Ancient, Medieval, Modern.
8	Modern Economists	Since 1950	Economics	three	Non-Developed, Under-Developed, Developed,

Sources.[33]

The variety of scales dominated by temporal, geographical and social bases, reflect a sort of difference in standard which primarily depend upon the nature of criteria. The base column reflects the origin of criteria. However, the criteria need to be explored more properly to clarify the concept of 'civilization.

Contesting Criteria

The scales in the table do not seem self-generated by the historians or intellectuals. These were the result of a contest of criteria to promote and prove a view, valid and authentic or to develop a view, on methodological basis to contribute in the contemporary European intellectual

33 *Ibid*. Most of the sources are mentioned in the footnotes. The additional sources are Unesco, *The History of Mankind*, New York: Harper, 1975.

discourse which was tinged with issues of colonial world politics.

In this perspective, the geographical base highlights a regional base of civilization such as Indian civilization, European civilization, Arab civilization. In the same way, temporal base highlights a time scale for the determination of criteria for the status of civilization which is always vague as depends on the selection of 'significant events'. Normative criteria divide the human race on religious basis and social conduct. Economic criteria pronounce civilizations as developed, under-developed and Semi-developed. Simultaneously, historical criteria consider civilizations in its ancient, medieval and modern form. One most restricted criterion is religious that divides the societies on the bases of belief and creed such as Hindu, Christian, Jew, Buddhist and Muslim. Ideological discussion has been confined during the last century to the Capitalist civilization, individualist civilization, socialist civilization and Islamic civilization or on such other foundations. Most recent trends have emerged in the name of liberty and democracy and have divided the men in liberal and conservative and democratic and semi-democratic and non democratic poles. However, these concepts have so many intricacies even in their bases and indicate underlying themes of contest among the different schools of thought. None of the themes seems self-expressive. In this regard, the criteria of scaling also indicates the mutual impact factors among the civilizations. However, all this can be understood as a contest among the criteria: what is civilisation and what is the rest?

The historians of society have focused almost every aspect of society singularly or in combination with other aspects developing the concept of inter-cultural relations. These aspects form a vast range from mythology to philosophy, political institutions to international relations, ideal to material and theory to practice. The question of priority among these aspects and determination of a minimal standard form the central criteria for the concept of scaling of civilizations.

One common theme for the criteria has been "Empire" in contemporary context as the model for the determination of the place of a society on the scale of civilization since the enlightenment.[34] As the Muslims had established an empire in India, so the Indo-Muslims are considered "civilized" in this context. However, the concept had a rational institutional and man centred approach to contemporary history which has been challenged by the view that mythology, literature and antiquity, indicate a level of civilization without which progress of a society can never be measured. The romanticists, since late 18th century have developed the scale to measure the status of a civilization considering the state of literature, antiquity and mythology. Simultaneously, they saw all three symbols in their relations with the geography. Their belief in the concept of diversity of cultures in the world developed an understanding of the existence of a number of civilizations at a time on the earth. For them, Islam was not an ancient religion than the Arab mythology and literature and had aborted the growth of ancient Arabic literature. In this way, Islam had developed a civilization, but it was not at the level of Greece or Rome. Rather it had destroyed the ancient civilizations of Arabia, Persia and Byzantine. Therefore, on the one hand, Indian Muslims appear to have not developed a viable civilization and then they were not Indian.[35] They were considered a continuity of Muslim imperialism.

The view is contested by the utilitarian philosophy and nationalist school. The Utilitarians have criticised the romantic criteria and focused on the institutional, constitutional, and democratic as well as rational philosophical side of a society to call it 'civilized'. They advocated universal norms and values as symbols of civilization. Muslims were semi-civilized for them. Believing

34 See Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Seven Volumes, London, Macmillan & Co., 1778. Robert Orme, *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, from the Year MDCCXLV*, London: John Nourse, 1763.

35 See note 29.

in the universality of value system, they applied the same concept to the Indian Muslims.[36]

Both the criteria are in marked contrast with the concept of revealed religion, life hereafter and religious metaphysics. Therefore, the religionists focused on the concept of salvation hereafter death. For them the developments of modern world, especially Europe were the products of Christian religion and western civilization was in fact Christian civilization.[37] Christian scripture and the concept of salvation was their sole and universal criterion for the scaling of the status of any civilization. Any society devoid of Christian religion was liable to what the earlier criterion applied to non-civilized world.[38] These criteria seem to be applied to the concept of civilization with minor changes since the mid-nineteenth century.

However attempts to synthesise these criteria have always been made by a number of historians by determining the minimum scale of civilization to mythology and maximum to philosophy and technology. Elphinstone seems to be assimilating religious and geo-cultural criteria to one.[39] One such attempt has been made by Toynbee. His criterion appears to be literature, religion, philosophy and empire-building, assimilating all themes of classification and scaling. However, his approach begins from barbarians and ends with the rise of a Universal Religion. Yet, he negates the concept of the unity of civilization and looks for a universal

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36 Mill, James, *History of British India*, ed. H. H. Wilson, 6 vols., London: James Madden, 1858, passim.

37 See for example T. B. Macaulay, *History of England*, London: Heron Books, 1856 and Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs,* London: John Murray, 1849.

38 Charles Grant, *Observations on the State of Society Among The Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals; and on the means of Improving it*, London: House of Commons, 1813 and Henry Martyn, *Memoirs of the rev. Henry Martyn*, London: Black, Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, 1819.

39 Mountstuart Elphinstone, *History of India*, 2 vols., London: Spottiswoodi, 1841.

religion in future by the assimilation of Hinduism, Budhism, Jewism, Christianity and Islam.[40]

It can be concluded that the concept of civilization is a dynamic concept since its emergence during the eighteenth century. The concept seems to be emerging out of vacuum created by the decline of traditional European structure of religion, politics and historical consciousness. The concept apply Hegelian dialectics to the comparison of societies and their status and has an inherent tendency of representation of unifying smaller but coherent structures of political and cultural identities against a more broader but diverse unit. This paradoxical status had necessitated a hierarchical structure of scales to determine the levels of societies. The variance of unifying and diversifying forces generates difference of the levels of scales. All this appear to be exploited through the concept of 'history of civilization'. The differing priorities for the selection of 'units of historical understanding' seem to be taking the form of criteria to determine the ladders of scales for the evaluation of the status of societies to 'civilization'. In this perspective, the expectation of a universal treatment of human species and the idea of a universal human civilization as well as universal religion seem contradictory to the concept. The concept within itself has minimum of a superiority and inferiority complex along with distinction of 'self' and 'other' and illuminates not only 'clash' but also 'coordination' among the differing units. However, 'Clash of Civilizations' seems to have domination in the nature and development of the concept. Although the Muslims has borrowed the concept from the west, yet, the application of the concept against the concept of 'Muslim Ummah' seems mismatched and can be questioned very strongly and promptly as the concept of civilization leads towards geo-cultural divisions rather than 'unity of believers'. Therefore, the construction of the world on religious bases such as Muslim Civilization, Christian Civilization, and Hindu Civilization seem contradictory to the concept without geo-temporal references.

40 A. J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, abridged by Somervell, London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

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