LITERATURE REVIEW

My area of research encompasses an extremely wide field of enquiry, since I am examining the missionary voices and actions in England and their efforts in colonial India. I further narrow down my broad framework on missionary activities in India to the Brethren movement, to show that this movement was shaped by different anti-imperialist parameters. The spread of imperialism and capitalism brought the missionaries bearing the flag of Christianity. Western colonialism, with its economic, technological, and social organizations came in the public secular garb of imperialism. Riding piggyback on the ‘modern west’ the missionaries were convinced that ‘conversion’ to Christianity through western culture was possible.

From Vasco da Gama’s conquest of the western coast in the 16th century, the missionaries came with their own agenda right up to the 19th century. During the 19th century, primarily with the rise of the Protestant mission force, missions took to a purer religious footing. 29th Annual Report of the Calcutta Baptist Mission, 1849, maintains that even William Carey, the father of modern missions, had different motives from the imperial administrators who banned him from Calcutta in the 1790s. Carey also had a weak grasp of the realities of politics and power. He opted for a post in an Indigo plant, and was quickly co-opted by imperial administrators and was deployed for their own purposes as Professor of Oriental Languages at the College of Fort William. The missionary enterprise disapproved of the secular approach of the East India Company towards acquisition of Indian Territory. The ‘Memoir’ by Claudius Buchanan was the first statement by a Company missionary chaplain, for the evangelism of the indigenous
population. In the wake of 1806 Vellore mutiny, Buchanan countered the voices raised in England and in India against the missionaries and the demands for their recall from India, by issuing an open invitation to missionaries to India. The propagation of Christianity and the role of governance were clubbed together in this program.

Ironically, both the missionary chaplain Claudius Buchanan and the Scottish missionary Alexander Duff, supported the cause of colonialism and its progress in India. While at home country on leave in 1835, Duff spoke before church’s General Assembly that ‘the English language…is the lever which, as an instrument, is destined to move all Hindustan’. The General Assembly approved schools on Duff formula and set up them in Bombay (1832), Madras (1837) and Machilipatnam (1842) in the Andhra region. With the Free Church of Scotland mission, the curriculum was progressively broadened to relate to Christianity far more closely. Interestingly, Bernard Cohn in his book, ‘Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India’ located one of the most concrete links in the relationship between English language and the empire within a group of indigenous multilingual specialists who mediated between the colonizers and the colonized. The study of English literature in the Arnoldian sense and the study of modern knowledge based prominently on literature and science of the most celebrated missionary, Alexander Duff for the diffuse of Christianity among the high caste Hindu students, is thoroughly dealt in the book, ‘Masks of Conquest’ by Gauri Viswanathan.

A new twist came: the missionaries, knowingly or unknowingly, were harbingers of ‘civilization’, relating British metropolitan cultures to culturally alien societies. Thus, the rule of law, commerce, good government, literature and education were all translated by the missionaries through the idiom of Christianity. Hence, the historical novel, ‘The Missionary: An Indian Tale’, by Lady Sydney (Owenson) Morgan, spoke of the civilizing
and christianizing mission that could uproot Indian tradition. This civilizing mission encompassed even the commercial activity and thus clubbed together the spread of imperialism and capitalism. This position is clear in the writing of Dr. John Philip in his celebrated book, *Researches in South Africa*: he observed that missionaries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, were everywhere extending British interests, British influence and the British empire while scattering the seeds of civilization, social order and happiness. Evelyn Waugh’s *A Handful of Dust* echoes the same idea of ‘religion’ with that of the spread of ‘civilization’.

Andrew Porter in his book, *Religion versus Empire* argues that the British Protestant missionaries did not claim to be part of the British imperial authority, though they understood imperialism’s value for their evangelical project. Porter quotes missionary William McCullough writing in 1893 back home about his experience in India: ‘I am a missionary first and an imperialist afterwards’. Porter explains it thus: ‘in the divinely driven world it was for the modern missionary to discern the means available for spreading true religion…’ ‘Means’ such as English education, social reforms, economic changes, and above all, the Empire. The Empire was at best something to be turned to missionary advantage.

Another approach to a representation of India available to the Anglo-Indians and to the public in Britain was the divine agenda of a Christian providence. Evangelicals and missionaries were under the strong notion that the presence of the British in India was one that was intended by Providence. There were many in the mission world who justified the Christian presence in India in terms of providential vision and reached wide British public through their books, articles and through their missionary reports home to the SPG, the CMS and the Methodist missions for publication in their respective journals.
An English churchman Bishop Daniel Corrie of the CMS (Church Missionary Society) in his address on the occasion of anniversary meeting of the corresponding committee, Calcutta (Church Missionary Record, no.11, vol vi, Nov. 1835, p.263), said ‘I verily believe the British power has been established in India with the permission, and under the direction, of Divine Providence…There was Burmese war why? To open a way to the free dispersion of the Gospel and now missionaries are baptizing great numbers of them…The Gorkha war too? To bring us acquainted with those brave highlanders…I believe that God will support the British government in India for the good of the people and that his servants may have free liberty and protection’. This statement is one example how missionaries, mixed evangelicalism with theological conviction. Hundreds of English men came to India as missionaries with total belief in Providence. Most of the missionary journals, ‘Church Missionary Record’, ‘The Church Times’, Guardian etc., served as stimuli in drawing them to India. As an evangelical idealist and a character in the novel, ‘Jane Eyre’ by Charlotte Bronte, the 19th century English novelist, John Rivers was a good example of this project.

The Celebratory histories of missionaries, on the same track as the works of Kenneth Scott Latourette, ignored the Saidian critique¹. Of course the very evasion of the Saidian presuppositions makes the celebratory story a useful one in some ways for a historian wrestling with the relationship between Western religion and imperialism. Celebratory is not necessarily uncritical. There is a tradition of criticism of missionaries to study their roles in the imperialist project. In the context of Said’s ‘Orientalism’ and ‘Culture and Imperialism,’ the historiography of missions’ historians has also been

studied. A recent book by Brian Stanley addresses the relationship between Western religion and imperialism as the central theme of his book. Missionaries were fundamentally different from imperialists, he argues, because their motives were fundamentally different. Imperialists were motivated by a desire to coerce, control, and dominate; missionaries by a desire to persuade, either through conventional forms of conversion or, much more characteristically, through the subtle rhetoric of doing good works in a non-Christian setting. Andrew Porter noted that, the relationship between missionaries and imperial governments, the missionary sense of self-sufficiency, their disdain or suspicion of imperial politics and government, constantly resurfaced.

In a different take, there are also scholarly positions on the missionaries. Missionaries like Beidelman who demonstrated that the missionaries were implicated in systems of coercion and control, and were even entrepreneurs in that field.

Robert Glover, wrote of two realms of missionary motivation: external and internal. The external motivations were based upon consideration of the state of the ‘heathen’, of their degrading habits, abominable practices, unmentionable cruelties and crimes while the internal motivations were based upon consideration of evangelizing the heathen. The dominant theme in his writing was the Western cultural hegemony. Imperialists and missionaries discovered common interests. Stephen Neill, writing the first extensive study of colonialism in his book, ‘Christian Missions’ suggests, “all the West has done tends to be interpreted in terms of aggression”. That aggression encompasses political, economic, social, intellectual and the “most dangerous of all forms

---

of aggression” missions. Neill points out that the colonial idea is used almost exclusively as a term of reproach with the notion of European exploitation and impoverishment of cultural others.

Several missionaries say particularly, the most celebrated missionary, Alexander Duff, all shaped their policy in accordance with the demands of the Indian situation in which the determinative factor was the position and influence of Hinduism. Duff recognized this factor and applied indirect methods to undermine Hindus by the transmission of literary, philosophical and scientific culture of Christian presence. The same strategies were no less practiced in the Madras Presidency by missionaries like Robert Noble of the CMS (Church Missionary Society) who introduced Anglo-Vernacular schools to win Brahmin converts. This detailed study of the educational missionaries of the Scottish Free church, Wesleyan and the Church Missionary Society from the mid 19th century was the fundamental argument refracted through each of these facets of the imperial relationship. Affirmatively the mid-Victorian missionary theorist, Henry Venn envisaged that a mission that was dependent upon colonial rule would not survive the withdrawal of colonial rule. Evidently understood the fact, the later missionaries like C. F. Andrews and Edward Thompson left the missionary world altogether to become active anti-imperialists.

I

The England between 17th and 19th centuries produced ideas thick and fast. These ideas whether they concerned the generation of a new breed of Indians through education, training, character building or simply good governance were produced by Englishmen

who were of seminal importance to both English public and the educated Indian public. My arguments take into account the manner in which these intellectuals straddled between secular and religious identities that were part of the intellectual climate of England. Some of them were clearly of a religious and ethical bent, while others had a more secular and intellectual approach to the debatable issues at hand. My argument takes place at two levels. The first develops a frame of analysis from the existing scholarship on colonialism, and its hidden face—the missionary enterprise. At the second level, I strive to link the first frame to the intellectual and political context of both England and the colonial state’s presence in India. The missionary movements are rested in both the locales—England and colonial India, within the power of the state. But there is a difference. In England, the state, as well as the English public, have a homogenous identity—at both the public and the private domains—Christianity. Therefore there is no fundamental contradiction between the two domains, unlike the situation in colonial India. It was important for the votaries of an alien foreign colonial state to have a neutral face of power in its colonial territories. There was an apparent split between its religious identity, spirit, ethics and its functional understanding of power and governance. The latter was clearly going to represent its secular face. The former, its religious face, had to be veiled completely, dependent upon the acceptance of the colonized. For the sake of convenience, I will club intellectuals who were caught up in the debates on governance, pedagogy, progress, issues of morality, growth of institutions, nations, but within a more secular understanding of guiding parameters of these issues—men like John Locke, David Hume, Edmund Burke, Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, Edward Gibbon etc.
There was also another powerful voice—that of an overtly religious conviction—
the voice of the Evangelicals. Both these voices were raised in the public space, namely the
media and the parliament.

Sir Isaac Newton and John Locke were the true fathers of the Enlightenment. John
Locke wrote his ‘Two Treatises on Government’ and with it the natural laws and natural
rights that focused much on individual liberty. Kant characterizes Enlightenment as a
process that releases us from the state of immaturity. By immaturity, he means, accepting
some one’s authority through faith in him. This, he says, is a denial of true reason in
order to make room for faith. Against these rational trends Frederich Schleiermacher, the
father of liberalism in theology, spawned Enlightenment thought in Christian theology.
Consequently, rationalist teaching or Higher Criticism, which originated from Kant
spread to Great Britain, and caused embarrassing scandals within the church and the
Intellectual skepticism prevailed. Darwin’s ‘Origin of the Species’ became the basis for
the polemics of racism and imperialism intertwined with romantic nationalism embodied
in British enlightenment theory. The Enlightenment is identified in best aspects with its
secular counterpart ‘Romanticism’. Darwin provided a rationale for those who believed
that the existence of the Empire proved the British were selected by Nature to rule but
also to convince the Indian people that the British were not mere colonial conquerors but
a superior race on a noble civilizational mission. The British Enlightenment paved the
road to modernity as the colonial state in India took the garb of civilizing mission and
contested traditional Hindu religious prejudices. While the missionaries came with an
agenda of civilizing mission, the English settlers came with a colonizing nemesis together
called ‘colonial Anglicanism’. The Anglican missions at that time were firmly embedded
in Enlightenment theories which led to categories of imperialist ecclesiology. In
consequence to this, the ‘ Providential theory’ took shape in the hands of the Evangelicals and imperial historiographers. The evangelicals more clearly marked out Providence as a ground for India’s existing subjection to Britain, while Prof. Seely in ‘ The Expansion of England’ attributed the expansion of the colonial regime to the hand of Providence. On the other side, the skeptical philosophers and historians, David Hume, the French deist, Voltaire and at a later period, Edward Gibbon, were all naturalists and they, of course, attributed the course of history to natural causes—birth, growth and decline of civilization. Especially Gibbon’s first volume of ‘ The Decline and Fall of Roman Empire’ (1776) is the good example of this kind. He marginalized supernaturalism to naturalism implying that the moral constriction wrought by imperialism causes the hegemony of Christianizing mission possible. Using the same argument Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling and E. M. Forster engaged in a novelistic process, whose main purpose was not to raise more questions, but to keep the empire more or less in place justifying its imperial stance.

II

The English East India Company established a merchant empire in India and was more interested in commerce. The kind of capitalism introduced by the Company exploited India economically. This evolved a system of two spatial zones, the public and the private faces in the imperial structure of British rule in India. Andrew Porter (ed), ‘ The Two Faces of Colonialism’, The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume III, is a good work in that direction. As a result of it, the 18th century anti-imperial arguments were often heard from the intellectuals like Burke, Adam Smith etc, over the injustices of foreign despotism. Burke scorned the exploitative face of the British as what was wrong
in the west could not be right in the east. P.J. Marshall (ed) ‘Speeches of Edmund Burke’
gives a vivid picture of affairs of East India Company and its rulers and how they were
contradicted by Burke. From the early 19th century, the imperialist trend swept among the
intellectuals, such as James Mill, John Stuart Mill, T.B. Macaulay etc. Colonialism with
the religious attempts of the Empire marked the politically conservative ideology of the
19th century. The nature of British imperialism from the early 19th century to the end of
the British rule, and the political and historiographical debates that have surrounded it,
thus became a subject matter which comprises the motivations and assessments of
relevant historiographical debates. Jennifer Pitts, A Turn to Empire: is a splendid
contribution to the history of political thought in the 18th and 19th centuries associated
with colonial imperialism

George Psalmanazar's ‘A Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa,
an Island Subject to the Emperor of Japan’, was published in 1704. The author
categorized Formosa and Britain in terms of ‘false’ religion--that is, priestly superstition--
against ‘true’ religion--that is, Anglican Protestantism. Peter van der Veer in his work,
‘Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain’ that the Mill’s book,
‘History of British India’ was influenced by Psalmanazar. Besides having a backward
religion, India was, in Mill's eyes, an example of immoral feudalism. The
historiographical debate of the 19th century was not only imperialistic but also a
misrepresentation of India. Hegel in his work ‘Philosophy of History’ opens a chapter
describing the womanized beauty of India awaiting masculine treatment by the west. In
this Hegel joins with the Robert Southey’s ‘The Curse of Kehema’ to marginalize a
Hindu with his ‘narratives of deceit, cheating and murder’ and the Hindu nature was a
character of ‘spirit in a state of dream’. Mill-Hegel’s articulation devalued India as
wandering in poetic imaginations and fantasies. The Mill-Hegelian discourse had no place for the orient and the orient too had no say in the onward utilitarian and evangelical momentum. The Mill-Hegelian articulation was a driving force behind the Anglicist movement, the effort of utilitarians and missionaries who also combined this ideological position with their own agenda.

The imperial ideology of the day took to a vague concept of a civilizing mission of sharing the missionaries belief in the transformative powers of education, a compulsory preoccupation for colonial administrators. This work draws from highly analytical perspectives of Percival Spear (The Oxford History of Modern India 1740-1947), Eric Stokes’ (The English Utilitarians and India), and Clive Dewey’s (The Mind of the Indian Civil Service). English-style education was promoted by Utilitarians such as James Mill and John Stuart Mill who envisaged a class of Indians, well-educated in western ideas and sentiment, who would spread their influence to the rest of India. Almost armoured by Mill-Hegel orientation, Macualay pushed for the introduction of English education in India, which interpreters justified as a conduit for Macaulay’s downward filtration to transform people loyalty to the Raj. Kalyan K. Chatterjee’s ‘English Education’ articulates that Evangelism, which equated social progress with Christianity, promoted a form of ‘European education in alliance with the doctrine of Christianity, to the colonies the superior morals and knowledge of Europe, would destroy the basis of their old beliefs and pave the way for conversion to Christianity’.

The infiltrations of the company administration by large numbers of people from Charles Grant, were seeking to impose a colonizing mission agenda in India, which was very different from simply being people of Christian belief, but it is argued here that a language of belief, interpretations and judgement are described in terms of the category
of religion. It had a pervasive impulse to control and to direct the British rule in India and was one of the important stories of long years of colonialism to dispel the myth of the separation of church and state and the evangelicals and the missionaries did their best to fulfill that pledge. Religion and power were mixed for material interests. British Christianity had substantive importance to many significantly placed individuals in the civil and military structures of the administration, as well as others back at home in England, and the mission circles in India and England who had direct or indirect responsibilities connected to India, both with utilitarian voice of law and administration and evangelical reforming impulse, were involved in the rational operation system of the British imperialism. This book surfaces how even more, the Christian historiography of the period with great resonance of providential theory, had its roots in British Hegelianism as well as Whig notions, and was thoroughly reinforced by the ‘Protestant Ethic’ of capitalism legitimizing (God’s approval implied) accumulation of wealth, which shaped the minds of Evangelicals in the second half of the 19th century is. Max Weber’s ‘The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism’ (1976) and Boyd Hilton’s ‘The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1885-1865’ (1997) are books of authority which prominently dealt these issues.

III

Primarily I discussed how the Anglican missionaries of branded societies viz., the Church Missionary Society (CMS), London Missionary Society (LMS), Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS), Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) etc., pervaded by Enlightenment theories led to imperialist ecclesiology of liberal theology and who were, politically and enthusiastically pro-imperial in their policy and their own presence, side by side with British administrators who maintained that India had to be ruled by the
British. Finally I compared and contrasted the Anglican missionaries with one unique British missionary sect, the Brethren missionaries in Andhra (India) around whom the last chapters of this thesis are structured. They were committed to their call, set apart themselves from all vices of imperialism such as colonial, racial and cultural prejudices as they often claimed themselves as ‘men sent from God’. Their teaching was fundamentalist theology with lofty Biblical ideals and stood apart from the state’s imperial ideology. Brethren bookshelves were the amassed store house of Brethren missionary records of labour in many lands (Echoes of Service Issues, Bath, London) and Brethren Archivists and Historians Network Review Issues in Archive at Manchester, confirm Brethren attitudes, a separation from the world. For example, ‘...are we not... aliens in this country in which we dwell, belonging in heart and interest to another and better country...? That is to say, a heavenly country’. Anthony Norris Groves, the first Brethren missionary to Andhra, who was against taking up arms, left the Church of England and started the movement of Brethrenism. Due to Groves dynamic personality the idea of rejecting war took hold of his colleagues and became a fixed tenet for the emerging sect of Brethrenism. A good number of military officers and soldiers gave up their colonial army positions before they joined the Brethren movement at the instance of Anthony Norris Groves in Madras and Chittoor about 1837. Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves by His Widow (1857) is a highly informative book about Groves’ pioneering work in Andhra. The Brethren believed belonging to no one nation, and no specific land on earth. Consistent with such a call, they took no voluntary active part in the government, politics, or conflicts of any one nation under imperial obligation. Pauline Summerton’s ‘Brethren Missionary Settler and A Colonial Settler Compared and Contrasted’ (2003) is a good work explaining how the Brethren missionaries managed to
avoid the pitfalls of colonialism. In India the founding Brethren missionaries A.N. Groves at Chittoor, Bowden and Beer at Narsapur and in the early part of 20th century the later missionaries Handley Bird at Madras and Bro. Silas Fox at Anantapur all located themselves among the indigenous people, far from the temptations of colonial society, which they felt might divert them from their life style of pilgrim character. Several Indian Christian companions of the Brethren missionaries are also dealt in detail in this thesis mostly based on their diaries and letters. G.H. Lang’s, ‘The History & Diaries of An Indian Christian, Arulappan’(1939) is a master piece in the history of indigenous missions inaugurating native missionary movement. Often the foreign missionaries bore the blame of being imperialists and racists whereas the Brethren missionaries were exonerated from such charges and held forth for the integrity of indigenous church and Indian leadership.