CHAPTER I

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All major social forces have precursors, precedents, analogues and sources in the past. It is this deep and multiple genealogies that have frustrated the aspirations of modernizers in every different society to synchronise their historical watches. (1997,p2)

The present chapter deals in detail with the genesis, meaning, interpretations and the development of the term ‘Modernity’, highlighting its features, indicators and types. Modernity is compared to modernism and contemporaneity and contrasted with traditionalism.

‘Modernity’ is a multidimensional and highly dynamic concept which can be defined, interpreted and perceived in various ways. It is a highly volatile concept which changes with ‘time’ and ‘place’. It is necessary to take cognizance of the various interpretations the concept has undergone at various stages and phases of human evolution. It is quite interesting to know that, while some writers like Kant have concurred with their predecessors as regards the meaning of ‘Modernity’, there are others like Pauline Marie Rosenau and Michael Foucault who hold divergent views, while still others are ambivalent towards the same.

Since the focus of the researcher is to study the impact of modernity in the fiction of Chinua Achebe and Shivarama Karanth, it is necessary that we study the impact of modernity on African and Indian literature.

The term ‘modernity’ indicates the experiences, dimensions and the link between the general concept of modernity in the global context, its aftermath and that of modernity in the colonies. Hence, this chapter makes a detailed attempt at
discussing and debating the global modernity concept, its implications on the African and Indian scenario and also the varying responses to colonialism.

Let us examine in detail the genesis of the term ‘Modernity’, the various mutations it has undergone in the annals of history, and its present connotation. The word ‘Modern’ has its roots in the Latin word ‘modo’ meaning ‘just now’. Around 1127 AD, Abbot Sugar began reconstructing his Abbey Basilica of St. Dennis in Paris. His architectural ideas resulted in something never seen before. It gave a ‘new look’ to the structure which was neither classical nor Greek nor Roman nor Romanesque. Not knowing what to name it, Sugar fell back on the Latin ‘opus Modemum’ meaning a ‘Modern look’ (1999 p6). This is the first ever reference to the word ‘Modern’ that has been recorded. In tracing the history of modernity in the European context two prominent philosophers Jung Habermas and Michel Foucault have played a vital role. They are often considered as “the two inseparable partners in a dance that defines the agenda of contemporary political philosophy” (1999 p61).

Wikipedia states that the word ‘modernity’ was coined by Charles Pierre Baudelaire to designate the fleeting, ephemeral experience of life in an urban metropolis and the responsibilities that art has to capture that experience (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernity). Here the emphasis is on two aspects: on the transience of life in an urban setup and the functional aspect of art in capturing that aspect. Habermas maps out the concept of modernity through the ages in one of his essays:

The word ‘modern’ was first employed in the late fifth century in order to distinguish the present, now officially Christian from the pagan Roman past. With a different content in each case, the expression ‘modernity’ repeatedly articulates the consciousness of an era that
refers back to the past of classical antiquity precisely in order to comprehend itself as a result of the transition from the old to the new. This is not merely true for the Renaissance, with which the 'modern age' begins for us; people also considered themselves 'modern' in the age of harlequin in the twelfth century and in the Enlightenment - in short whenever the consciousness of a new era developed in Europe through a renewed relationship to classical antiquity (1981 p39)^5.

Habermas evolves a four point definition for modernity involving

- Individualism and recognizing the subjective freedom of the individual;
- Right to criticism and refusal to take anything for granted;
- The autonomy of action;
- The philosophy of reflection enabling humans to introspect, understand the world around without the interference of religion (1981 p5)^6.

The definition of modernity by Habermas emphasizes individuality, subjective freedom, and autonomy of thought, action and self introspection. He detests interference of religion in the personal life of an individual. He gives importance to the life of an individual correlating with his surroundings at the individual level and not influenced by external factors like religion or any philosophy.

Jamal Khwaja in his essay 'What is Modernity'? perceives modernity as a "unique configuration consisting of a conceptual framework, a distinctive value system and a distinctive artistic and aesthetic sensibility" (1968 p18)^7. Jamal Khwaja looks at modernity as a mixed feature of unique value system, varied artistic perception and aesthetic sense. The values take a turn. Here the focus is not on freedom or individuality but a changed conceptual framework and altered value systems.
Nagendra, a prominent Indian writer, in his essay 'Modernity in Literature' assigns three different meanings to modernity:

One meaning is basically temporal and denotes a particular period or age. For example, in Indian History, modernity is said to begin from the latter half of the eighteenth century, while in England it is believed to have started somewhere during Renaissance and roughly during the time of French Revolution in France.

Secondly, etymologically speaking, the word denotes the 'modern' as related to the 'present' or the 'contemporary'. Since the character of 'contemporary' changes with the passage of time, this particular meaning of the word which is an equivalent of the 'contemporary' also changes from time to time. The 'modern' here means the 'new' as distinguished from the 'old'. In this context 'modern' is not confined to our present age only. The different periods in history were 'modern' at one time when they broke away with their past. Here again we cannot pin point exactly where and when the old ceased to exist and the new began. We just go by the trend by and large and can only roughly say that 'modernity' began in such and such a century or age and at such and such a place. 'Place' and 'time' is just an approximation and exactness is rather improbable. Similarly it is quite explicit that today's 'modern' is tomorrow's 'ancient' and today's 'ancient' was yesterday's 'modern'. It is definitely impossible to precisely demarcate which is modern and which is not in the chronological order.

Another meaning is conceptual wherein 'modernity' is considered as an attitude denoting a philosophy of life. Modernity is viewed as a complex concept made up of several component ideas with special emphasis on a live contact with and awareness of the milieu. Correspondingly modernity denotes an 'attitude' or 'a way of
life'. Here again we take into consideration that man is a combination of two vital aspects: one the intrinsic quality of a person and the second, the milieu or the surroundings which have a bearing on the character or behavior of a person. Only when the mind of a man coupled with his milieu is flexible enough to go with the changing times can any change be possible. When we say that a man is ‘modern’ it is just in his dress, food, manners and mannerisms: all these denote superficial modernity. It is the intrinsic attitude of the person that matters. Deep within a person may be still traditional or rigid sticking on to the past predilections. Hence, according to Nagendra, “a person is said to be modern when he can bring about an attitudinal change in himself along with the superficial changes” (1968 p425).

In the European context, modernity was termed ‘Enlightenment Modernity’, while in the case of India and Africa it was termed as ‘Colonial Modernity’. Enlightenment Modernity means progress in all walks of life including progress in knowledge, social and moral improvement, emancipation of man from power and authority through reason. But Foucault dubs Enlightenment Modernity which aims at universal progress and liberation as concealed domination and impracticable. This Enlightenment Modernity of Foucault is summed up by James Schmidt as:

The critique charges that the enlightenment ideal of freeing humanity from all forms of repression, exploitation, degradation and alienation paradoxically results in a new and insidious form of that produces a ‘thoroughly concealed domination’ under the ‘false absolute’ of a subject centered reason. Attempts at enlightenment lead only to the triumph of new forms of mythology, efforts at humanistic reforms lead to ever more crafty forms of domination and each of the alleged
triumphs of reason has led only to new and more pervasive forms of enslavement (1996 p147).9

In this, Foucault differs from Chomsky who sees very optimistically some sort of an attribute in human nature which grounds justice (1998 p75)10. David Harvey, Terry Eagleton, and others feel that the modernists lay too much emphasis on science and technology. They uphold alternative knowledge systems and challenge the absoluteness of western science and reason. David Harvey in his work 'The Condition of Postmodernism' argues that this is the commercialization and domestication of modernism and suggests that it integrates with the neo conservative politics (1989 p42).11

Western Capitalist society was characterised by over accumulation of material. Harvey considered Postmodernism as the cultural response to material condition. He foresaw a rift between scientific and moral judgments due to this resulting in the emergence of a new trend:

The crisis of over accumulation that began in the late 1960s and that which came to a head in 1973 has generated exactly such a result. The experience of 'time' and 'space' has changed, the confidence in the association between scientific and moral judgments have collapsed, aesthetics has triumphed over ethics as a prime focus of social and intellectual concerns, images dominate narratives, ephemerality and fragmentation take precedence over eternal truths and unified politics and explanations have shifted from the realm of material and political economic groundings towards a consideration of autonomous cultural and political practices (1989 p 327-328).12
If Harvey, Terry Eagleton and others drifted apart and opposed Enlightenment in the European context, Indian thinkers responded to modernity in varied ways. Colonialism was often identified with modernity. In the words of Shankar U.S:

In India, modernity as it is mediated through the agency of colonialism, is appropriately described as colonial modernity. The phrase connotes the colonial dimensions of modernity, which is said to be instrumental in perpetuating the structures of domination instituted by colonial practices (2001 p2).

Ganesha U.H. considers colonialism as the harbinger of modernity. While discussing the discourse of modernity he projects a similar view when he says:

The onset of colonialism with its ‘civilizing mission’ created in India a moment of epistemic break, when a new consciousness started emerging with the incursion of modernity into a traditional society. The introduction of colonial system of education, the English language, modern technology, bureaucracy, modern social institutions and Christianity all brought about a new pattern in the ways of living and thinking. The conceptual and technological frames that were integral to the process of colonization constituted ‘modernity’; ‘tradition’ came to be constituted and defined in terms of and in opposition to modernity, as the existing ways of life and patterns of thought” (2012 p35).

Having studied the genesis, meaning and various interpretations of modernity, we need to arrive at certain general features of modernity, which can be done, after listing the tenets of traditionalism.
Traditionalism

The word ‘tradition’ has its roots in the Latin word ‘traditionem’ which means ‘delivery’, ‘handing down knowledge’ or ‘passing down a doctrine’. ‘Tradition’ survives in English as a description of a general process of handing down. Tradition embodies a number of concepts and ideas which are differently codified by various thinkers. While Raymond Williams looks at ‘tradition’ as a general process of handing down with a very strong and predominant sense of the entailing respect and duty (1976 p319) Bikhu Parekh views tradition as a part of the collective inheritance of a systematic life style (1989 p19)\textsuperscript{16}. Talcott Parsons in his ‘Structure of Social Action’ highlights certain fundamental and marked features of traditional societies:

Traditional societies are bound by norms, beliefs, attitudes and values which have been passed on from generations; they are susceptible for cosmetic or surficial changes only keeping the fundamentals in tact; all important aspects of social and cultural life are governed by religion; the individual’s self interest is subordinated to the overall interest of the group; community life takes precedence over individual life; if a person belongs to a particular community, he is bound to it by common belonging and has the rights and obligations defined within the social structure because they bear the stamp of custom and tradition and are sanctioned by ancestral authority; the identification of the individual with the group of which he forms a part and with its social and cultural outlook is the very essence of traditionalism. A person belonging to the society is subjected to the taboos and prohibitions of the society as much as his stake in the peace and survival of the society; supernatural and magical aspects play a significant role in the life of the individual
and the society; the community is morally supportive to clansmen at times of distress when in conflict with members of other similar groups; believe in multiplicity and ethnocentricity of Gods; usually male chauvinistic and women and women’s words have very little significance; attributes like sociability, prowess, courage, integrity, piety and industry are valued; common goals and common interests are treated not as a suppression of the personality but as a conformity to the common social norm (1937 p473-490)\textsuperscript{17}.

For Emmanuel Obiechina ‘tradition’ includes everything right from greeting to all customs and religious practice (1975 p 37)\textsuperscript{18}. Tradition is always with respect to a specific boundary, group or a specific community. Hence, it is necessary that we define a community. We do find varied explanations by various sociologists for the word ‘community’ itself: M.MacIver conceptualizes a community as follows:

Wherever the members of any group, small or large, live together in such a way that they share not this or that particular interest, but the conditions of a common life, we call that group a ‘community’. The basic criteria of a community are that all of one’s relationship may be found within it (1952 p8-9)\textsuperscript{19}.

Robert Redfield concurs with MacIver in conceptualising community

Where in he considers the size, activities, social relationships, and mentality of the people involved along with their physical proximity and self reliance as the primary parameter for a group to be called a ‘community’ (1956 p18)\textsuperscript{20}. This is more or less in terms with the concept of ‘The Sacred Society’ of Hover Baker and Richard Lennoy’s Secular Society (1971 p348)\textsuperscript{21}. 
Marx has a different orientation when he refers to such communities as 'Barbaric', when he says: "Such primitive communities are short sighted, barbaric, para civilized and insensible" (1973 p171-172)\textsuperscript{22}. He traces the root of oriental cruelty to such a society in the novels of Karanth and Achebe, we find societies sharing characteristic features of a typical traditional society:

*Choma's Drum* depicts a class ridden society wherein tradition denies the status of a tenant to Choma who aspires to own a piece of land. Here the paradox is that Choma is tempted to own tenancy and become a farmer by a colonial officer who offers him tenancy. But here again it is the orthodox tradition which does not allow Sankappayya, the landlord to permit him land for tenancy. On the one hand it is the attraction of colonial modernity which lures Choma's one son Guruva to take to Christianity for the sake of owning a piece of land. On the other hand it is tradition which makes Choma lose his other son Neela who drowns unrescued in the name of untouchability.

In *The Shrine*, the myth of sati Sarasamma is depicted as a foil to the subordination of women who dies a fateful death on the funeral pyre of her husband. In *The Woman of Basrur*, the pontiff Laxmanathirta who heads a religious institution falls prey to the desires of the body and seeks sexual fulfillment through Manjula, the prostitute.

One finds a mix of both, the sacred society of Baker and the barbaric society of Marx in African and Indian literature. For example if we find traces of sacred societies in Karanth's *Choma's Drum* and to an extent even in *The Head Man of the Little Hill*, we also find Marx's specimen of barbaric society in the same novels as in the death of Choma's son not being saved by Brahmins in the name of
untouchability. The novella, *The Shrine* depicts the myth of Sati in the form of patriarchal discrimination in traditional societies. Similarly Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* stand a testimony to both. One pragmatic aspect in traditional societies is that they experience a mixed situation of not just sacredness or barbarism but fascination, acceptance opposition, acknowledgement, agreement, polarization and many more issues.

Having listed certain generalities of traditionalism with live examples from Indian and African fiction, we now go on to enumerate the features of modernity. It is necessary to take cognizance of the various interpretations the concept has undergone at various stages and phases of human evolution.

**Features of Modernity**

Modernity as a way of life and modernity as an aspect in literature demonstrate certain characteristic features wherever it has made its presence felt. Modernity is not in things, materials or even commodity. It is more in the internal and intrinsic attitude, outlook, approach and other more important aspects. Dipankar Gupta in his treatise *Mistaken Modernity* lays down certain prime attributes of Modernity like: dignity of the individual, upper mobility inter-subjectivity, independence, freedom of thought, speech and action to name a few. He says, ‘Possession of modern technology alone does not always signal Modernity’ (2000 p1)\(^{23}\) Along with Modern technology it also has certain other features which are listed below:

Dignity of the individual is given utmost importance as against heritage or parentage; individual is considered a microcosm of the larger society he lives in and as such the norms that govern the larger world also govern him inter - subjectivity or the concept of sharing in one another’s fate is a pre-requisite of modern life ;an increasing
proportion of interpersonal practices are self centered, rational and
calculative as a result of which the desire to have much more than
needed is a typical feature; individuals claim citizenship rights and
social units of families, schools, firms, churches, etc are differentiated
from each other; individual merit and capability accord upward
mobility to an individual due to which many from the lower class
graduate to the upper classes; English education is introduced
formally which in turn links the individual to the outer world creating
a link between him and the outer world: develops free thought
inquiry, philosophy and individualism; creates an awareness and
awakening among the educated class to question some of the inherent
inhuman and painful practices of the prevalent times; health, hygiene
and sanitation receive importance with the establishment of medical
centers; traditional local panchayats local dispute settlements are
replaced by courts of law; massive industrialization leads to
urbanisation which in turn slowly sees the decadence of villages and
springing of faceless cities with roads, hotels eat-outs and business
establishments; conventional food and drinking habits like palm wine
and cola nuts and jaggery and water give way to coffee, tea and other
beverages and the conventional attire is being replaced by new types of
shirts, trousers, jeans etc.; religious customs, practices and the
institution of marriage itself undergoes changes; subtlety of human
relationship is affected making it more mechanical and listless; cross
cultural alliances and relationships often result in deadly diseases
(2000 p1-2)^{24}. 
Sociologists Susan Rudolph and Lloyd Rudolph recognize modernity as a dissipating force of traditionalism, they contend Modernity as:

- a scheme which creates a cosmopolitan outlook among the individuals;
- traditionalism and sacredness being replaced by rationality, reasoning, science, technology and other utilitarian values; individual is accorded precedence over community and profession is more a choice factor rather than heritage; youth is respected while age is relegated to the back stage; caste and creed have no bearing in employment in imperialistic industrial houses and establishments; participation and responsibility of the larger number is given importance in governing than the powerful (1968 p356).

Considering and unifying the interpretations of various thinkers regarding Modernity, we need to differentiate it from contemporaneity.

**Modernity and Contemporaneity**

Though 'modernity' and 'contemporaneity' are synonymous in the common usage most of the times, yet there is a tinge of difference between the two. A.K. Saran in his essay *contemporaneity and Modernity* distinguishes between the two. He says ‘Contemporaneity is a time conscious concept i.e. awareness of the time one lives in. It stands for one’s relation to one’s own time (1968 p39-42).

Though Modernity also refers to time, it is a comparative concept. We say a period or an institution is Modern only in relation to another that is ancient primitive or archaic. The concept of contemporaneity is considered an aid to understanding and analyzing any age, institution or any social process. Contemporaneity being time conscious is in a constant state of flux and cannot be tied down to any specific form. Hence to be contemporary means to be aligned to the present or to be in line with the
true direction of change. In simple terms, to be contemporary is to have the right sense of the past and the future, to be able to mediate between the past and the future through the present.

Contemporaneity involves the notion of the spirit, the *zeitgeist* or the soul of a given age. Toynbee defines contemporaneity in a negative way by saying 'incapacity to move from one set up to another is non-contemporaneity' (2004 p11)²⁷. This very clearly indicates that contemporaneity is the adaptability or the willingness to change. One needs to adapt oneself to the changing times and changing scenario. Only then can the self be contemporary and sustaining failing which one is left behind while the rest of the world marches forward. Schuon has made this point clear in a masterly way:

> Virtue implies a sort of incessant movement since it involves our will. There is no life and consequently no virtue without continual renewal. Thus to attribute to oneself some quality of other is equivalent to a fixation, or a crystallization, of the inner flux which makes that quality live to do so is to make it sterile’ (1954 p194)²⁸.

Any system or an individual needs to be a rolling stone. It needs to imbibe certain of the old, blend it with the best of the present and march ahead to the future. If this is not done, the present becomes miserable, the future and the past forgotten in matter of time. One point to be noted and acknowledged is the fact that the advent of any new order or way does not necessarily mean despising or opposing the old. Any new order definitely means the continuation of the old only. It would have taken the best of the old, and added the best of the contemporary to form a new whole called ‘The Modern’.
Thus, though 'Modernity' and 'contemporaneity' are almost used synonymously they are not so. While contemporaneity is a factor totally devoid of 'time' and 'space', 'Modernity' is 'time' and 'space' bound. To elaborate, we say 'this' period is Modern with relation to some other earlier period. Likewise 'Modernity' is also 'space-bound'. In the sense, we say a particular area like America or England is more Modern than Asia or Africa. Hence 'Modernity' is a highly dynamic and volatile concept with respect to time and space.

Though the terms modernism and modernity are almost used synonymously, yet there lies a line of difference between the two. Modernity is more a stage or phase in life undergoing mutations while modernism is more pertaining to art. We can make the difference more explicit.

Modernism

The term Modernism is used to denote a 20th century European Movement in creative arts. It delinked itself from the 19th century art form in terms of realism, linear narrativity, perspective and tonality. It was seen as an exploration of possibilities and a perpetual search for uniqueness and its cognate individuality. Though Modernity had its roots in Europe, it found a rapid development on its discourse with the African culture. Though the European powers and hegemony suppressed the savage cultures of Africa, yet they imported their rustic masks, jewellery, carvings etc. Modernism was shaped by various factors like industrialization, urbanization, horrors of the global wars etc. Modernism rejects the ideology of Realism and makes use of the works of the past through the application of reprise, incorporation, rewriting, recapitulation, revision and parody. As a result of this, artists, writers and thinkers broke with the traditional forms of literature painting.
and music which resulted in abstract art, a tonal music and stream of consciousness technique. This broke with the past in the first three decades of the twentieth century.

It is said that modernist literature was born in the city and with Baudelaire especially with his discovery that crowds mean loneliness and that the terms ‘multitude’ and ‘solitude’ are inter-changeable for a writer with an active and fragile imagination. This is what Obi Okonkowa experiences in Lagos in ‘No Longer at Ease’ amidst the vast crowd.

Clives Scott considers modernism as redemption from the aesthetics of the experiential and the existential. Art was considered not an imitation of reality nor an alternative reality but an intensity of reality (1983 p349)²⁹.

**Indicators of Modernity**

‘Modernity’ creeps into a society and is manifested in various ways or forms through certain agents called the *Indicators of Modernity*. Prominent among them are science and technology, education, industrialization, health and hygiene, employment opportunities, citizenship rights and standard of living of the society at large. British Colonialism penetrated into the Indian realms through a triple channel- Modern technology, English education and Orientalism.

**Modern Technology**

Technology is one of the prime indicators of modernity. Exposure of traditional societies to view scientific inventions, new commuting and communication systems etc. led to a shrinking of space and facilitated movements which broke the barriers of small villages and tiny hamlets, opening the way to macro urban settlements. Changing concepts of health, hygiene etc. paved the way indirectly for modernity. Science and technology as an indicator of modernity has been handled in detail in the subsequent chapters.
Modernity finds a fertile ground to develop wherever there has been social
disruption through industrialization, war, accumulation of population or any other
event which disrupts traditional and social relationships.

Modernity develops at a faster pace in cities because it is there that social
change and dislocation is more pronounced. It is also in rapidly expanding cities that
rural ethnic groups come into contact with foreigners or culturally foreign natives who
control the economy and dominate positions and status. As new workers gather in the
cities, as a result of industrialization, Modernity spreads from the intellectuals to the
urban proletariat and from industrial centers to towns. Eventually Modernity trickles
down to rural areas also. Hence ‘industrialisation’ is one of main indicators indicating
Modernity.

**English Education**

The expansion of education is influential in the development of Modernity and
national literature. Education creates a class of local intellectuals who are interested in
bringing about a revamp of the existing system. There is a very close relationship
between the economic conditions of a society, its politics, education and new
literature also. Urbanisation therefore leads to the expansion of education which in
turn produces writers and professionals who can reach out not only to the local
readers and market but to a wider readership and world market. Further, education in
English creates an awareness and better exposure of the world around resulting in
universal acceptance of local intellectuals, expert professionals. Education in a single
language also enhances the integrity and spirit of nationalism and brings about unity
among the locals.

The growth of cities and urbanization of the villages comprise one of the most
impressive facts of Modern times. It is in this context that the proverb ‘God made the
country and man made the town’ has come true. The city is not only increasingly the
dwelling place and the workshop of Modern man but it is the initiating and controlling
centre of economic, cultural and political life that has the most remote communities of
the world in its orbit and woven diverse peoples into its cosmos.

This shift from the rural to a predominantly urban society which has taken
place within the span of a single generation in such industrial areas as the United
States of America and Japan has been accompanied by virtually every phase of social
life. With the advent of industrialization, the city has become the melting pot of races,
peoples and cultures and the most favourable breeding ground of new biological and
cultural hybrids. It has not only tolerated but has dissolved individual differences. It
has brought peoples from the ends of the earth together because they are different and
thus useful to one another rather than being homogenous and like minded.

It is quite revealing that colonialism created a set of English educated local
intellectual elites “who were local in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions
and taste. These were the intellectual elites who thought of their native superstitions,
religions, mindless devotion to customs and practices and thought of releasing
themselves and the society around from this dogmatic social condition. In India,
intellectuals like Rajaram Mohan Roy and others through their various social
reforming activities tried to put an end to various inhuman and superstitious practices
of India and at the same time tried to educate the natives to the contemporary
changing scenario. In fact, Rajaram Mohan Roy had strongly pleaded with the British
Governor General in 1823 not to find traditional seminaries but to employ European
gentlemen of talent and education to instruct Indian natives in science subjects like
mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry anatomy etc, idea being that he wanted
the natives also to get acquainted with the new and advanced knowledge. Hence, the
educated intellectual elites, their ideologies and the English education, all put together, was one another way through which ‘Modernity’ crept into the colonies.

One of the most significant symbols of modernity is the English language which the colonizers thought would ensure enlightened modernity. It was considered a means of elevating the native public for a befitting British rule. According to Gauri Viswanathan:

The British Government’s policy of introducing English language and literature was governed by multi-farious functions; as a disguised form of authority; as a safeguard against potential rebellion; for the creation of a blue print for social control in the guise of humanistic program of Enlightenment; as a strategy of mediated response to situational imperatives and as an experiment in secular education (1998 p14)20.

Achebe is very categorical on the advent of the British into Africa. He expresses their slow and tactful entry and branching technique with a pinch of salt when he says:

The British penetration of West Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century was not achieved only on the field of battle as in Benin but at home also, in churches, schools, newspapers, novels etc. by the denigration of Africa and its people (2010 p 62)31.

English education also provided an opportunity and access to the natives’ Biblical values and Christian concepts and it also gets associated with Christianity. Thus Christianity acts as a symbol of cultural modernity during colonization.

No doubt the colonizers did have their own selfish motive in introducing English language. The positive impact it had on the natives cannot be totally denied. It helped certain classes of people to enter into British administrative wing; it introduces
the natives to the western liberal thought; it became a status symbol in the society; it accorded an upward movement in the socio economic ladder. To quote Kuvempu, one of the leading twentieth century Kannada novelists who says: “if I had not learnt English, I would have been carrying cow dung on my head and working in the fields of an upper caste Brahmin”(2004 p1059)32.

Orientalism

Orientalism was a cultural practice adopted by the colonizers represented by the British East India Company. It aimed at presenting to the colonized an indiginised version of the British rule. As a result of which a separate code of laws was evolved based on Indian customs and tradition. A thorough revamping of the existing spiritual texts was undertaken with a view to translate and codify them. Neeladri Bhattacharya in this regard observes:

The late eighteenth century orientalist tradition saw ancient texts as the source of authentic knowledge about immemorial custom and tradition. The Shastras and the Koran, it believed, set out the codes of conduct of Hindus and Muslims and defined the customary laws which mediated social relationship as well as conflicts within communities. Practices were seen as legitimate only when they conformed to the injunctions of ancient texts (2001 p22)33.

Edward Said viewed Orientalism as a powerful mechanism which aimed at establishing an all round supremacy of the colonizers on the colonized in terms of politics, science, culture, religion, etc. The colonizers had a twin motive in doing this:

* To introduce the literary texts of the East to the West and

* To win over the colonized for westernization by the process of reinventing the Local past glory.
Said brings out the implications of the Orientalist scholarship as follows:

.....a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate what is manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; It is above all a discourse that is by no means in direct corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment) power intellectual, (as with reigning science like comparative linguistic anatomy or any of modern policy sciences) power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, text, values) power moral (as with ideas about what “we” do and what “they” cannot do or understand as “we” do (2001 p 12)\textsuperscript{34}.

Kant Emmanuel, as early as 1784, in his short essay On History, speaking on Enlightenment says,’ Enlightenment is Modern’ (1963 p10)\textsuperscript{35}. According to him, to be enlightened is to become mature, to reach adulthood, to stop being dependent on the authority of authors, to become free and assume responsibility for ones own actions. His analogy is that when man is not enlightened, he does not apply his own powers of reasoning, but rather accepts the guardianship of others and acts as being told to quote the Prospero and Caliban myth. He does not feel the need to acquire knowledge about the world because everything is written in the holy books. He does not use his discretion and goes by the advice of the pastor. Most men in all periods of time have been in this sense immature and those who have acted as guardians of society have wanted it that way. In order to come out of this dependency, Kant says that man needs to be enlightened. This ‘enlightenment,’ which puts an end to the self imposed
dependence, Kant terms as ‘Modernity’. He says ‘Enlightenment means an exit, an escape; an escape from tutelage, coming out of dependence’ (1963 p10)36.

On the other hand, the French philosopher Michel Foucault says very interestingly in Kant’s criteria of the present – “The Moment when humanity is going to put its own reason to use without subjecting itself to any authority (1984 p 32-50)37.

Here, what Kant is talking about is not the origins of enlightenment or its historical evolution, but those properties of enlightenment which bring about a change in the individual from the past to the present. To be more precise, Kant speaks of the effect of enlightenment on the individual and the consequent change it brings about in the individual in terms of attitude, outlook and approach which he terms as ‘Modernity’. In short, according to Kant, ‘Modernity’ is nothing but the impact is total on the individual brought about by ‘enlightenment’. If we equate enlightenment with education, then we can infer that education leads to enlightenment which in turn leads to ‘Modernity’.

Similarly, Partha Chatterji in his book ‘A Possible India’ endorses the views of Kant when he says-

Modernity is the first social philosophy which conjures up in the most ordinary people, dreams of independence and self-rule. The regime of power in Modern societies prefers to work out through the commands of a supreme sovereign, but through self-imposed disciplinary practices based on the dictates of reason. Chatterji says ‘The desire for autonomy continues to range itself against power; power is resisted’ (1990 p5)38.

The same was echoed in a categorical way by Winston Churchill when he badly remarked in his opposition to India’s demand for independence. In his view,
India could only produce men of straw lacking the necessary vertebrae required to govern a nation. This statement of Churchill very clearly indicates that the colonisers very strongly believed that the colonized are incapable of governing themselves for a two fold reason. On the one hand, they lacked enlightenment and the urge to liberate themselves from the coloniser, while on the other hand, were not fit enough to govern themselves after liberation. Considered in this backdrop, Kant’s equation of ‘Enlightenment is Modernity’ is definitely acceptable.

More generally speaking ‘Modernity’ is simply the sense or idea that the present is discontinuous with the past, that through a process of social and cultural change life in the present is fundamentally different from life in the past. The word ‘Modern’ indicates that a person or practice is up to date, that they are different from the out of date practices or people of the past. This is more or less analogous and can be interchanged with the word ‘contemporaneity’.

Let us now consider ‘Modernity’ in terms of ‘the milieu’, the environment in which the individual is placed. Meaning, when man’s milieu or the surrounding in which he lives changes man has to change correspondingly. For example, in earlier days everything was done manually including calculations, maintenance of accounts etc. But with advancement in science and technology, computerization has enveloped all spheres of life and one definitely needs to be computer savvy in order to keep pace with the changing times or else one will be left behind. This is how we can say whether a society is Modern or not. The people living in the society need to be Modern in their outfit, their attitude, outlook and approach towards various issues and also sensitize themselves towards the surroundings in which they live.

Thus, in the Modern outlook there is a fascination for the new. The feeling that things should continue as they are, is repugnant to Modern outlook. It does not
militate against tradition, at the same time it does not accept tradition as a static phenomenon. The rejection of all that is old and stale, an urge for assuming new forms and shapes through re-adjustment and re-orientation and a craving for variety and novelty are some of the intrinsic features of Modernity.

Having analysed the genesis, meaning and types of Modernity, let us now examine the types of 'Modernity'.

Modernity and Types

Dipankar Gupta, in his treatise on *Modernity*, classifies Modernity into two types:

1. Surfacial Modernity and

Let us now examine these two types of Modernity which go a long way in expostulating the main thesis of Modernity.

Surfacial Modernity

As the name indicates, *Surfacial Modernity* is the change, difference or improvement which is visible outwardly or superficially. It is cognizable in terms of dress, appearance and external display. This is just superficial and may not be an in-depth attitudinal change. In other words it often symbolizes external ‘mimicking’ which the Iranian intellectual Jalal-E –Ahmed calls ‘Westoxication’ (2002, p1).

A point of clarification here again is that ‘Westoxication is often confused with’ Westernization’. Before defining ‘Westernisation’, we go by one commonly accepted presumption that the western countries are considered to be more advanced and developed in terms of science, technology, industry, agriculture and all other fields as compared to the Asiatic and the African countries.

Hence we can infer that ‘Westernisation’ implies actual changes in terms of socio-economic, scientific, technological and other advancements ‘Westoxication’
implies a show-off among the commoners in various superficial ways. The so called 'westoxicated' or superficially modernized people have an immense conceit about themselves. They have a fad for western consumer items and aesthetic preferences. For them westernization which is equivalent to Modernization is in wearing jeans, sun glasses, being dandified, attending discotheques or even tuning to MTV. For them western clothes, mannerisms and lifestyles are symptomatic of western / Modern values and thereby 'Modernity' and not 'westernisation' in the true sense of the term. This snobbish flaunting superiority complex Jalal e Ahmed calls 'Westoxication'. Westoxication appears in most of the developing countries in varying degrees. None of the characteristics that Modern western societies display in terms of social relations or independent thinking exist in these developing countries. There is no Democracy in the true sense of the word, very little or no scope for upward mobility and hardly any hope for the outsiders to peep inside. This is what 'Surfacial Modernity' talks about. Further here we do not find any of the important features of 'Modernity', like dignity of the individual, upward social mobility, education and employment opportunities, citizenship rights, improved trade and finance etc.

**Fundamental Modernity**

'Fundamental Modernity' as the name connotes has more to do with a fundamental change in the attitude, outlook, approach and ideas of the people. In this case 'Modernity' implies a greater social and economic mobility, political participation, and respect for one another as citizens occupying a common space. It is only by respecting others that greater social mobility and citizenship rights can be protected. When relationships between people are governed by universalistic norms, then public participation becomes a standard norm in the society. Craving for freedom, belief in universalistic norms, dreams of independence and self-rule, working not through the
commands of a supreme rule but on the dictates of reason, in short an attitudinal change among the people is true and Modern. Hence this is 'westernisation' or 'Modernity' in the true sense of the word. When individuals are measured in terms of their birth and family connections, then among other things even economic development is retarded. It is only when the individual element is released that a society becomes a dynamic one at every level.

**Time of Modernity**

Modernity is a highly dynamic concept. As such it is rather difficult and impossible to periodise it. Roughly it can be traced back to the time of 'Industrial Revolution' or the 17th century. It is not that 'Modernity' had not set in earlier to that. But the industrial revolution triggered the growth of Modernity in a much faster pace. It catalyses the changing process. T.P. Ashok, the Kannada critic, has this to say on the source of Modernity:

> Just as France had the French Revolution and Britain had the Industrial Revolution in the background which catalysed 'Modernity', Asia and Africa had colonization as the catalytic agent for Modernity? (1996 p90)

Most historians and scientists believe that Modernity had its origin in Britain and its colonies, particularly the American ones. Some even date the early Modern period from 16th century onwards. Many believe that the Modern era began with what is called 'the industrial era' which occurred in Britain in between 1750 and 1820, and political revolutions which had the effect of overturning monarchial power occurred in the American colonies in 1776 and France in 1789. Most sociologists insist that industrialisation is a *sine qua non* for Modernity. Keeping all important matters in
mind, as an approximation we can take the beginning of the Modern era to have occurred at the turn of the century.

In the task ahead the researcher examines how the various indicators have played their roles in moving the wheels of Modernity in the fiction of the concerned writers. Having known the anatomy and physiology of 'Modernity' we now move on to the focal point of the study i.e. the fictional works of Shivarama Karanth and Chinua Achebe. Before analyzing their fiction in the backdrop of 'Modernity', we shall study the background of the two writers and also the various aspects which shaped them into writers.
END NOTES


6. Ibid.,p50


24. Ibid.,p1-2


