CHAPTER 2

ORIENTALISM AND SEMIOTICS OF ORIENTALISM

Meaning Of the Term ‘Orientalism’

‘And firyn Phebus riseth up so brighte
That al the Orient laugheth of the lighte’ (636).

Chaucer used the subjective meaning of orien as ‘rising’ first time in 1386 A.D. in ‘The Knight’s Tale’. Since the Eleventh century the word ‘Orient’ has been used to mean ‘rising sun’ or ‘east’.

It refers to ‘that region of the heavens in which the sun and other heavenly bodies rise’; ‘the corresponding region of the world’; ‘quarter of the compass; the east’. Alternatively, it is ‘The Characteristic modes of thought or expressions, fashions etc. of Eastern Nations.’ (930)

The terms, ‘Orient’ and ‘Orientalism’ have been used in English language to refer to ‘both near and far Eastern countries’. Similar terms are the French-derived ‘Levant’ and ‘Anatolia’, from the Greek word Anatole, two further locations for the direction in which the sun rises. All these definitions reveal just one point that ‘Orientalism’ is ‘the study of near and far Eastern societies and cultures by the Westerners’.

The nineteenth century British historical writing of medieval India had a remarkable closeness to British, also to European historical writing, both in its strength and weaknesses.

The movement validated strong emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience, placing new emphasis on such emotions as apprehension, horror and terror, and awe—especially that which is experienced in confronting the sublimity of untamed nature and its picturesque qualities, both new aesthetic categories.

The studies pertaining to Orientalism includes the scholarly study of the languages and texts of the Orient initially conceived as the Middle East but later
encompassed all of Asia. These studies included the late Eighteenth century policy of
the East India Company favoring the preservation of Indian languages, laws and
customs; the adoption of an artistic style and subject matter as with East; A discourse of
power fashioned in the West which deeply implicated European imperialism and a
corporate institution harnessed to the maintenance of the ideological and political
hegemony of Europe throughout Asia.²

We would discuss all these possibilities. First, we shall attempt to configure the
detailed meaning from the history of Orientalism.

**Historical Background**

Indian society had progressed from 'rudeness to civilization' through four stages,
namely 'hunting, pasturage, farming and commerce'. Although, It is difficult to be
precise about the origin of the distinction between the ‘West’ and the ‘East’, the rise of
both Christianity and Islam produced a sharp opposition between European Christian
cultures, their enemies to the East and in North Africa. During the Middle Ages Islamic
people were demonised as ‘alien’ enemies of Christendom. European knowledge about
the cultures of the East was very sketchy and there was a vague awareness that complex
civilisations existed in India and China, from which luxury goods such as woven
textiles and ceramics were imported. As European explorations and colonisations
expanded, a distinction emerged between non-literate people, for example in Africa and
America, and the literate and intellectually complex cultures of the East. In the 18ᵗʰ
century, Enlightenment thinkers agreed to certain aspects of Eastern cultures as superior
to the Christian West. For example Voltaire promoted research into Zoroastrianism in
the belief that it would support a rational Deism superior to Christianity. Others praised
the religious tolerance of Islamic countries in contrast with the Christian West, or the
status of scholarship in Mandarin, China. With the translation of the ‘Avesta’ by
Abraham Anquetil-Duperron and the discovery of the Indo-European languages by
William Jones, complex connections between the early history of Eastern and Western
cultures emerged. However, these developments occurred in the context of a rivalry
between France and Britain for control of India, and were associated with the attempts
to understand colonised cultures in order to control them more effectively. Liberal
economists such as James Mill denigrated Eastern countries on the grounds that their civilizations were static and corrupt. Even Karl Marx characterised the ‘Asiatic mode of production’ as unchanging. Christian Evangelists sought to denigrate Eastern religious traditions as superstitions. Despite this, the first serious studies of Buddhism and Hinduism were undertaken by scholars such as Eugene Burnouf and Max Müller.³

By the mid-nineteenth century ‘Oriental Studies’ was becoming an established academic discipline.

It is quite remarkable that medieval India emerged as a specialized unit of study through the work of British scholars of the nineteenth century.

Although medieval India emerged as a specialized unit of study, the predilection of the academia for ancient Indian studies still continued to predominate British scholarship. The Bibliotheca Indica publications of the Asiatic Society of Bengal are a significant indicator in this respect; only one-fourth of these publications were texts or translations relating to medieval Indian history, the remaining three-fourths were largely Sanskrit texts or translations relating to earlier centuries of Indian history.³ The preference of the academic world for ancient over medieval Indian studies also stands out by the absence in the whole range of British scholarship on medieval India of a name comparable to William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Horace Hayman Wilson, Henry Colebrooke or John Muir.

However, while scholarly study expanded, so did racist attitudes and popular stereotypes of ‘wily’ orientals. Often scholarly ideas were intertwined with such as prejudicial racial or religious assumptions. Eastern art and literature were still seen as ‘exotic’ and as inferior to Classical Graeco-Roman ideals. Their political and economic systems were generally thought to be feudal ‘Oriental despotisms’ and their alleged cultural inertia was considered to be resistant to progress. Many critical theorists like Rudyard Kipling regard this form of Orientalism as part of a larger, ideological colonialism justified by the concept of the ‘white man's burden’.⁴

In continuation to the explanation of the same idea the concept of ‘Orientalism’ can be reflected in the words of Major Evelyn Baring Cromer⁵ also.
Cromer’s thesis was: ‘Egyptians were incapable of ruling themselves for ever’. He thought that ‘Oriental’ was ‘irrational, depraved, child like’. In Cromer's eyes, ‘it was a culture that consisted of beings who could not self-govern’; therefore, Europe had every right to interfere. He said that the ‘Britishers knew the Orient and Orientals better than they knew themselves’. Normally, any reader would find this term irrational. Despite this mixed explanation, the word ‘Orientalism’ carries no negative freight anywhere. Reputed institutions like the ‘Oriental Institute of Chicago’ carry the term without reproach.

‘Oriental’ had always been understood simply as the opposite of ‘Occidental’ (‘western’). ‘Orientalism was a European enterprise from the very beginning. The scholars were Europeans; the audience was European; and there the Indians figured as inert objects of knowledge. The Orientalist spoke for the Indian and represented the object in the texts. Because the Indian was separated from the Orientalist knower, the Indian as object-as well as its representation-was constructed to be outside and opposite of self; thus both the self and the other, the rational and the materialist, British and the emotional and spiritual Indian, appeared an autonomous, ontological and essential entities. Of course, the two essential entities, the spiritual India and the materialistic West, made sense only in the context of each other and the traces of each in the other. This suggested that the heterogeneity and difference lay beneath the binary opposition, although the process of rendering India into an object external both to its representation and to the knower concealed this difference. It also made the colonial relationship-the enabling condition of British Orientalism-appear as if it was relevant to the production of knowledge. As a result, though colonial dominance produced the East-West construct, it looked as if this ‘binary opposition’ not only predated the colonial relationship but also accounted for it. In other words, Orientalist textual and institutional practices created the spiritual and sensuous Indian as opposite of the justifications for the British conquest.” For years, this theory remained in practice until in 1978 when Edward Said appeared on the screen.
Edward Said and ‘Orientalism’

The word ‘Orientalism’ began to develop negative connotations following the publication of the groundbreaking work ‘Orientalism’ by the Palestinian scholar Edward Said. Following the ideas of Michel Foucault, Said emphasized the relationship between power and knowledge in scholarly and popular thinking, in particular regarding European views of the Islamic Arab world. Edward Said proposes that ‘Orientalism’ is a ‘style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient' and the 'Occident’.’

Edward Said explains in detail exactly what he believes the word ‘Orientalism’ to be in his book with the same title. This is connected to the idea that Western society or Europe is superior in comparison to cultures that are Non-European (or ‘the Orient’). Moreover, that the ‘Orientalism’ is a ‘kind of racism held towards anyone not European.’ Analyzing Edward Said’s book “Orientalism” we see that it makes three major claims:- Orientalism, although purporting to be an objective, disinterested, and rather esoteric field, in fact functioned to serve political ends.

Orientalism helped, define Europe’s self-image. ‘It has less to do with the Orient’ than it does with ‘western world.’ And, The construction of identity in every age and every society involves establishing opposites and ‘Others’.

Said argues that ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ work as oppositional terms, because ‘Orient’ was constructed as a negative inversion of Western culture. Taking a comparative and historical literary review of European scholars and writers looking at, thinking about, talking about, and writing about the peoples of the Middle East, Said tried to unveil the relations of power between the colonizer and the colonized. Said's writings have had far-reaching implications beyond area studies in Middle East, to studies of imperialist Western attitudes to India, China etc. It was one of the foundational texts of postcolonial studies. Said later developed and modified his ideas in his book ‘Culture and Imperialism’. On one hand, where, many scholars now use Said's work to overturn long-held, often taken-for-granted Western ideological biases regarding Non-Westerners in scholarly thought and some post-colonial scholars would even say that the West's idea of itself was constructed largely by saying what others
were not. On the other hand, Critics of Said's theory, such as the historian Bernard Lewis, argue that Said's account ignores the many genuine contributions to the study of Eastern cultures made by Westerners during the Enlightenment and Victorian eras. While many distortions and fantasies certainly existed, the notion ‘the Orient’ was a negative mirror image of ‘the West’ cannot be wholly true because attitudes to distinct cultures diverged significantly. In any case it is a logical necessity that other cultures will be identified as ‘different’, since otherwise their distinctive characteristics would be invisible, and that the most striking differences will hold up the mirror to the observing culture.

‘Saidean orientalism’ postulates that during the past two centuries Europe has ideologically 'constituted' Asia in relation to itself with the purpose of inferiorizing it. This has been done by Europe, by projecting itself as rational, changing, progressive and superior in contradistinction to Asia, that is, 'the other', being irrational, unchanging, static, inferior and despotic. Although Edward Said himself maintains that these distinctions were 'not changing, nor simply fictional', yet he categorically asserts that the Orient was 'by the mainstream academic thought to be confined to the fixed status of an object frozen once and for all in time by the gaze of western percipient'. For Said this ideological construction 'orientalism' exists in 'insulation from intellectual developments everywhere else in the culture'. ᵃ  Saidean 'orientalism' is thus tantamount to a total reduction of European intellectual activity concerning Asian societies stretching over two centuries, to the perceived task of inferiorizing those societies.

‘Orientalism’ a sheer example of ‘European arrogance’ and ‘Western prejudice’

Perhaps, it cannot be easily accepted because the development and maintenance of every culture requires the existence of another different and competing ‘alter ego.’ Said argues that ‘Orientalism’ has produced a false description of Arabs and Islamic culture. This happened primarily because of the essentialist nature of the enterprise, that is, the belief that it was possible to define the essential qualities of Arab people and Islamic culture. These qualities were seen in uniformly negative terms, he says. According to Said, the West has created a dichotomy, between the reality of the East and the romantic notion of the ‘Orient’. Especially, The Middle East and Asia are
viewed with prejudice and racism. Said believed that the Western interpretations of the Middle East are flawed. They are considered backward and unaware of their own history and culture. To fill this void, the West has created a culture, history, and future promise for them. On this framework rests not only the study of the Orient, but also the political imperialism of Europe in the East. Moreover, many believe that ‘Oriental studies’ had been the deliberate step to enter the imperialist premises. Let us elaborate upon this idea first.

**Emergence of Oriental Studies**

The history of Oriental Studies in Europe may be traced back to the year 1312, when the church council of Vienna decided to establish a series of chairs in Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syrian in Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Avignon, and Salamanca. Later, in the 17th and 18th centuries, following the great voyages of discovery undertaken by the European maritime powers, and the dispatch, by the Roman Catholic Society of Jesus, of Christian missionaries to the East, a series of institutes and academies were set up for the study of the languages and cultures of India, China, and Japan. However, it was only in the final quarter of the 18th century that ‘Orientalism’, as a profession, became firmly established. Said also explains that ‘Orientalism is the study and knowledge of everything related to Orient.’ One quote that expresses this concept is the following: ‘Orientalism is knowledge of the Orient that places things Oriental in class, court, prison or manual for scrutiny, study, judgment, discipline or government. (41)¹⁰

For the classical world the 'discovery of Sanskrit opened an almost inexhaustible region for investigations'. The fact of commonality between Sanskrit and some European languages prompted subsequent work on the common Indo-European heritage. The scholars of the Graeco-Roman history were to realize that during:

Those very centuries which they seem to have monopolised, the sun still witnessed other empires in other parts of the earth. Contemporaneous with these romance-lands of European antiquity, flourished the great empires of Persia and India; and however little their orbits intersected, each was indeed a 'magic circle' of aweful import and reality. The two worlds of ancient life fulfil their destiny side by side.¹¹
Indeed, Sanskrit came to be viewed as a 'precious key to the due understanding of Greek mythology, and to the solving of many a problem in the history of Aryan races and tongues'. Interest in Sanskrit and Persian studies was seen as analogous to the 'peculiar pleasure' being taken by the Americans in 'connecting' their country with their 'old home' in Europe. This 'might not inaptly be paralleled for us Englishmen, by the interest of researches concerning the progenitors of our whole Aryan stock in Persia and India'. While the students of 'the earlier school are looking for derivation from Saxon, Norman, Roman, Celts, the students of Zend and Sanskrit literature have been occupied in revealing to us an ancestry behind all ancestries of which we had hitherto taken account; a primaeval home whence have come even the names of our closest relationships, and the fables and fairy-tales of our nurseries'.

Said shows this by explaining the concept that there is the ‘West’ and then there is the ‘Orient’. He further explains this saying, ‘Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (‘Europe’, ‘West’, ‘Us’) and the strange (‘Orient’, ‘East’, ‘them’).(43) (ibid.) As we have already discussed, Said wrote that Orientalism was ‘a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.’ (ibid.) This Western idea of the Orient explains why so many European countries occupied lands they believed to be Oriental. ‘Orientalism’ is fundamentally a political doctrine, willed over the orient because the orient was weaker than the west, which elided the orient’s difference with its weakness. The French, the Portuguese, and the Britishers had emerged as imperialist powers in the 18th century, thus, subjugating the Oriental. In the 19th century, America followed them. These developed countries emerged as power at different point of time in history and overpowered the developing countries, thereby affecting their culture and administration.

Many appropriate examples can be drawn from former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's essay “Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy.” In this essay, Kissinger attempts to describe the issues surrounding the United States' place among foreign cultures. While the United States is an obvious Western power, Kissinger acknowledges that we face “pressures of domestic forces on the one hand and foreign realities on the other”(46). This quote shows how Kissinger holds an Orientalist view, creating a
distinct division between developed and developing countries; in short, ‘We are different’. This division of foreign policy has been coined “binary opposition” by his peers. Kissinger acknowledges the evident political problems between the United States and Third World countries and speaks of the two groups as separate entities. Kissinger feels that by learning more about developing countries, the West (real world) will be superior; through accurately recorded and classified data, we can measure our knowledge (46-7). Kissinger follows this point by claiming that cultures without post-Newtonian knowledge view the real world as being “internal to the observer “(47). These divisions are found in their simplest terms on page forty-seven of Said: We had our Newtonian revolution; they did not. As thinkers we are better off than developing countries are.”

The Western view that is precisely depicting a need to control those with less knowledge is a prime example of Orientalism. The West believes that we can think outside of ourselves, think objectively and rationally about the world's problems. In contrast, Kissinger feels that developing countries lacking Newtonian thought can only see things from their own self-interested point of view. This view clearly demonstrates Said's definition of Orientalism; Kissinger's theory is a demonstration of Orientalism in itself. By separating two cultures according to knowledge, Kissinger rationalizes the self-interested behavior on the part of the West and therefore a biased opinion is given as the best interest of the West. As long as such ideas are promoted, Orientalism will dictate how we perceive these Third World countries.

Once again, we refer to Cromer.

The concept of ‘us’ and ‘them’ are reflected in his words as well. He explains in a quote why it is so easy to control the Orient saying, ‘managing them was almost everywhere nearly the same’. If any ‘Oriental’ strayed from his idea of what it is to be an Oriental, he considered them defiant and not typical of the norm. This also has to do with the superiority issue. Cromer states: ‘I content myself with noting the fact that somehow or another the Oriental generally acts speaks and thinks in a matter exactly opposite to the European.’ Europe has always been ‘powerful’, the Oriental, ‘weak.’ Cromer believes that the Orient would be nothing without Western Civilization. He
embodies everything Said means by the term ‘Orientalism’ including having a ‘superiority complex’ and ‘over generalizing a large group of people into one category’. Therefore, we can say that Cromer is the epitome of what it is to be an Orientalist since his definition agrees with what Said means by ‘Orientalism’. Among the historians who have written a substantial account of Orientalism, as a profession, are Pierre Martino and Raymond Schwab. In his account of the origins of oriental studies in Europe, Schwab describes the contributions made by the old catholic schools in Holland and Switzerland, individual French scholars such as Barthelemy d’ Herbelot and Abraham Anquetil-Duperron Portuguese and Spanish explorers, and Jesuit missionaries dispatched to India and China in the 17th and 18th centuries. Nevertheless, it was not until the British, following the conquest of Bengal, instituted a thoroughgoing research programme designed to produce an understanding of the laws and the customs of the Hindus that a real breakthrough was made, led by three great scholars, William (‘Oriental’) Jones, Charles Wilkins, and Henry Thomas Colebrook. The decisive period in Indic studies began with the arrival of English Civil Servants in Calcutta around 1780, which supported by the governor, Warren Hastings, began an extraordinary undertaking.

It was undoubtedly, a breakthrough in Indian history; an identification to Indian perspective on the World panorama came through William Jones. In January 1784, When Sir William Jones convened the inaugural meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, (The Asiatic Society was an oriental form of society in Asia whose fundamental characteristic had been the absence of private property and the existence of common ownership by the village communities under a despotic rule, that this typical form developed out of the primitive communist society on the basis of latter’s social needs and represented the slave-owning and feudal stages in the countries of Asia, and that this social formation continued, without any class struggle for thousand of years, until, in India, it was finally uprooted by British Imperialism who thus played a constructive role in the development of Indian Society). This was to be for India what the Royal Society was for England. As the first President of the Society and as magistrate, Jones acquired the effective knowledge of the orient and of the Orientals that was later to make him the ‘Undisputed Founder’ (the phrase is AK Arberry’s) of Orientalism.
years before Jones arrived in India, Warren Hastings had decided that Indians were to be ruled by own laws, a more enterprising project than it appears at first glance since the Sanskrit code of laws existed then for practical use only in a Persian translation and no Englishman at the time knew Sanskrit well enough to consult the original text.

But, William Jones could do this. To rule and to learn, then to compare orient with occident, were Jones goals. Proper knowledge of the orient proceeded from a thorough study of the classical texts and only after that to an application of those texts to the modern orient. Faced with the obvious descriptitude and political impotence of the modern oriental, the European orientalist found it his duty to rescue some portion of a lost, past classical oriental grandeur in order to facilitate ameliorations, in the present orient. What the European took from the classical oriental past was a vision (and thousands of facts and artifacts) which only he could employ to the best advantage to the modern oriental he gave “facilitation and amelioration”- and too, the benefit of his judgment as to what was best for the modern orient. William Jones and twelve other members of the Asiatic Society wrote a request letter to Warren Hastings and few others to agree to be the patrons of the society. Warren Hastings agreed and became the chief patron of Asiatic Society. In a discourse on the institution of the society he said, “It is your design, I conceive to take an ample space for your learned investigations, bounding them only by the geographical limits of Asia, so that considering Hindustan as a centre and turning your eyes in idea to the north, you have on your sight, many important kingdoms in the eastern peninsula, the ancient and wonderful empire of China with all her tartarian dependencies and that of Japan with the cluster of precious islands in which many singular curiosities have too long been concealed.”

Moreover, Western Philosophers thought India to be still the land of the mystics away from reason and reality. Their idea of Indian philosophy can be understood with this conception.

In an article entitled “The British Rule in Indian”, published in the New York daily Tribune, on 25 June 1853, Karl Marx, a keen student of Hegel and occasional observer of the Indian scene, continued to propagate the view put forward by his great predecessors, that India had no history, and that Hindu Society was ‘undignified,
stagnatory and vegetative’. Unlike Hegel, however, he argued that the brutal interference of the British tax-gatherer and the British soldier, combined with the working of ‘English steam and English free-trade’, would in due course undermine the economic base of Indian society, and produce ‘the greatest, and to speak the truth, the only social revolution ever heard in India’.17

Long before this article was written, the British were digging their feet in India, thereby with a motive to sweep India off its feet.

This gave rise to the term British Orientalism.

**British Orientalism**

British Orientalism (1772 to 1835) was a unique phenomenon in British Indian history that was inspired by the needs of the East India Company to train a class of British administrators in the languages and culture of India. This period of British Indian began in 1772 with the coming to power of Warren Hastings (1732–1818), the first and perhaps most famous of the British Governor General of India. This period of British Orientalism marks the formative years of a century of intense intellectual, religious, and social change in Bengal that is now known as the Bengal Renaissance.

For the most part, the British Orientalists were a unique group who reflected the eighteenth century ideals of rationalism, classicism, and cosmopolitanism. Unlike many later British officers serving in India, the Orientalists were appreciative of the ancient religious and cultural traditions of classical India. Consequently, they made significant contributions to the fields of Indian philology, archeology, and history. The idea that traditional oriental learning could be combined with the rationalism of the West was the inspiration of British Orientalism. Intellectually it was one of the most powerful ideas of nineteenth century India.18

Edward Said looms large over the current cultural landscape. The influence of this American-Palestinian professor of literature is so great that a remarkable number of commentaries about European art, literature, cinema, music, and history now ritually genuflect to his ideas and to the wider “postcolonial” critique, they helped engender.19

From the late 18th to the mid-20th century, Orientalism remained a more or less
neutral descriptive term, though not without a cluster of positive and negative connotations.

It referred to the linguistic and philological studies, which emerged in the wake of the great maritime voyages and discoveries, the growth of mercantilism and the spread of the European colonial power between the 16th and 19th centuries. Although the Western-Eastern texts and languages had been pursued since ancient times, Orientalism is also closely associated with the birth in the 1780s of the Indological studies of a group of English civil servants in Bengal, working under the patronage of Governor-General Warren Hastings. Stuart Schaar’s remark here is noteworthy that

“Since the early 1960s, Orientalism has become a much more volatile term. The word has accumulated a new freight of meaning as well as high charged ideological nebula through the work of such figures as the Egyptian sociologist, Anouar Abdel-Malek, the Syrian historian A.L.Tibawi, the Marxist sociologist Bryan Turner, and, pre-eminently, the Palestinian theorist and writer, Edward Said. Western civilization, generally speaking, is extremely egotistical and has the view that Western culture is superior to all others. They believe they are more civilized and more educated than the rest of the world and because of this, stems the idea that it is the duty of Western civilization to take other, less developed societies under their wing”. ²⁰

Largely, the Britshers loomed the identical point of view about the whole of Eastern Nations, whether it is far east, and middle east or near east. Now there is a need to confine one self, from general ‘Oriental’ to specific ‘Asian’. In this study we would chiefly discuss the Oriental Associations with India.

Scientific discoveries, machine-age, emergence of nation states, some representative mode of governance, rational ideology, emergence of the individual and his disentanglement from the community, new forms of art and literature were all essential components of this point of reference for the British writers. That it was so is apparent from the fact that they were preoccupied with the changes that made Europe so distinct from Asia.
Orientalism and India

Classical writers like Ktesias, Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Bardesan, the Chroniclers of Alexander’s march and others, knew and had already reported all kinds of interesting things about India and its culture. In middle ages, Europe was practically cut off from the land of the Ganges because Muslim rulers didn’t allow the travelers to write their history. Few daring travellers like Marco Polo etc. became successful. Only a few caravans brought to the West, via Interior Asia or Egypt, the coveted products of the rich sub-continent. The intellectual exchange, on the other hand, which had existed during the Golden Age of Hellenism and of the Roman Empire, had come to a complete stop. When Vasco Da Gama landed in Calicut, on the Malabar Coast in 1498, he opened up for the West a new world that, nevertheless was familiar for a long time. Thus, the discovery of the sea route to India signified the actual beginning of scientific studies of India. Even though the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, the French, and the English who established their factories on the holy soil of Bharatvarsha at first only pursued economic and political ends, in the course of time their interest nevertheless did not fail to turn to the culture and religion of the Hindus. The writings of missionaries and the descriptions by travelers conveyed a variety of information even if frequently inaccurate and fragmentary about the country and its inhabitants, so that the educated of the 18th century was in a position to form a certain idea of India.

But this had no positive results because the sour intentions were evident. The percentage of enlightenment thinkers was lesser than the imperialist. Here, we have some examples. In his book 'Tancred', Disraeli said that the ‘East was a career’. He meant that to be interested in the east was something bright young westerners would find to be an all-consuming passion. Here, he should not be interpreted as saying that the east was not only a career for westerners but much beyond that. Karl Marx said, ‘They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented’. Rudyard Kipling said, ‘Its white man’s burden’ to civilize the orients. Justifying Kipling, B. J. Moore Gilbert says, ‘Kipling’s work is full of outrage about Britain’s lack of interest in its empire’. He asserted that the inhabitants of that country never looked further than their annual seaside resorts.21 ‘Kipling’s notion of trying to tell to the English something of the world outside England, however, expresses an ambition which typified much Anglo-
Indian literature before him. For prominent amongst the psychological and cultural burdens endured by the exiled community was a sense of neglect at the hands of their metropolitan contemporaries.'(30)22 Although, Anglo Indian fiction, then, evolved in some measure in response to an aggrieved belief that the nature of life in the sub-continent was little understood or cared about in Britain. It challenged the contributions made to metropolitan Orientalism by both travel writing and fiction; and in so doing, helped to define the exiled community and its culture as distinct by perspective and preoccupation from its British equivalents. ‘In place of the myths of the ‘Gorgeous East’, it sought to produce an alternative vision which was a good deal less glamorous and exciting. This is organized around a recurrent core of topics, which form the staple of Anglo Indian fiction’s social commentary.’(35)23

For England, it was not merely India or the darker races that needed strong paternal intervention on account of their incapacity to rule, the argument extended to Ireland too. Like the Indians, the Irish too were 'incapable of taking care of themselves'.24 It is significant that this view of the Irish people's inability to rule themselves was common both to their sympathizers and their critics. These ideas underlay their opinion that England had earned no gratitude from Ireland for having done so much for it. Kipling and Fletcher summed up these views on Ireland in their comment that Ireland was: 'full of beautiful laughter and tender tears, full of poetry and valour, but incapable of ruling herself and impatient of rule of others'.25

The nudging phrase ‘White man’s burden’ did not come up by itself. It carved out a niche out of historical events. In 1898, the United States had a war with Spain over Cuba. There was a chance to bring the two nations together to replace colonial mercantile world of Spain & Portugal, the world of the East India Company and before not to say the narrow world of the two Boer Republics in South Africa. They had an Anglo-Saxon Imperial mission that would be wide thinking and modern. Americans like Kipling and Roosevelt (or Hay) and Rhodes were wide thinking and modern. He was sensible of duty of the burden and sacrifice that history had imposed upon the two nations at that moment in giving them such power and opportunity, and seeing the sacrifice that was made by the district commissioners and subalterns and engineers in India, he made his Clarion Call to America.
“Take up the White Man’s Burden-
Send forth the best we breed-
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives’ need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folks & wild-
Your new caught sullen peoples,
Half devil & half child.”

Kipling’s message to America justified their side as the positive side of the imperial creed. He considered the far west as ‘lawless’ and New York and Chicago as ‘cosmopolitan’, reflecting his American patriotism.

The shadow of this idea has been casting its effect on India even. Here the Britishers had this self-proclaimed responsibility of civilizing Indians. This developed love-hate relationship between the Britain and the rest of the world. The European was leading the world. This highly influenced the political, social, economical, and religious background of the nations being subjugated by these imperialist countries. Culture and traditions were also interfered upon. Of the three surviving Non-European world cultures the Islamic, the Indian and the East-Asian; the Islamic culture was the first to become an object of research in Europe. Because of constant battles between Christians and Mohammedans, which filled the entire second half of the Middle Ages, Mohammedan Texts were translated into European languages and with apologetic intentions, Western theologians and philosophers had to come to terms with the doctrine of the prophet. The Jesuits who came to China in the beginning of the 17th Century in order to carry on missionary work, laid the foundations of Western sinology with their Latin translations of Chinese Classical Writers. The acquaintance with the wisdom of the Chinese enthused Leibniz and Christian Wolff to praise by word and script, the moral teachings of Confucius. In 1697, Leibniz published his work ‘Novissima Sinica’ and in Halle in 1712 Wolff delivered the famous pro-rectorial address. On the ‘Moral Teachings of the Chinese’ which induced Fredrick Wilhelm I in 1723, at the instigation of his pietistic colleagues to dismiss and banish from Prussia the celebrated Philosopher.
for his alleged atheism—an injustice for which Fredrick, the great, made amends, in 1740, by recalling Wolff.

The literature of the Hindus became accessible in the West gradually only after 1785 through translations, as the Brahmins anxiously withheld their holy language Sanskrit, and the literature composed in it, from the unbelieving barbarians of the West. Because of this reason, until then only a few texts translated from South Indian Languages could be used in Europe as original sources of information. The fact that imitations composed by missionaries like the ‘Ezour Veda’, were looked upon as authentic documents which prevented the correct understanding of the Hindu religion and Voltaire characterized it as ‘Le plus precieux manuscript qui soit dans tout l’orient’. All this renders that the thinkers who dealt with India in the 18th century had to content themselves with the facts known in their time. In the realm of Western Intellectual life, India had not as yet, acquired a place. The above representations underwent considerable change over time but Orientalism’s basic procedures of knowledge remained remarkably stable. They were developed soon after the East India Company conquered Bengal in 1757. Since the company required that its officers have knowledge about the conquered people, administrators learned Persian and Sanskrit and soon began to publish texts. Alexander Dow, an army officer, translated one of the standard Persian histories into English, The history of Hindustan in 1768-71; and N.B.Halhead compiled and translated the Sanskrit Dharmashastras as A code of Geintoo Laws, or Ordinations of the Pundits in 1776. With the involvement of more officials, notably, William Jones, H. T. Colebrook, John Shore, and Francis Gladwin, this process of learning Sanskrit and Persian as well as that of publishing texts and commentaries, gathered speed and led to the founding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. From then on, a number of research journals emerged such as Asiatick Researches (1788), the Quarterly Journal (1821), and the Journal of Asiatic Society (1832).

Discovering Incredible India

By and by, the Oriental knowledge spread to European Universities; and scholars with no direct contact with India, Max Muller in London and the Romantics on the continent, saw Europe’s origins or childhood in India. In this developing discourse,
the discovery of affinities between Sanskrit and European languages provided the premise for formulating the belief in an ‘Aryan race’ from which the Europeans and Brahmans were seen to originate. This search and discovery of European origins in the India of Sanskrit, the Brahmans and texts essentialized and distanced India in two ways. First, because it embodied Europe’s childhood, India was temporally separated from Europe’s present and made incapable of achieving ‘progresses’. As an eternal child detached altogether from time, India was construed as an external object available to the Orientalist’s gaze. Second, composed of language and texts, India appeared to be unchanging and passive. These distancing procedures overlooked the European dominance of the world that provided the conditions for the production of this knowledge and that had constituted this discursive dominance. The India of the Orientalist’s knowledge emerged as Europe’s other, an essential and distanced observer of European Orientalist.25 We get a vivid picture of many such ideas in R.P.Saraf’s book. He says,

“The British imperialism, during the colonial and semi feudal society used history (the historical works written by British and some Indian metaphysical historians) to justify its rule over India by propagating that India and its people stand nowhere in history that their ancient civilization, full of corruption, degradation and absurdities, had no meaning or reality, that they had, always been conquered and ruled by foreign invaders, and hence, historically destined and to be slaves yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever. That there geographical environment dooms them to his fate, and that British imperialism had come as a savior to unite, civilize and modernize the barbarians of India, and for the human mission, the India should, always, remain thankful to British imperialism”.26

This imperialist approach to history tried by building a psychosis of India’s inferior place in world history to demoralize the Indian people and thus to strengthen the imperialist foundation in India. Even, Marx could understand this motive very well. In one of his 1853 articles he wrote,

“England has a double mission in India: one destructive and the other regenerative- the annihilation of the old Asiatic Society, and the laying of the material
foundations of western society in India” and that “England has broken down the whole framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstruction yet appearing.”

He emphasized on the British imperialism’s destructive role where constructive side was hardly visible. Its said that we do not have a personal past prior to our birth, but our self perceptions are associated with the shared history of the members of a particular group to which we think we ‘belong’ with which we ‘identify’ our identities. Our identities are either matter of ‘discovery’ or a matter of ‘selection and choice’.

Amartya Sen, an economist and Nobel Laureate remarks, “the assumptions of the unique centrality of one’s community based identity survived by privileging typically implicitly that identity over other identities (which may be connected with class, gender, language, political commitments or cultural influences) As a result they restrict the domain of one’s alleged ‘historical roots’ in a truly dramatic way. Therefore, the increasing search for a Hindu view of Indian history not only has problems with epistematic variety but also involves the philosophical problem of categorical oversimplification.”

In addition to this, the roots of the flowering of Indian sciences and mathematics that occurred in and around the Gupta period (beginning particularly with Aryabhata and Vara Mihira) can be intellectually associated with persistent expression of heterodoxies, which pre-existed these contributions. Infact, Sanskrit, and Pali have a larger literature in defense of atheism, agnosticism, and theological skepticism than exists in any other classical language. As discussed earlier, James Mill wrote The History of British India in 1817. It tells us as much about empirical Britain as about India. It is surprising that he wrote three volumes of history without visiting India. He disputed and rejected practically every claim ever made on behalf of Indian culture and intellectual traditions but paid particular attention to dismissing Indian scientific works. ‘He rebuked early British Administrators (particularly Sir William Jones) for having taken the natives to be a people of high civilization while they have a reality made but a few of the earliest steps in the progress to civilization. Colonialism need not be based against any particular colony compared with any other subjugated community. Therefore, Mill had no great difficulty in coming to the conclusion that the Indian
civilization was at par with other inferior ones known to Mill like the Chinese, the Persian, the Arabians, and the others. Contrary to Mill’s History is Alberauni’s History of India, Tarikh-al-Hind (11th Century). It contrasts sharply with Mill’s history from a dominant Colonial perspective. Several Indian works on medicine, science, and philosophy had Arabic rendering by the 9th Century. It was through the Arabs that the Indian Decimal system and numerals reached Europe, as did Indian writings in mathematics and science and literature in general. It is a known fact that “No matter what period we choose or how far back we go, language always appears as a heritage of the preceding period. We might conceive of an act by which, at a given moment, names were assigned to things and contract was formed between concepts and what has been said; but such an act has never been recorded. The notion that things might have happened like that was prompted by our acute awareness of the arbitrary nature of the sign.”

As Saussure says, “No society, in fact knows or has even known language other than as a product inherited from preceding generations and one to be accepted as such i.e. the question of the origin of speech is not so important as it is generally assumed to be. The question is not even worth asking; the only real object of linguistics is the normal, regular life of an existing idiom is this. A particular language state is always the product of historical forces and these forces explain why the sign is unchangeable, that is why it resists any arbitrary substitution.”

For a country like India even, which has a rich heritage of languages, the Indian languages do not belong to a single group. They have been classified under 4 groups:- The Munda Group (Austro-Asiatic group) represented by the tribal languages in India, The Sino-Tibetan Group (the mongoloid) mainly prevalent in the Himalayan border regions of Assam, The Dravidian Group from which four languages of Southern India have been derived, The Prakrit Group from which eleven principal languages of Northern India have been drawn.

Aijaz Ahmad feels that there are major languages and literatures of India for which no comprehensive history is available. The tradition of circulating texts through the various linguistic communities of India by means of mutual translations, without the
mediation of English, is so weekly developed that even where such historical research does exist, it is rarely accessible to readers outside the particular linguistic community. A massive distinction has always prevailed between the court/elite class languages and the mass languages called Upbhransha languages. British proved to be the restorer of these languages. Although their own language, English has always been treated as an alien language in India but the foresighted nature of some Indians who realized its worth and introduced into their country and regarded it to be, necessary for the people then also as it is felt in today’s time.

The Indian upper castes to-day raise the question of 'merit' to retain their stranglehold over the Indian bureaucracy.

The ‘other’ too like the European ‘self’ was not an undifferentiated whole. Ernest Jones in the mid-nineteenth century wrote that the untouchables and the other oppressed castes in India have for ages been 'inferior' not only for this world, but for the next world too. Jones wrote about the tyranny of the caste system which condemned the sudras to perpetual slavery and treated the outcastes as beyond the pale of humanity and denied them human status. Here is a parallel for Said to find the inferiorization of the 'other' within his 'other'. We in India have recently seen doubts being raised about the ability of the untouchables and other backward castes to undertake tasks involving deliberating capacity and thereby requiring 'merit', which, of course is presented as an abstract concept devoid of social context and conditioning. The parallel is very similar to the nineteenth century views of the British ruling classes about their working men and of women of all classes in Britain.

This vast range of diverse views reflecting different sectional and class interests, clearly and emphatically question the validity of Said's homogenized single category of European superiority versus Asian inferiority. In fact, there were sharp divergences of opinion in Britain on almost everything pertaining to India including the nature of their empire in India

**Introduction of English language in India**

When British came to India to explore and haunt into its virgin land, politically, the country was passing through the confusion of a transition period. The Mohammedan
sovereignty had collapsed. The Marathas proved unequal to holding the falling scepter. The sovereignty of the land was inevitably passing into the hands of the East India Company who had not fully assumed the duties and responsibilities of sovereignty. Initially, their main concern was commerce and acquisition of wealth. The Mohammedan system of administration was allowed to continue with as little disturbance as possible. Education was not yet considered to lie within the province of Government. There were no schools throughout the length and breadth of the country, except the Tols and Maktabas and Pathsalas where Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian were taught with the elements of arithmetic. In 1780, Warren Hastings found the Madrassa, a Mohammedan College in Calcutta for giving instruction to Mohammedan boys in Arabic and Persian. In 1791 Jonathan Duncan, Resident at Benares, did the same thing for the Hindus by establishing the Benares Sanskrit College, avowedly to cultivate “their laws, literature and religions.” The Fort William College was established at Calcutta in 1800 for the benefit of the members of the civil service. However, there were no public schools for the systematic teaching of English to Indian boys. Then it was when Raja Rammohun Roy settled in Calcutta, he began to concert measures for the introduction of English education among his compatriots. All the three agencies that have been at work during the last hundred years, for the diffusion of education on western lines in India, viz., Private Bodies, Government Institutions, and Christian Missions, owed largely to his initiative in the beginning. The earliest public institution for the teaching of English in India was perhaps the Hindu College of Calcutta, established in 1819.

The system of English education commenced in very simple way in Bengal. Two persons were responsible; one was Mr. David Hare, and the other was a native, Rammohun Roy. (41) In 1823, Raja Rammohun Roy addressed to Lord Amherst, the, then, Governor General, advocating the introduction of western education after the English model. These tiring efforts on the behalf of Raja Rammohun Roy and many others, there arouse a hope that India could sustain its lost glory and position in the bygone centuries. As far as writing in English is concerned, we know very well that English is not an Indian language. It came to India as the native speech of the Britishers. In addition, during their rule over India, it became the part of Indian culture.
Conclusion

Through this chapter on ‘Orientalism’, we try to bring home the idea that Learning did not determine its own course alone and the initial intention of Conversion of the Indians through convincing missionaries yielded to or was intermingled with another intention that was Conquest. It is our contention that orientalism, that is the study of Asian societies by European scholars was not an undifferentiated system of ideas. Like any other system of ideas, it contained within itself divergencies and contradictions reflecting their class character. Orientalism, like any other system of knowledge, was the product of several currents and crosscurrents and situations acting and interacting upon each other and in the process producing varied, even conflicting explanations of historical phenomena regarding the societies of Asia. These views had greater or lesser consonance with objective reality depending upon scholars' conceptual frameworks, tools and techniques of investigation, availability of information and their politics. The aim in the period of Imperialist invasions may have been no longer to clear a path for knowledge into the field of intellect, but for Administration also. To know more about it in detail, fact-finding teams were formed, which could produce conclusive results more quickly than individual efforts. Puran Singh’s book on The Spirit Of Oriental Poetry written in English in the early 20th century is one such step in this direction contributing to the idea of Orientalism.
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