Indian Perceptions of the West

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For nearly two centuries, Indian perceptions of the West were powerfully affected by the behaviour of the British, and to a lesser extent of other Europeans, in India. A small minority of Indians travelled to the West, and they tended to praise what they found there, sometimes with the comment that the British behaved better at home than in India. But many of these travellers' tales were affected by didactic distortion. Just as the philosophes had praised China as a model for eighteenth-century Europe, so Indian visitors to Europe would dilate upon those aspects of European attitudes and behaviour that they thought were most needed in India, not only among Europeans but also among Indians themselves.

Whether as administrators, businessmen or missionaries, Englishmen in India tended to act as members of a ruling race, at least from the closing years of the eighteenth century, and they liked to think that they were so regarded by Indians. They knew that the term firinghi, or Frank, was by no means complimentary, and they hoped that Indians applied it only to such persons as Portuguese or Eurasians. But reality sometimes obtruded: in the 1820s Bishop Heber heard village children shout that embarrassing epithet when they saw him on his travels. The British greatly preferred the term sahib, and they would insist upon it when they were in a position to do so. Newcomers to India, including the present writer in the twilight of the British raj, were solemnly instructed by their seniors that "the native knows a sahib when he sees one," and were thus encouraged to behave in an appropriately dignified and aloof manner at all times. In fact, although familiarity gradually engendered tolerance, especially among city-dwelling Indians, Europeans behaved in various ways that were offensive to
the traditionally-minded, whether Hindu or Muslim: their demeanour seemed brusque and uncultivated; their diet usually included impure meats, and their sanitary habits invariably seemed unclean. The tight trousers and cutaway coats worn by Englishmen during the late eighteenth and for much of the nineteenth century seemed very immodest. Also, English ladies would show their faces in the market place like low-caste women; in the evenings they would bare their shoulders and on festive occasions they would dance like common prostitutes. However, while Europeans in general seemed boorish and unrefined, those Indians who had close contact with them often came to distinguish between those of high and low status, using the term *sahib* for the former and *gora*, or "pale-skinned," to describe the latter—although it was prudent as well as polite to address every European to his face as *sahib*, however low-born he might really be.

Here we come to a fundamental ambivalence in Indian attitudes to Europeans. A fair complexion has long been highly regarded in India, presumably as indicating an elite lifestyle free from the need to toil in the sun, just as in Europe a suntanned skin is highly regarded, presumably as indicating that its possessor has the leisure and resources to enable him to disport himself on Mediterranean beaches instead of toiling in an office or factory. And in India high social status has also been traditionally associated with claims to foreign ancestry. High-caste Hindus would think of themselves as descended from the Aryans who invaded India in the second millennium B.C. and who commented unfavourably upon the dark skins and diminutive noses of the local inhabitants. Indian Muslims of high status were apt to claim descent from Iranians, Turks or Arabs. So upper-class Indians tended to feel a certain kinship with Europeans, who claimed a high status, who were undeniably foreign and who were mostly of fair complexion. Western education reinforced such feelings. Western knowledge had clearly helped the British to power in India, and its acquisition would no doubt enable the upper classes to share power with them. When it eventually became apparent that the British were peculiarly reluctant to share their power, a further ground of ambivalence was imparted to Indian perceptions of the West. But from early in the nineteenth century western influences demanded a response.

Certain patterns of response can readily be identified. Between the extremes of rejection on the one hand and acceptance on the other there were two alternative models of compromise. One was that of selective acceptance, usually involving the assumption that western knowledge could be assimilated without damage to traditional values. The other was that of concealed acceptance—the discovery within Indian tradition of ideas, attitudes and values that most resembled those of the West or that could most readily be forced into some sort of conformity with them, so that tradition itself seemed modern, and this has even led some scholars to question the antithesis. But perceptive Indians at the time were not deceived.

Clive and his colleagues thought to disarm hostility to British rule by concealing it under Indian colours, styling themselves servants of the Mughal emperor. Maratha statesmen such as Nana Phadnis, who saw the East India Company merely as an enemy power, seem indeed to have thought that the
British differed from Indians mainly in being more treacherous. But Ghulam Husain Khan, who observed the behaviour of English officials in Bengal, thought them much inferior to their Indian counterparts. British officials, he commented, seemed ill-at-ease outside their offices, and were at a loss when complainants approached them in public places demanding justice. Nor did they know how to behave towards persons of birth and respectability. Such were the restraints of a new style of impersonal bureaucracy. But Ghulam Husain was no Weber, and he pitied the foreigners for their ignorance.  

Indians who visited England during the next few decades were favourably impressed by much of what they saw, but not unduly so, and they felt able to offer some friendly criticisms. Mirza Abu Talib Khan, a Muslim of respectability from Lucknow, arrived in England in 1800, and stayed there for over three years. He was received by the King, moved in high society and recorded his pleasure at finding the English so much more polite and hospitable in England than their countrymen were in India. He thought that the common people enjoyed remarkable liberty and equality. Workmen and servants could not be beaten, for example. But he also thought that the difference between rich and poor was much greater in England than in India. He was impressed by the widespread use of machinery, not only in industry but even in the kitchen—he had seen a mincing machine. This he explained by reference to psychological and economic factors. On the one hand, the English were "naturally impatient," and did not like "trifling and tedious employments." On the other hand, labour cost much more in England than in India. In general, he criticised the English for their lack of religious faith, for their pride and contempt for the customs of other countries, for their love of luxury and dislike of exertion, for their love of money and for their sexual immorality. He praised them for a sense of honour, for a general wish to improve the conditions of the common people, and for plainness of manners. He was also able to make some significant comparisons between England and France. For example, London was very large, but Paris was more beautiful. He thought that courtesy was more widespread in France, in contrast to the irritability and surliness that he often found among the English.  

When Lutufullah, another respectable Muslim from northern India, went to England in 1844, he reacted in a similar manner. He was impressed by the luxury of London, by the cleanness of the streets, by the extensive use of iron and by the friendliness and hospitality of Englishmen in their own country. Once he noticed that a certain Colonel Miles, whom he had known in India, did not return his visit; he commented quietly that perhaps the colonel thought that "he was still in India, and not in the land of freedom where all are equal." The English seemed to be very patriotic and law-abiding. But they went "far beyond the limit of moderation" in their "obedience, trust and submission to the female sex." Indeed, Lutufullah concluded, "the freedom granted to womankind in this country is great, and the mischief arising from this unreasonable toleration is most deplorable." Mohan Lal Kashmiri, who went to England at about the same time, also enjoyed life in high society. He was greatly impressed by the widespread use of steam power. He considered that England had one great advantage over other countries: "even its lowest-born native is educated in some respects."
He had seen “a cab-driver and a footman on the coach-seat, reading a newspaper.” But he had one serious criticism. Although England was a rich country, it had many starving people.4

The comments of these travellers were delivered in a notably detached manner. Insofar as there was any didactic distortion it was confined to an emphasis upon the better behaviour of the English in England than in India. In other words, it was the English who needed to mend their ways: Indian self-confidence was unshaken. Similarly, when Muslim scholars were provoked into debates with Christian missionaries in Agra in the 1840s, they emerged unruffled from the encounter, reassured to learn that German Higher Criticism had established the existence of variant Biblical manuscripts, in contrast to the uniquely inspired text of the Qur’an, and scornful of the readiness with which the exponents of Christianity would appeal to revelation rather than reason.5 It was not until the British had suppressed the Mutiny and revolt of 1857, sacked the historic Muslim capital of Delhi and exiled the last of its Mughal rulers, that Indian Muslims faced the need to come to terms with the West and shaped their perceptions accordingly.6

Bengal, on the other hand, had had a more extended experience of British rule, and in Calcutta, the East-India Company’s capital, there were significant groups of Hindus who responded directly to western influences from early in the nineteenth century. The Hindu College was founded on Bengali initiative in 1817 to teach western knowledge through the English language, and a brilliant group of high-caste students soon acquired the name of “young Bengal.” Under the influence of Derozio, a talented Eurasian teacher, their acceptance of things western led them to scandalise their elders by reading Tom Paine, eating beef and drinking wine.7

Ram Mohun Roy devised a more selective form of response. A Bengali Brahman who had served in the East India Company’s offices and lent money to British officials, he devoted a prosperous retirement to the study of western ideas. He corresponded with Bentham and he associated with Baptist missionaries. Indeed, he showed such an interest in the missionaries’ ideas and activities that they expected his speedy conversion to Christianity. Instead, he converted one missionary to Unitarianism—William Adam, thereafter known in Calcutta as “the second fallen Adam.” Ram Mohun’s attitude to Christianity was revealed in his selection of Christ’s sayings, significantly entitled The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness. He omitted the miraculous and supernatural elements in the Gospels, and he also omitted Christ’s criticisms of the Pharisees, who may have seemed inconveniently like Brahmans. The result was a collection of ethical maxims compatible with European Deism. In 1828 he founded the Brahma Samaj, a Hindu sect which bore many resemblances to Unitarianism. In the trust deed of the first meeting house it was provided that there should be no “graven images”—an Old Testament term freely used by Nonconformist missionaries in criticism of popular forms of Hindu worship. He had no difficulty in finding a variety of Sanskrit texts to justify his claim that Hinduism was basically monotheistic, and he agreed with British criticisms of the burning of widows, although he advised the authorities not to prohibit the practice for fear of
arousing militant opposition. When his advice was disregarded, the only manifest opposition to the measure was the formation of the Dharma Sabha, with the general aim of defending Hindu dharma, or social ethics, and the specific purpose of campaigning for the repeal of the prohibition. That purpose was not achieved, but the Dharma Sabha attracted considerable support, working on western lines with a committee, secretary, treasurer and regular minutes and accounts. It issued various rulings on caste issues, but its members included vigorous supporters of English education. Of the possible patterns of response to western influence here is a significant example of selective acceptance, based on the assumption that western knowledge could be assimilated without damage to traditional values, while the Brahmo Samaj provides an example of concealed acceptance, recovering from within Indian tradition ideas and assumptions that resembled those flowing in from the West.

Ram Mohan Roy went to England in 1831 to negotiate better financial terms for the Mughal emperor, or King of Delhi as the British now called him, but he showed every sign of agreement with Whig principles. When he made an impromptu speech to some factory workers he concluded by urging them to support the King and his ministers in obtaining constitutional reform. He obviously thought it wise for the lower orders to be guided by their betters into loyalty as well as moderation. He also submitted a memorandum to the Parliamentary Select Committee on East India Affairs in which he argued that the settlement of English landlords in India would have a beneficial effect—provided that they were not of lower-class origin.

In general, western-educated Hindus tended to see the Whig, Liberal and later the Labour politicians at Westminster as their natural allies, and to see themselves as natural members of the upper classes in England. Ram Mohun brought his adopted son to England with him, and the young man spent several years working in the offices of the Board of Control in the expectation that he would eventually be nominated to a writership in the East India Company's service—the first Indian to be appointed to the covenanted civil service, later known as the I.C.S. This, it was thought, would be evidence of official sincerity in accordance with the undertaking in the Act renewing the Company's charter in 1833 that race or religion would be no bar to administrative appointments in British India. At the last moment, urgent representations were made by senior officials to the effect that it would be inexpedient to select as the first Indian to be so appointed the son of an unorthodox religious reformer. The young man therefore left England in obscurity and thereafter served in a subordinate post in the Bengal Secretariat. No other Indian nomination was in fact made.

Later, when competitive examinations were introduced for the I.C.S., many Indians again displayed a similar faith in British professions of fairness in appointments, and came to England to sit for the examinations. When three Indians passed into the I.C.S., the Civil Service Commissioners deftly manipulated the marking scheme to make it more difficult for Indians to succeed in the future, just as they adjusted the rules to facilitate the success of young gentlemen from Oxford and Cambridge in preference to persons from less-favoured institutions of learning. At the same time, the Secretary of State declared that the aim of the
enterprise was to select the ablest candidates, regardless of birth, and Indians in considerable numbers seemed to believe him: at least, they continued to come forward for examination, although few were chosen.\(^{11}\)

Most were high-caste Bengalis. As an example we may take Romesh Chandra Dutt and his family, Kayasthas by caste. Romesh Chandra passed into the I.C.S. and dully ascended the administrative hierarchy to become Commissioner of Orissa. His father had also served the British, mainly in revenue survey work. His uncle, Soshi Chandra Dutt, similarly rose to be Head Native Assistant in the Bengal Secretariat, and acted as Romesh Chandra's guardian after his father's death. With his father, and later with his uncle, Romesh Chandra as a youth spent the evenings reading English literature and discussing politics, especially English politics.\(^{12}\)

Soshi Chandra Dutt accepted the view cherished by the British that their function in India was progressive, even providential. India, it seemed, had been in a state of decline when the British seized power: "Reason had become paralysed, repugnance to investigation was general, habits of indolence had reached their climax; and the stupefaction of ages was settling down everywhere on a firm and immovable basis. A complete change of policy was required—a renovation of vitality by electricity or magnetism; and this it was in the power of the English, and the English alone, to impart. They brought to the task the aid of European civilisation of the highest order." So it was only right and proper for the Bengalis to take so enthusiastically to English literature. "The dry bones of Oriental literature would not have raised the morality or the life of the nation. What book, including the Veds and the Purans, is there in the country that could displace Bacon, Milton and Addison, without recalling the ages of Oriental gloom?" Clearly, Macaulay's dismissal of Oriental literature was warmly echoed in Bengal at this time.\(^{13}\)

Nor should it be assumed that Soshi Chandra was merely echoing Macaulay. In 1823, more than a decade before Macaulay's ruthless minute, Bam Mohan Boy had written to the Governor-General to protest against the proposal for a government Sanskrit College: no "improvement" or "utility" could be got from Sanskrit learning, he asserted.\(^{14}\)

However, Soshi Chandra had a word of warning for Young Bengal: at least they ought not to imitate the English in their liking for alcoholic beverages. He also ventured a criticism of English behaviour: English officials had still not "acquired what the French, for instance, would have mastered at the very outset, the art of making the natives their friends, and all Britain should understand clearly that till this art is acquired her hold on India must necessarily be insecure."\(^{15}\) But most of his comparisons between Britain and other western countries were to Britain's advantage. The Americans had regrettable tendencies to sexual immorality: "New York has been called the Sodom of modern times: in it adultery and abortions form the fundamental items of news and talk among all classes." He also disapproved of "the absence of refined manners" there. However, he admitted that the Americans seemed to have some merits. In particular, they were "very pushing and independent." They had great mechanical ingenuity. Utility was their standard in all matters. Achievement rather than birth was valued—and Soshi Chandra asserted bravely that he approved of this.\(^{16}\)
There was, indeed, considerable interest in such ideas among Soshi Chandra's contemporaries. Samuel Smiles sold widely, and was translated into many Indian languages.

One can see the influence of English preconceptions in Soshi Chandra's views of Europe. Not perhaps in his opinion of France as superior to all other countries in "refinement and civilisation," but rather in his assertion that as a people the French suffered from "impulsiveness," "vanity" and "a deficiency of the reflective and moral faculties." Similarly, he criticised Germany for military aggressiveness: "Empires based on military glory are always subject to suicidal tendencies, and destroy themselves." However, it seemed that Providence envisaged a progressive function even for Russia. In Gladstonian fashion Soshi Chandra asserted that Central Asia had been "designedly assigned by Providence to the charge of Russia for its amelioration, just as India had been specially made over to England, as having already a higher civilisation than Russia can impart, and which would therefore benefit better, though more slowly, under English rule."17

His nephew Romesh Chandra came to England for the I.C.S. examinations in 1868, and saw things western for himself, and with a more critical eye. But his approval and criticism still accorded with English middle-class assumptions. He was impressed by the parks, the Crystal Palace and the educational standards of the "town gentry," but noted that there prevailed a "silly" distinction between the landed and commercial classes. He professed horror at the condition of the lower classes. "Drunkenness and cruelty to wives prevail to a fearful extent among them, their independence often borders on insolence, and their remarkable imprudence makes them wretched." He deplored the imprudence of early marriage among the lower orders in England, although he himself had been married at the age of fifteen: "People belonging to the other classes with a habitual sense of duty and honor do not marry, generally speaking, till they have competence to support a wife and family in a style befitting their rank: but among the labouring classes this prudence is entirely wanting, and the consequences are baneful." A London labourer and his family lived in much worse conditions than those of the poorest class in India.18

He paid another visit to England in 1886, and again gave voice to English middle-class assumptions. It was so difficult to find servants these days: "The education of the lower classes, and the opening up of new industries have unsettled the old relations between masters and servants all over the world." It was difficult enough in India, but in England the problem was much worse. Every housemaid in London expected to have Sunday afternoons off. Then the newspapers were so outspoken as to reveal, in their reports of divorce proceedings, the existence of "depravity" among the upper classes. What good could come of such frankness? It threatened social stability. One also read of perjury in many of these cases. English officials in India were apt to profess to be disgusted by perjury there. But it existed in England too! However, in spite of occasional outbursts of patriotic feeling he still tended to see the West as the English middle classes liked to see it. In Rome he watched pilgrims climbing the Scala Santa on their knees: "I was reminded of the still more rigid penances imposed by a still
grossest superstition in my own country, where pilgrims from the north of India measure their length, and thus creep along day after day and month after month along the road to Juggernauth." But Italy resembled India in other ways also, which stirred his patriotism—a warm climate which encouraged a high level of civilisation; an unfortunate history of foreign invasion; finally, aspirations towards national independence. 19

From his vantage point in the I.C.S. Romesh Chandra found various administrative merits in British rule. In a study of the Literature of Bengal in 1872 he hailed the British conquest as a progressive event: it "removed Bengal from the moral atmosphere of Asia to that of Europe," and opened it not only to English ideas but also to influences stemming from the American revolution, the French revolution and the Italian war of independence. But when he saw a Japanese warship in the Suez Canal in 1886 he reflected that of all the nations of Asia the Japanese alone were "keeping abreast of European civilization." They did so through "energy and hard work," and by making use of western advisers, who were quickly replaced by Japanese staff. 20 Unfortunately, the British seemed unwilling to be replaced.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the growth of nationalist feeling was accompanied by criticisms of administrative incompetence in the way the British handled specific problems such as famine and rural poverty. Hitherto, a succession of Indian visitors to England had commented that the very poor in England were worse off than their counterparts in India. Mirza Abu Talib at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Mohan Lal Kashmiri in the 1840s, Romesh Chandra himself on his first visit to London, had all been struck by urban poverty. Hamid Ali Khan made the point in poetry when he said farewell to London after being called to the Bar at the Middle Temple: "Virtue and plenty on the surface lie, Beneath are vice, crime, want and misery." 21 But now it was being said that there was worse poverty in India. Ghulam Husain Khan had argued in the late eighteenth century that the British were taking wealth out of Bengal, and in England critics of the East India Company had spoken of a drain of wealth: the Court of Directors even warned their servants against it. Now such ideas were revived. Romesh Chandra retired from the I.C.S. in 1897, was appointed an unpaid Lecturer at University College, London, and settled down to research on such matters. His two-volume economic history of India under British rule contained much criticism of British economic policies as exploitative: many of his arguments were taken from Burke, but whereas Burke had argued that the East India Company was draining away the wealth of Bengal, he argued that British rule was draining away the wealth of India.

The Sens of Kolutollah were another high-caste Bengali family who gained in wealth through association with the British and had taken with enthusiasm to western education. They were Vaidyas by caste: the Vaidyas, with the Kayasthas, ranked next to Brahmans. Ram Kamal Sen, who became Treasurer of the Calcutta Mint in 1832, was a leading member of the Dharma Sabha, but he was also a prominent supporter of English education. One of his sons was Bullion Keeper at the Mint, another was Diwan of the Bank of Bengal. One of his grandsons was Head Native Assistant at the Bank of Bengal, another was a journalist. Another,
Keshab Chandra, gave up his post at the Bank of Bengal to devote himself to religious activities in the Brahmo Samaj, then led by the Brahman Debendranath Tagore. In 1860 he published the first of his Tracts for the Times. The title revealed his awareness of contemporary religious movements in England, and the first tract, entitled “Young Bengal: this is for you,” criticised Improvement Societies, Debating Clubs and Literary Societies. Instead, he preached the need for a moral awakening along Evangelical or Nonconformist lines, and cited an ill-assorted list of European names in favour of such an endeavour—Aristotle, Locke, Shaftesbury, Coleridge, even Dugald Stewart. Soon the Brahmo Samaj was split. Keshab Chandra formed a new sect—the Brahmo Samaj of India. He insisted that those who conducted services should abandon the sacred thread that denoted twice-born status, although Ram Kamal Sen had insisted upon the Vaidyas’ right to wear it and many other Vaidyas firmly supported such claims.

Many Kayasthas, including Romesh Chandra Dutt himself, thought in similar terms. In his History of Civilization in Ancient India he argued that Kayasthas had once been accepted as Kshatriyas, the twice-born group to which rulers and warriors belonged. But most Bengali Brahmans thought that there were no Kshatriyas left: only Brahmans were now entitled to twice-born status. English education, with its emphasis on western superiority, reinforced the lack of confidence in their own identity which afflicted many Vaidyas and Kayasthas. Moreover, the dominant tendency of western thought, with its emphasis on the importance of individual ability and achievement, was to undermine notions of hereditary privilege. Keshab Chandra Sen’s career is particularly significant as demonstrating one way in which such tensions were resolved. First, by discarding the sacred thread he renounced the strategy of upward mobility based on hereditary claims that accorded with Hindu traditions. Secondly, he undertook a successful visit to the West, which proclaimed that his ability and achievements were recognised in England itself.

He went to England in 1870. He held a large number of meetings and preached in Unitarian and Nonconformist chapels, speaking eloquently in favour of pacifism and total abstinence and praising English middle-class family life. He was received in audience by the Queen, an experience which delighted him. “It is my belief that it is God Himself who crowned Victoria with the crown of Empress,” he declared in 1879. But by then he was losing ground. On the one hand he was criticised because he had arranged the marriage of his daughter, aged thirteen, to the Maharaja of Kuch Bihar. He seemed to be condoning child marriage, a custom to which reformers influenced by western ideas were strongly opposed. This led to a split in the Brahmo Samaj of India. On the other hand he was criticised for being too European. In the event he became more mystical, and proclaimed a “New Dispensation” based on a synthesis of European and Asian ideas and emotions: “we instantly realize within ourselves an European Asia and an Asiatic Europe!” He seemed to be persuading himself that differences could be resolved by denying their reality: “All science is religion, and all religion is science. There is as much science in prayer as in the locomotive engine....” And so on. This was to stretch the strategy of concealed acceptance into confusion.
However, it was an attitude to natural science that has continued to our own day. A century later Vinoba Bhave, Mahatma Gandhi’s most eminent disciple, can be found struggling to identify religion and science: “To me, science is equal to spirituality, both should mean the same thing.” Like Keshab, Vinoba begins from the premise that the insights derived from Hindu practices of meditation are of equal validity with those derived from the experimental methods of western science; like Keshab, he concludes that they are in fact the same.24

Alternatives to the Brahmo Samaj soon emerged, with very different attitudes to the West. Narendranath Dutt, a western-educated Kayastha, left the Brahmo Samaj under the influence of Ramakrishna, a village Brahman who practised austerities, claimed that in trance-like states he had visions not only of Kali but of Christ, and preached the unity of all religions. Narendranath took the point that Hinduism was large enough to include the insights of other religions. Not only was it the religion for Indians: it had much to teach the West. Travel in the West, however, conferred the authority he needed in India. At the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 his exposition of Hinduism was received with enthusiasm, and he returned home famous, as Swami Vivekananda, the religious name he had assumed before he left. In general, he argued that the West was weakened by materialism and needed Hindu spirituality but that India was weakened by superstition and needed education, self-reliance and social reform. Vivekananda was accused of inconsistency, and of suiting his message to his audience. It was true that he had the orator’s instinctive understanding of his listeners. When one of his followers proposed to write a life of Ramakrishna in English he quickly advised him to “avoid all irregular indecent expressions about sex etc.,” so as not to upset people in the West.25 But he had an elaborate justification for addressing such different messages to India and the West. Indian spirituality in his day, he said, was merely laziness. The dominant aim of Indians in the past had been to achieve moksha, or salvation through renunciation, while the dominant aim of people in the West was to practise dharma, or do their duty in the world before renouncing it, while the West did not know that salvation should be the final end of life. He therefore saw himself as entirely consistent in preaching the need for spirituality in the West and for energy in worldly activity in India. Whether western values and assumptions could accurately be described in such characteristically Hindu terms did not occur to him. He was derided for preaching a “muscular Hinduism” analogous to Charles Kingsley’s “muscular Christianity,” and there were occasions when he was led into incautious eulogy of organised games. But although his oratorical instincts betrayed him into such expressions to catch the attention of his audience, the thinking that underlay such points was more sophisticated than Kingsley’s.

Another example of his understanding of his audience was his use of what Agehananda Bharati has called “scientific similes.”26 These fitted the prevalent yearning for western science, and reinforced the implication that western science and Hindu values were compatible. But his understanding of Hinduism involved a strenuous reinterpretation of traditional teaching along the lines of a concealed acceptance of western values, for example: “Alas! nobody thinks of the poor of this land. They are the backbone of the country, who by their labour are producing...
food—these poor people, the sweepers and labourers, who if they stop work for one day will create a panic in the town. But there is none to sympathise with them, none to console them in their misery. Just see, for want of sympathy from the Hindus, thousands of Pariahs in Madras are turning Christians. ... I sometimes feel the urge to break down the barriers of 'Don't Touchism,' to go at once and call out, 'Come, all you who are poor, miserable, wretched and downtrodden,' and to bring them all together in the name of Shri Ramakrishna. Unless they rise, the Mother won't awaken. ... I see clear as daylight that there is one Brahman in all, in them and me—one Shakti dwells in all. ..." He saw western science as offering solutions for India's poverty provided that caste prejudice and aversion from manual labour were abandoned: "With the help of Western science set yourselves to dig the earth and produce food-stuffs—not by mean servitude of others—but by discovering new avenues to production, by your own exertions aided by Western science."27

When he visited England he noted that there seemed to be no racial prejudice among the English in their own country, unlike the English in India, or indeed unlike the Americans. "I am very much more at home here than anywhere out of India. The English people know us, we know them. The standard of education and civilisation is very high here—that makes a great change, as does the education of many generations."28 After a few months in England he "very much toned down" his ideas about English people.29 But all this did not affect his confidence in his own assessment of western virtues and vices. The Englishman's fundamental interest was in economics, the Frenchman's in politics. And so on. But he was eloquent in praising the results of popular education in the West, and the energy and activity that went into social work. Some didactic distortion may be suspected here, but he approved of the Roman Catholic religious orders as providing an organisational structure for a celibate devotional life combined with educational or social work, and an analogous pattern was followed in the institutions of the Ramakrishna Mission which were established under his auspices.30

In the novel Ananda Math Bankim Chandra Chatterjee portrayed a religious order of Hindu militants who raided government treasuries and other such establishments in mid-eighteenth century Bengal. Their purpose, his heroes explained with a truly prophetic grasp of historical processes, was to force the British to take over full responsibility for the administration instead of propping up Muslim rule. This was because British rule would have the providential function of introducing a knowledge of western science into India, and such knowledge was essential to the regeneration of Hinduism. In the course of the book non-violence was condemned as a corruption of Hindu beliefs attributable to Buddhist influences. True Vaishnavism, Bankim Chandra explained, entailed the use of force against evil-doers as well as the development of love. His message was well received by Bengali nationalists looking for authentically Indian ways of responding to the West. The idea of Britain's providential role in educating India now had a respectable history. What was new was the notion that vigorous political activity was a religious duty, not merely an acceptable occupation for educated persons who had not reached a high level of spiritual enlightenment.

Similarly, in western India the Maratha Brahman Bal Gangadhar Tilak
interpreted the *Gita* as teaching that salvation should be achieved not by renouncing action and withdrawing from the world but by renouncing the fruits of action and working selflessly in the world for the good of the nation. He went on to argue, in *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, that the Aryan ancestors of the Hindus had achieved a high level of civilisation in the frozen North long before there was any learning at all in Europe. Clearly, Hindus could do without European help again. But the nature of Hindu identity was already being questioned. When Max Müller, the most famous Sanskrit scholar of the time, spoke of an Aryan race comprehending the speakers of the Indo-European group of languages, he was heard by warm approval by many Hindus, and his subsequent retraction was ignored. Keshab declared with characteristic emotion that "in the advent of the English nation in India we see a reunion of parted cousins, the descendants of two different families of the ancient Aryan race." Vivekananda shrewdly warned against postulating differences between Aryan and non-Aryan races, but many Brahman scholars were tactless enough to claim that the Kshatriyas had all perished long ago and that the Brahmans themselves were the only descendants of the Aryan invaders. Tilak even went further, and argued that "the vitality and superiority of the Aryan races, as disclosed by their conquest, by extermination or assimilation of the non-Aryan races" was the result of "high degree of civilisation in their original Arctic home." Non-Brahmans were unlikely to accept such theories with any enthusiasm.

In Maharashtra the low-caste spokesman Jyotirao Phule condemned the alliance of Brahmans and moneylenders which had diverted the benefits of British rule from the peasants into their own pockets. The Brahmans, after all, were foreign conquerors, and the low castes were the true natives. In 1873 he founded the Satyashodak Samaj, or truth-seekers' society, whose members affirmed their faith in human brotherhood, promised not to employ priests, undertook to educate their sons and daughters, and pledged their loyalty to the British government. Subsequently a similar posture was adopted by the Dravidian movement in South India. Its exponents criticised Brahmans as the descendants of foreign conquerors, and after independence its political wing campaigned for the retention of English as an official language of the state of India on the ground that if Hindi were the only language used by the central administration an unfair advantage would be given to high castes from northern India. The distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan races was a dangerous one for nationalists to toy with.

In northern India, however, the Arya Samaj gave the term Arya a cultural, and especially a religious meaning, and opposed the notion of caste based on birth. This is not to deny that the movement drew a certain vitality from social conflict, but the conflict was of region rather than class. As British rule spread out across northern India, English-educated Bengalis had gone with it, as officials, lawyers and schoolteachers, and they founded local branches of the Brahma Samaj. In the last decades of the nineteenth century the Arya Samaj took root there, especially in the Panjab, as a challenge to the Brahma Samaj—less western, and more aggressive. It was founded in 1875 by a Brahman, Dayananda Saraswati, but executive roles in the new organisation were quickly assumed by...
Khatis, the local equivalent of the Kayasthas, ambitious also to succeed Bengalis in government offices, law-courts and schools, Dayananda had been influenced by critics of Keshab Chandra's syncretistic tendencies, especially by Brahmos faithful to the original sect led by Tagore. The Arya Samaj appeared as a more Indian reform of Hinduism, critical of such things as child-marriage and idol-worship, but basing its criticisms solely on appropriate Sanskrit texts, with none of the quotations and references liberally taken by Keshab and his colleagues from the Bible and from various western authors. At first Dayananda was prepared to praise certain aspects of British rule: it had established peace, its law-courts were open to all and there had been some road-building. But it had not promoted virtue, for its penal system was too lenient: branding, mutilation and other painful punishments were needed to suppress theft, gambling and adultery, as the ancient law-giver Manu had recommended long ago. Eventually, Dayananda came to argue that foreign rule could never be beneficial. Indeed, in the Golden Age of the Aryans natural science was well understood, and if one read the texts properly one could find references to medical cures, mechanical propulsion, even airships.34

So an alternative to admitting India's need for western science and arguing for its compatibility with Hinduism, if at the cost of some adjustment, was to assert that India had once had its own natural science. What might appear to be a process of learning from the West was thus equivalent to recovering one's own heritage. A third possibility was rejection—to deny that India had any need of western science or technology, or of western institutions of any kind. This position was reached by Mahatma Gandhi in a series of articles written on board ship in 1909 under the title Hind Swaraj, as a plea for India's independence. Thirteen years later, Gandhi said that he would only change one word, and that in deference to a lady friend. (The wording is in fact decorous in the extreme.) Medical science merely provided remedies for illnesses caused by self-indulgence. "I have indulged in vice, I contract a disease, a doctor cures me, the odds are that I shall repeat the vice. Had the doctor not intervened, nature would have done its work, and I would have acquired mastery over myself, would have been freed from vice, and would have become happy." Doctors violated religious instincts, in that most of their medicines contained animal fat or spirituous liquor. Hospitals were "institutions for propagating sin." It was a simple process: "Men take less care of their bodies, and immorality increases." Men no longer tried to be virtuous when cures for venereal disease were so lavishly provided in European-style hospitals. It was a fallacy to suppose that doctors studied medicine in order to serve humanity: they did so merely "to obtain honours and riches." So the Indian people were cheated. "To study European medicine is to deepen our slavery." Similarly, the western legal system established by the British operated mainly for the benefit of lawyers, who encouraged litigation, and for the preservation of British rule. Railways were also harmful. They spread plague germs. They encouraged famine by facilitating the transport of grain to the dearest markets. They even harmed religion: "The holy places of India have become unholy. Formerly, people went to these places with great difficulty. Generally, therefore, only the real devotees visited such places. Nowadays rogues visit them..."
to practise their roguery." Western influences were thus both impoverishing and immoral.35

Notwithstanding such warnings the Mahatma was influenced by western ideas and assumptions. He entitled his autobiography The Story of My Experiments with Truth: but it was a western notion to seek truth by experiment rather than by studying sacred texts or by meditation. As a consequence various unfortunate members of his entourage were subjected to treatments suggested by fringe medicine. He tried a number of recipes which he found in western literature on vegetarianism. He studied the New Testament and developed an awareness of the dangers of sin which would have satisfied the most exacting of Evangelical missionaries. He went on to interpret the Gita as encouraging the struggle against sin rather than as sanctioning physical warfare. He also made use of various Protestant hymns in his religious services.

Hind Swaraj was written at a time when the search for new methods of political agitation prompted activists to look to Ireland and to adopt boycott as a slogan of protest against Curzon's Partition of Bengal in 1905. The Russo-Japanese War also affected Indian views of European military competence. Indian newspapers hailed Japanese success as "saving the honour of the East."36 Jawaharlal Nehru later recalled that as a boy of fourteen he was excited by the idea of an Asiatic power like Japan defeating a European power.37 In the agitation against the Partition Japanese goods were exempted from the boycott of foreign goods.38 Even Muslim newspapers professed admiration for Japan's success, mindful of Russia's hostility to Turkey. But such comforting thoughts were soon overshadowed by the revocation of the Partition. The transfer of the capital to Delhi seemed small compensation for the disappearance of a province with a Muslim majority. Could Muslims trust the British after all?

For half a century, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's example had seemed a prudent one for them to follow. A north Indian Muslim with family traditions of government service, he was employed under the British as a subordinate judge and saved the lives of British officials during the unrest of 1857. He was rewarded with a pension and various honorary insignia, and thereafter devoted himself to improving the Muslim position in India. In The Loyal Mohammedans of India he presented examples of loyalty to the British and argued that Muslims were well disposed towards Christians by reason of their religious principles, their habits and their assumptions. This was clearly written with an eye to British readers. But he devoted more of his attention to attempts to change Muslim attitudes. In an Urdu article on the causes of the revolt he deplored the separation between Englishmen and Indians and inter alia referred to the former Mughal sovereign as an imbecile. When his elder son was awarded a government scholarship to enable him to study in England, Sayyid Ahmad went with him, in 1869, and was well received in high society. He recounted his experiences in a series of letters which were duly published. The sight of Aden gave him "a sense of British power." At Marseilles he was impressed by the French lifestyle, especially the cafes. "How good God is that he enables even workmen to refresh themselves in such paradises as could never have been conceived by Jamshed!"39 He reported that the streets in Paris and London were clean and well lit, that the policemen
were helpful and that the lower orders were literate. His praise of such things aroused resentment in India, and he replied that he knew what he was talking about: "What I have seen and see daily is utterly beyond the imagination of a native of India." With the confidence of such experience he seems to have forgotten the fact that was second nature to a cultivated Indian Muslim. "Without flattering the English, I can truly say that the natives of India, high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners, and uprightness, are as like them as a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man." As if this were not enough, he seemed to justify English rudeness in India: "The English have reason for believing us in India to be imbecile brutes." 40

All this was to emphasise that India needed western education. In his boarding house in London he observed the housemaid: "She reads the papers and enjoys them, and does her work like a watch or a machine." This prompted another tactless comment: "It is a fact that if this woman, who is poor, and compelled to work as a maid-servant in attendance night and day upon me, were to go in India and mix with ladies of the higher classes, she would look upon them as mere animals, and regard them with contempt." Here was didactic distortion enough to emphasise India's need of education. But although he directed so much attention to the educational standards of the lower classes in England, his concern in India was to promote the education of a Muslim elite. If Indian Muslims were reluctant to go to government schools and colleges this was only, he asserted, because such institutions admitted persons whom they regarded with "social contempt." On his return to India he laid the foundation of a Muslim college and ultimately university at Aligarh on Oxbridge lines. Only boys from respectable families would be admitted. This was the way to train an elite from whom the British could select loyal officials and counsellors. Representative institutions might well lead to the elevation of men of low birth and would certainly be to the advantage of the Hindu majority. India's Muslims must therefore look to the British for preferment and protection. 41

Sayyid Ahmad also did his best to make Islam acceptable on western terms, by finding texts and traditions compatible with western values. Slavery might be permitted, but it was a more humane alternative to killing one's enemies, and anyhow the Prophet had recommended not only the good treatment of slaves but also their liberation. Polygamy was only allowed under such restrictions as made it almost impossible for most people. Islam was as much a progressive force as Protestantism. Indeed, Islam not only "fought against Judaism in favour of Christianity," but also influenced Christianity towards Protestantism. 42 Amir Ali, a Muslim lawyer from Orissa who read for the Bar in England and became a Judge of the Calcutta High Court, went further along this line. The Muslims "were occupied in the task of civilization" while "the barbarians of Europe" were still "groping in the darkness of absolute ignorance and brutality." But eventually one could hope that Islam and Christianity would work together, for both aimed at "the elevation of mankind." 43

However, the logic of Muslim partnership with the British seemed less obvious as Britain cautiously drew closer to Turkey's enemies in Europe. Perhaps
true Muslims could after all join Hindus in a struggle for freedom? An affirmative answer was easier for those without the advantages of an Aligarh education. Maulvi Barkatullah, a Muslim from western India who laboured arduously in Tokyo to teach Japanese students Hindustani and make converts to Islam, published a pan-Islamic journal entitled The Islamic Fraternity in which he urged Muslims to support the cause of Germany in any European war: Germany would protect the Ottoman Caliphate, and "Germany's word alone is reliable." This was in 1912. In the following year Barkatullah was expelled from Japan. He went to San Francisco, where he joined the Ghadr, or revolutionary, party led by Har Dayal. A Kayastha from the Panjab, Har Dayal had taught History at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, before going to Oxford with a government scholarship. He left Oxford before the end of his studies there and was eventually appointed to a temporary and unpaid Lectureship in Indian Philosophy at Stanford. He published articles attacking the British educational system in India and urging Indian students to study, instead, not their traditional learning but modern knowledge as taught in Europe, especially in France and Germany. "Paris towers over all other intellectual centres like a giant among pygmies," and German was of course "the language of science and research." In his Ghadr newspaper it was optimistically stated that in the coming war between Britain and Germany the Irish would rise in support of Germany. That was in 1913. Early in 1914 Har Dayal was deported from the United States, and during the first world war he worked in Turkey and Germany under the auspices of the German Foreign Office in various projects designed to undermine British rule in India. Barkatullah was similarly occupied. Har Dayal's subsequent career has a certain significance. In December 1918 he announced that his experiences in Germany had convinced him that "German imperialism" was "a very great menace to the progress of humanity." He was soon arguing that if the British government were to go it would be replaced by a worse tyranny. Eventually he settled down in England, where he studied at the School of Oriental and African Studies and was awarded a Ph.D. for a thesis on the Boddhisattva doctrine. He also opened a "Modern Culture Institute" at Edgware. Those who went there in search of modern culture were said to be "mostly young socialists and vegetarians." Meanwhile in India the first world war led to a closing of various ranks in support of the allied cause. Even Gandhi proclaimed his sympathy for it. Afterwards he urged Hindus to join Muslims in a campaign on behalf of the Caliphate, but events in Turkey soon made this seem anachronistic. In the 1930s there was some relaxation in his attitude to western technology: he admitted that railways, doctors and surgeons had a limited utility. But British rule he continued to denounce as immoral, and more Indians were coming to agree with him. Many were alienated by General Dyer's action in firing on an unarmed crowd which had assembled at Amritsar in defiance of a prohibition of public meetings: over 300 were killed. Dyer was officially censured and relieved of his appointment, but there were public expressions of sympathy for him in England. Even the poet Rabindranath Tagore resigned his knighthood in protest. The young Jawaharlal Nehru, who had recently joined the nationalist movement after Harrow and Cambridge, happened to find himself in the same railway compartment with
Dyer and other army officers. "They conversed with each other in loud voices which I could not help overhearing." Dyer described his experiences in a boastful manner, which Nehru found most distasteful: "I was greatly shocked to hear his conversation and to observe his callous manner. He descended at Delhi station in pyjamas with bright pink stripes, and a dressing gown." The British in India had clearly lost their standards.

But there was still a tendency to appeal from England drunk to England sober. When Rabindranath Tagore went to Russia in 1930 he was impressed by what he considered to be the valiant efforts of the Soviet government to promote the education of the people. But he saw that it was a dictatorship, and he reflected that there were advantages in a British government: "other Europeans in their treatment of subject peoples are less generous and more cruel than the English." Nehru, on the other hand, saw violence both under Soviet and under British rule, but thought that "the violence of Russia, bad though it was, aimed at a new order based on peace and co-operation and real freedom for the masses." But then, he felt that he understood Marxism: "It was the essential freedom from dogma and the scientific outlook of Marxism that appealed to me." The rise of British power in India could easily be understood: they had "a higher political and military organization." But there were two Englands—"the England of Shakespeare and Milton, of noble speech and writing and brave deed," and "the England of the savage penal code and brutal behaviour, of entrenched feudalism and reaction." He concluded gloomily that "the wrong England" played the dominant role in India. And among the staunchest supporters of British rule in India were the members of "that curious group which has no fixed standards or principles or much knowledge of the outside world, the leaders of the British Labour Party."

In the early days of the second world war Nehru concluded that there was little to choose between the antagonists. He told Gandhi in 1940 that the war was a "purely imperialist venture on both sides." Gandhi professed moral sympathy for the British but as a pacifist resolved to turn Britain's difficulty to India's advantage. An alternative response was made by Subhas Chandra Bose. A Bengali Kayastha, he had gone to Cambridge, where he approved of the "consideration and esteem" enjoyed by students. "Nothing makes me happier than to be served by the whites and to watch them clean my shoes." He professed socialist principles but Nehru suspected him of fascist sympathies and combined with Gandhi to deprive him of the Congress party's Presidency in the early months of 1939. N.G. Ganpuley, an Indian businessman working in Germany, later explained that Bose had indeed made enquiries about Nazi policies, as he wanted to follow the traditional maxim that one should make friends with one's enemy's enemy. Ganpuley reassured him: there was no racial discrimination against Indians in Germany: Jewish propaganda had influenced the Indian press, and so "we had begun to dislike Germany without rhyme or reason." No doubt reassured, Bose later went to Germany and also to Japan, and recruited Indian prisoners of war into an "Indian National Army." On the other hand, Gandhi could only suggest that the Jews use "soul-force" against Hitler. Nehru later helped to defend the few I.N.A. officers who were tried before a court-martial in
the Red Fort in 1945. But as prime minister he firmly refused to allow former I.N.A. officers to join the army of independent India. There was an ambivalence in treason or patriotism under foreign rule. But army morale had to be safeguarded. It seemed that Indian officers trained in England favoured the court-martial of ex-I.N.A. officers while those trained in India opposed it.61

Nehru himself confessed to being torn between East and West as a result of his English education, although it has been suggested, on the other hand, that a certain alienation is the lot of any intellectual.62 Certainly the Indian intellectual has been and still is deeply affected by his familiarity with the English language, through which even his knowledge of Marxism comes. In the nineteenth century, English education took such root in Young Bengal that this group resembled an intelligentsia in the technical Russian sense—speaking a foreign language even at home and living a foreign lifestyle. Even after independence Britain tends to be the country regarded by Indians as typical of western virtues—and vices. Therefore Britain tends to be harshly criticised for its shortcomings. Indian sensitivity to foreign opinion is often described as a weakness resulting from foreign rule. The decision to distribute _Pather Panchali_ outside Bengal was taken only after its success at Cannes.63 A successful foreign concert tour brings fame to an Indian musician in India.64 But a regard for the opinion of others may be a sign of maturity, and Britain's disregard for its image abroad still seems a grave handicap in today's world. It remains to be seen whether the Indian regard for Britain has been permanently damaged by the British Nationality Act (1981), which seems a significant example of that tendency to ignore outside opinion.

If the models of response to the West were arranged in logical order from the one extreme of acceptance to the other of rejection it would seem that logical arrangement has no connection with chronological succession. It is true that the early nineteenth century presents us with the archetype of acceptance in Young Bengal and the early twentieth with the archetype of rejection in Gandhi's _Hind Swaraj_. But contemporary with Young Bengal were the two models of compromise—that of selective acceptance in the Dharma Sabha and that of concealed acceptance in the Brahmo Samaj—and these models continued to characterise many Indian perceptions of the West. The growing appetite, stimulated by nationalism, for authentically Indian devices still fed upon western perceptions of India and India's past.65

A significant example is the policy of _panchayat raj_ in independent India—the attempt to develop a system of local democratic bodies based on the idea that the ancient Indian village was a democratic republic governed by a _panchayat_, or popularly-elected council. In fact the Indian village was never democratic in the sense of egalitarian, and the term _panchayat_ seems to have been applied to a variety of _ad hoc_ tribunals that were anything but popularly elected.66 However, early in the nineteenth century British officials who were afraid of the disruptive effects of westernisation painted idyllic pictures of Indian villages as contented, harmonious and independent republics. Marx later described the village communities as the foundation of Oriental despotism, but Indian nationalists preferred to look to those British scholars who were enthused by notions of innate Aryan tendencies to self-government. Soon enough, Indian historians came to
portray the ancient Indian village as equipped with fully democratic institutions, and the panchayat raj policy provides us with a contemporary example of the model of concealed acceptance. The model of selective acceptance, based on the assumed compatibility of Indian values with western techniques, is nowhere more evident than in the daily spectacle of India’s politicians, duly clad in various forms of Indian dress, giving orders to India’s bureaucrats, duly clad in shirts and trousers, with neckties and jackets in addition for the senior ranks. Ardent patriots are apt to criticise the policies that emerge as being un-Indian, but to perceive the difference between myth and reality is as difficult for politicians as it is for scholars.

Indian criticisms of British policies as un-British revealed a similar perceptual difficulty. But at the root of such problems was a continuing ambivalence in Indian attitudes, perceiving the West as progressive and beneficent or alternatively as reactionary and exploitative. If one way of resolving such tensions was to distinguish between ideal and reality another was to distinguish between types. The Englishman in England was seen as different from the Englishman in India—or from the sort of Englishman who went to India. Or the English official was seen as different from the English missionary. Alternatively, distinctions were made between different types of country. A popular model in the nineteenth century was to see certain countries as having already travelled the road destined for India from foreign domination to independence—for example, Italy or the United States. A more popular model in more recent times was to see countries as inherently reactionary, like the United States, or inherently progressive, like the USSR. However, the tendency remains to perceive a special relationship with Britain, partly because of memories of British rule, partly because of vague notions of Aryan kinship still felt in high-caste circles, partly because of an educational system still bearing a British imprint.
Notes

4. Mohan Lal (Kashmiri), Travels in the Punjab, Afghanistan, & Turkestan, to Balkh, Bokhara and Herat; and a Visit to Great Britain and Germany (London, 1846), pp. 492-493, 512-520.


42. Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Question whether Islam has been Beneficial or Injurious to Human Society in General, and to the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations* (London, 1870).


47. Ker, *Political Troubles in India*, p. 113.


52. Rabindranath Tagore, Letters from Russia (Calcutta, 1960), pp. 100, 112.
60. N.G. Ganapuley, Netaji in Germany. A Little-Known Chapter (Bombay, 1959), p. 186.
62. Edward Shils, The Intellectual between Tradition and Modernity: the Indian Situation, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Supplement 1 (The Hague, 1961), p. 61. This is less usual in England than elsewhere, witness the readiness of some university dons to take to hunting, shooting or fishing, thus establishing a claim to acceptance among the landed classes, or the eagerness of many others to profess loyalty to some football or cricket team, thus demonstrating that they endorse popular culture.
65. Non-violent civil disobedience, often seen as an authentically Indian technique, had a significant inauguration in Bombay in 1882, when members of the Salvation Army deliberately disobeyed an order prohibiting the playing of music in a religious procession: F. Booth Tucker, Muktifauj (London, n.d.), pp. 13-15. When Gandhi was pursuing an unsuccessful legal career in Bombay early in the 1890s, much publicity was achieved by a group of Nonconformist missionaries who chose to go to prison rather than pay fines imposed on them for libelling a government opium contractor. Alfred Dyer, their leader, occupied his time in prison in the composition of elevating hymns, which he duly published under the title, Songs in Prison, and Other Songs of Christian Life and Warfare; see Kenneth Ballhatchet, Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793-1905 (London, 1980), p. 135.