

As Nehru claims, two versions of English rule emerged in both Great Britain and India. The intellectually developed England grew in tandem with the savage and feudalistic England. The British justified the harsh treatment of Indians and the lower classes of Great Britain with the British notion of intellectual and cultural superiority and the supposition that British rule alone would lift the less developed cultures up to the level of the British. While in Great Britain brutality was restricted to criminals and the lower classes, in India the brutality was widespread reaching all but the privileged few. The brutal treatment of Indians manifested itself through an education system that promised equal education but not equal opportunity, through the overreaction of the military and military personnel, and through the callousness of British leaders towards the Indian population.

British re-education of Indians acted as a double-edged sword; on the one hand, Indians were allowed to enter British public schools and Universities opening Indian minds to a wealth of knowledge previously unknown to Indian civilization. Yet, the new British education debased the cultural heritage of Indian civilization. Education of the upper castes of Indian society promoted the British ideal of facilitating the intellectual development of less developed civilizations. Yet, this ideal was shown to be another way to subtly exercise power over Indian society. The subtle British dominance through education is shown in Thomas Macaulay's philosophy to create "a class of interpreters" between the British and Indian masses.¹ Thomas Macaulay's idea was not to create a class of Indian intelligentsia equal to the British, but a class of people who served as a medium. These so called Macaulay's Children could be better educated, have all the

¹ See Lecture 9/26 and Stein (1998) for full quotation

tastes of the British elite and yet still be denied access to the upper echelons of government and society open to the British in India. A clear example of this inequality is illustrated in the movie *Gandhi*. Although Gandhi is by all means a well-educated and upper-class citizen, he is forcibly removed from the first class section of the South African train.² While this event occurs in South Africa, the fact remains that Gandhi is not considered an upper-class citizen in the British Empire based on the sheer fact that he is Indian. The unequal treatment of the Indian elite compared to the British elite psychologically demoralized the Indian people by creating a ceiling on upward class mobility. This barrier stopped assimilation between the British and Indian cultures keeping the distinction between conqueror and conquered throughout the British rule of India.

Not only were the Indian elite psychologically damaged by the education system, but the Indian masses were hurt by the British education system further demonstrating the cruel nature of British rule masked by the social good of public education. When the British conquered India, Indian history was rewritten transforming India's literary and technological achievements into nothing more than folklore and stolen ideas from more civilized cultures. Images of savagery and mysticism marred the historical accounts of Indian civilization. Government schools were erected in every district with a curriculum taught in English where Indian history was rewritten to depict the past as an era of superstition and backwardness.³ With a skewed version of Indian history, those previously uneducated had only the British to believe. Intentionally or not, the British deepened the rift between the British and Indian creating in a feeling of inferiority in the

² See clip from beginning of *Gandhi* a film by Richard Attenborough.

³ See Lecture 9/26

Indian masses. The feeling of inferiority of the masses was much more powerful than the barrier faced by the Indian elite in such that the elite had the knowledge to question British superiority whereas the masses did not have such knowledge.

The reaction of the British military toward Indian resistance to British rule moves the British rule from a psychological to physical brutality. Throughout the history of British India several notable resistances against British authority emerged. Even more notable is the reaction of the British military to these demonstrations. The first uprising occurred in Northern India in 1857. “The great Indian Mutiny and Civil Rebellion of 1857 came as a shock that was to reverberate through all the relations of the British Indian Empire for the next ninety years.”⁴ The British army quelled the uprising with brute force, but knew the status quo of authority could not sustain British rule in a foreign land. The British sought to strengthen the rule of India by letting the crown assume authority of India and reorganizing the military for more control. The reaction of the British to the 1857 Revolt can be seen as a logical reaction to Indian uprising if the British intended on keeping authority in India.

Later reactions of the British military to peaceable Indian revolts and non-cooperation demonstrate the true brutality of the British military. Both the Amritsar massacre and the brutal beatings against those marching on the British salt factory illustrate the British military’s overreaction to civil protest and the horrifying nature of the brutality of the military’s actions. The Amritsar massacre at Jallianwala Bagh occurred when the British Indian Army opened fire on thousands of innocent unarmed civilians with no escape save for the lone entrance guarded by the army. In no way was this demonstration violent or even hinting at violence through inciting speech. As the

⁴ See Stein (1998) p. 226-7 for more detail about the 1857 Mutiny

enlightened society that England claimed to be, a more diplomatic approach should have been taken not a violent response to fire at protesters. Unnecessary violence should only exist in more primitive societies and if England embraced the ideals of political revolution the military should have allowed the protest. The inhumanity of General Dyer's action towards a crowd of non-violent protesters is sickening. When asked why he had acted in such a way he responded that he wanted to create an example for the Indian people that resistance to British rule was unacceptable.⁵ According to his argument, brutality was justified by the superiority of British rule. As a representative of the British rule, he exemplified the idea that the British rule was savage and unenlightened despite its civilized front.

The second non-violent action of Indian protesters and the harsh reaction of the military occurred when a group of Indians marched towards the British salt factory. In this example, a group of Indians marched towards an army armed with nightsticks and ready to beat anyone who came too close. The march resulted in countless non-violent Indians being beaten one after another by the British Indian Army with no retaliation on the part of the Indians.⁶ Because of the callousness of the British Army and its extreme overreaction, this event evoked a response worldwide creating sympathy for the Indian independence movement. Throughout the period of imperial rule by the British, the army grew in its savagery and baseness in an attempt to suppress and ever growing movement towards independence. With the growing brutality of the army, British rule took on the role of savage conqueror and suppressor of a nation of people.

⁵ See middle of the film *Gandhi* for court proceedings of Gen. Dyer

⁶ See *Gandhi* film for illustration of the march

Finally, the callousness of British leadership in India created an image of England as a backward society exerting feudalistic control over another nation. The type of person who came to India to rule over the conquered territory consisted of people who ascribed to the liberal philosophy, who were looking for fortune, and those who were looking to gain prestige that would be unattainable in Great Britain. In order to rule over another civilization, a British official had to believe in the superiority of British culture. The liberal philosophy believed that Indian civilization was undeveloped and played to mysticism. James Stuart Mill was perfectly suited to rule because he believed that India was an infant civilization that needed a strong British rule to become an adult culture.⁷ With such a philosophy, Mill and others like him justified the British rule through the idea that Britain was promoting cultural progress. Those who came to India for profit disregarded the traditional rule of Indians just like the liberals. Yet, those searching for a profit separated themselves from Indian society trying to have no influence or no positive influence over the Indian masses. The example of Warren Hastings leadership demonstrates the plundering aspect of the fortune seeking ruler in India.⁸ The desire to make money overpowered the necessity to effectively rule the nation that he claimed to control. Plundering of India's wealth was another way in which England brutally controlled India during British Indian rule. Finally, the last profile of British rulers in India were those seeking prestige. This subset mainly consisted of the Scottish and other underprivileged in Great Britain compared to those people who resided in England. A more psychological process was occurring in the minds of these rulers. The Scots were seen as somewhat second-class to the English, unlikely to get good jobs in London. A

⁷ See Lecture 9/19 for more on Stuart Mill or Stein (1998)

⁸ See Lecture 9/17 for more about the discourses and individuals officials in India

disproportionate amount of Scotsmen came to India compared to the English in India.⁹ The Scots were the brutalized of Great Britain and in turn treated the India people in a similar way that the English treated them. The later British rulers in India continued to perform as the earlier ones treating the Indians as lower class citizens than themselves. Brutality in British leadership was exemplified by the condescension and notion that the British and Indians were not equal.

British rule may have originally had positive intentions in an attempt to unite Indian civilization into a coherent nation controlled by the British. Yet, because the British would not or could not allow full equality for Indian citizens independence became necessary. The England that came to India was not the civilized protector, but brutal conqueror. Through biased education and unequal opportunities, through brute military force, and the indifference of leadership to the Indian population the British demonstrated themselves to be the savage, infant society that they claimed to be saving India from.

⁹ See Lecture 9/24 for more about Scotsmen in India

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