Invented Superiority: British Self-Perception and Indian Responses in Colonial South Asia

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RESÜMEE

Mit Beginn ihrer kolonialen Expansion nach Irland, Nordamerika und schließlich nach Süd-asien ab dem 16. Jahrhundert entwickelten die herrschenden politischen und wirtschaftlichen Klassen Englands ein dezidiertes Verständnis von der eigenen kulturellen und zivilisatorischen Überlegenheit. Im Wesentlichen bestand die Erzeugung dieses Überlegenheitsgefühls im so-genannten „Othering", also der dezidierten Definition anderer Gesellschaften und Kulturen als rückständig, degeneriert und daher unterlegen. In Britisch-Indien sollte sich dieses Gefühl, und letztlich die Überzeugung einer europäischen Superiorität, an drei Punkten zeigen. Zum einen über die Konstruktion des „zeitlosen indischen Dorfes", das pars pro toto für die Statik des Orients stand. Zum zweiten über der Hierarchisierung der „indischen Gesellschaft" aufgrund der brah-manisch-britischen Erfindung des „Kastensystems", das ebenfalls für die Unveränderlichkeit, aber auch Rückständigkeit der homogenisierten und essentialisierten indischen Gesellschaften stand. Und zum dritten mittels der behaupteten Überlegenheit europäischen Medizinwissens, das nur durch administrative Regulierung durchgesetzt werden konnte. Im kolonialen Kontext Britisch-Indiens ist der *homo europaeus* geradezu erfunden und letztlich erfolgreich konstruiert worden – mit nachhaltiger Wirkung.

1. Introduction: The Civilizing Mission in Ireland, America and India

From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards the British began to create as well as to conceptualize colonial rule in South Asia. Starting from Bengal in 1757, British terri-tory on the South Asian Subcontinent expanded continuously until the end of the nine-teenth century. This did not happen without serious setbacks, for example, the rebellion in Bihar and Bengal from 1781 to 1784, the Kabul catastrophe in 1842, or the Great Rebellion from 1857 to 1859; the first and the last events almost terminated British rule

in India. Despite such setbacks, at the end of World War I the British Empire in South Asia spanned from Peshawar in the northwest to Tennasserim on the Malay Peninsula in the southeast and from Kashmir in the Himalaya to Point Galle on the island of Ceylon in the south. Yet, both expansion and setbacks shaped and sharpened British self-perception as a civilized nation, a superior race, while simultaneously also as a vulnerable species. Hence the British were convinced that they had to protect themselves against the evils of climatic, animal and human threats in South Asia as elsewhere in their mostly tropical colonial empire.

From the beginning of territorial rule in South Asia, the British imagined themselves as superior beings with respect to culture and civilization, in particular in regard to the "modern" state and its legal system, moral values, rational sciences and Protestantism. Like other western European "nations-in-the-making," the British developed or, rather, invented the catalogue of characteristics according to which that superiority could be claimed. This self-estimation was particularly true for the English "nation." Neighboring peoples such as the Scots, as all Celts, were regarded as substantially inferior to English civilization standards. The Irish were seen as the most savage people at the westernmost fringe of Europe. From the turn of the sixteenth century, when the crown and parliament of England transformed Ireland into a colony, they became an object of policing and punishment which the English regarded as an appropriate means for the former's civil and moral uplifting.[1]

At the same time, the English started to colonize Chesapeake Bay in Virginia then, some years later, New Hampshire and other parts of the North American subcontinent, thereby transplanting that recently developed ideology of a civilizing mission from Ireland to North America.[2] American Indians were also seen as savages and, at best, they were termed "naturals." Whilst stories about Pocahontas and John Rolfe became part of a modern myth, they too often romanticized early "cultural encounters" as rare but, nevertheless, true love stories in an otherwise rather harsh colonial environment.[3] A second, similarly important ingredient of the early colonizing ideology was embodied in the idea of a Protestant empire across the Atlantic. It was to be an empire independent of the Catholic Holy-Roman Empire, allegedly supported by the Pope and dominated by the worldwide successful colonizing "southern" Spanish Habsburgs. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, public statements demanded the "northern" countries (in

1   E. Campion et al., Two histories of Ireland. The one written by Edmond Campion, the other by Meredith Hammer Dr of Divinity, Dublin: Printed by the Society of Stationers [and London: by Thomas Harper] 1633. E. Spenser, The fairy queen disposed into twelve books, fashioning XII moral virtues. London: Printed for William Posonbie 1590, vol. I, pp. 12-13.

2   N. P. Canny, The Ideology of English Colonisation: From Ireland to America, in: William and Mary Quarterly 40 (1973), 4, pp. 575-98.

3   B. Woolley, Savage Kingdom. Virginia & The Founding of English America, London 2007, offers a different history. See the film "The New World" (Producer: Terrence Malick 2005), which for the first time contradicts that modern myth – which Walt Disney's production "Pocahontas" of 1995 had just retold a decade before.

particular that of England's, the Netherlands' and Scandinavia) kingdoms' right for such a Protestant empire.[4]

Like all colonizing empires, the English also soon developed the idea of a civilizing mission as an integrated ideology for their colonial program. With regard to America, civilization was seen as the only salvation for the native inhabitants. Early English colonists in North America defended their violent and sometimes even brutal treatment of Amerindians, arguing that the violence and injury by the Romans on Europe was part of their historical mission of civil uplifting. Without the encounter with the Romans, Britons would still live as a rude and untutored people, wandering in the woods or dwelling in caves, hunting for their dinners as wild beasts hunt in the forests for their prey, prostituting their daughters to strangers and sacrificing their children to idols. The Romans' treatment therefore, it was maintained, turned the land of savages into the land of Shakespeare.[5] When Lord Delaware, the designated first governor of the newly founded colony of Virginia, left England to set the fledgling colony on a sound footing, he was publically praised as civilizer and apostle. The priestly sermon again drew on the idea of the Romans for civilization and, additionally, on the Apostles for religion.[6]

The backbone of that religion was Protestant Puritanism as it trans-shipped, for example, the Atlantic with the well-known Pilgrim Fathers. Such Protestant and Puritan identity became particularly important during the seventeenth century and the Stuart Restoration.[7] Additionally, by the end of that century, Protestant belief and an ideology justifying at least a mission on a global scale was placed on the agenda of the *Franckesche Stiftungen* in Halle, a small town located in the middle of Europe, which, however, hosted Prussia's first university and the country's largest orphanage. August Herman Francke (1663–1727), professor of theology at the aforementioned university, priest of a local church and president of the orphanage, became one of the leading figures in what was to become known as *Pietismus.* Related to English Puritanism for its rather "pure" practicing principles, Pietists were famous for their "*Christentum der Tat.*"[8]

Faced with dramatic poverty and misery in large parts of central Europe, an ongoing result of the Thirty Years War (1618–48), as well as significant suppression of Protestants throughout Europe as in England during the Stuart Restoration and in France after the Edict of Nantes which forced the Huguenots to leave the country in 1684, Pietists set out

4   E. Sandys, Europaea speculum. Or, A review or survey of the state of religion in the western parts of the world wherein the roman religion, and the pregnant policies of the Church of Rome to support the same, are notably displayed. Hagae-Comitis: Printed for Michael Sparke, London 1629, pp. 188-9 and 195. T. K. Rabb, Jacobean Gentlaman: Sir Edwin Sandys, 1561–1630, Princeton 1998, pp. 34sq. As it has been suggested recently the "American Revolution" was to establish that empire independently from England, cf. F. Jennings, The Creation of America. Through Revolution to Empire, Cambridge 2002.
5   E. Campion, Two histories of Ireland., 'Edmund Spenser's View of the State of Ireland' (see note 1), p. 9.
6   W. Crashaw, A sermon preached in London for the right honourable the Lord Lawarree, Lord Gouernor and Captaine Generall of Virginia and others of his Majesties Counsel for that kingdom, and the rest of the adventurers in that plantation. At the said Lord General his leaue taking of England his native vountrey, and departure for Virginia, Febr. 21. 1609. London: Printed (by W. Hall) for William Welby 1610, Dv, Liv-r.
7   S. H. Moore, Puritanism. New World Settlements and the Call of Home, New Haven and London 2007.
8   K. Deppermann, Der hallesche Pietismus und der preußische Staat unter Friedrich III. (I.), Göttingen 1961.

to reform Protestantism and developed an outwardly oriented religious practice. Making God's grace visible through good deeds became the core of this new religious approach. Pietists in Halle conferred themselves to an inner mission, which aimed to relieve poor people and particularly orphans from their misery.[9] An essential part of that mission was, of course, preaching the gospels. This kind of mission was soon to be expanded to all people, as it was (again) believed that, for example, "Indians" in the east and west, as well as "Mongols" in Siberia or "Negroes" in Africa desperately needed religious instruction for their moral and material improvement, the latter being a new aspect in the Protestant missionaries' civilizing ideology.[10]

It was against this background that in 1706 the Danish-English-Halle Mission was founded, and soon after, two Halle Pietists were sent as missionaries to Tranquebar, the Danish fort and settlement close to present day Madras/Chennai. From the very beginning the mission was logistically and financially supported by the London based Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. Protestant missionary activities created a Protestant network in a northern European dimension. Yet, since the royal charter of the English East India Company (EIC) prohibited missionary activities within its territories, the mission remained restricted to Tranquebar and Serampur, the Danish settlement in Bengal close to Calcutta.[11] In England, however, it was the awakening movement in the mid-eighteenth century and eventually the so-called Evangelicals that gave a fresh impetus to colonization and the civilizing mission in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Like Halle Pietists, London Evangelicals also promoted the idea of both inner and outer moral and material betterment. Local British, mostly urban, as well as Indian societies were turned into an object of missionary activities whilst the extended ideology of the civilization mission enhanced the idea of an imagined English and Protestant superiority, be it in Ireland, in America or in India.[12]

In other words, within the colonial landscape of the British Isles and early colonization of North America, the imagined superiority of the English people's tastes, manners, morals and religion also helped to shape the likewise imagined superiority in what was to become British India. An example of such related attitudes may be seen in the English administration system of Ireland during the nineteenth century, since legislation for that part of the British Empire often became the blueprint for a similar legislation in British India.[13] Even the colonial personnel served in all three colonies. Charles Lord

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9   In fact, the Franckesche Stiftungen were an orphanage established by August Hermann Francke in 1698 and opened in 1701, subsequently supported by many aristocratic persons and privileged by the king of Prussia who regarded the orphanage as a "plantation" for the state's future personnel, cf. H. Obst, A. H. Francke und die Franckeschen Stiftungen in Halle, Göttingen 2002.

10 Th. Fuchs, Die Anfänge der protestantischen Missionsbewegung im 18. Jahrhundert, in: M. Mann (ed.), Aufgeklärter Geist und evangelische Missionen in Indien, Heidelberg 2008, pp. 23-38.

11 A. Gross, Y.V. Kumaradoss, and H. Liebau (eds), Halle and the Beginning of Protestant Christianity in India, 3 vols, Halle 2006.

12 Cf. B. Hilton, The Age of Atonement. The Influence of Evangelism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785–1865. Oxford 1988, esp. pp. 3-70.

13 S.B. Cook, Imperial Affinities. Nineteenth Century Analogies and Exchanges between India and Ireland, New

Cornwallis, for example, the defeated general of the British forces at Yorktown, Virginia, which terminated the war of the American colonists in 1782, became Governor General of British India between 1786 and 1793. After this term he was appointed Viceroy of Ireland, where he stayed from 1795 to 1801. He then returned for a second term as Governor General of British India in 1805. However, he died a couple of months after his arrival in Calcutta.[14]

Within this global colonial setting the British invented a catalogue of characteristics as a civilized and a civilizing people. Equipped with the above-mentioned values, Evangelicals further developed the idea of a self-burdened civilizing mission at the turn of the eighteenth century. Protagonists like William Wilberforce and Charles Grant started a global program for human relief with a campaign against slavery and the slave trade. It became the trans-Atlantic topic from 1807 when the slave trade was officially prohibited in the British Empire until the closing decades of the nineteenth century when Brazil abolished slavery in 1889.[15] In South Asia and bordering regions, however, the Christian mission became the object of Evangelical agitation.[16] Yet, even when the Protestant mission was permitted after the renewal of the charter for the EIC in 1813, missionaries from various missionary organizations faced a world of many beliefs in this part of the globe which limited their activities as well as the number of conversions.[17]

In fact, what was actually needed as ideology legitimizing colonial rule in British India was not the Bible and Christian books but moral values based on what was regarded to be Christian principles. The civilizing mission was never a means solely for the salvation of people stigmatized as savage and uncivilized but, simultaneously, a means for the salvation of that part of British society that was seen as "fallen," such as prostitutes, loafers, vagrants, and drunkards, many of whom belonged to the poor, paupers and socially deprived.[18] However, these values basically reflected Victorian *christlich-bürgerliche* values of discipline, punctuality, controlled sexuality, rational behavior and sociability, which were regarded as essentials for a strong character as well as the precondition for physical

Delhi, Newbury Park, and London 1993. Barry Crosby, Irish Imperial Networks. Migration, Social Communication in Nineteenth-Century India. Cambridge 2012

14 F. and M. Wickwire, Lord Cornwallis and the War of Independence, London 1971. Idem, Cornwallis. The Imperial Years, Chapel Hill 1980. Cornwallis not only fought successfully in Tipu Sultan of Maisur in 1792, thus defeating the then most potent army and declared enemy of the British on the South Asian subcontinent, but Cornwallis also subdued the Irish revolt in 1801. See also Kate O'Malley, Ireland, India and Empire. Indo-Irish Racial Connections, 1919–1964. Manchester and New York 2008.

15 J. Meissner, U. Mücke, K. Weber, Schwarzes Amerika. Eine Geschichte der Sklaverei, München 2008, pp. 161-239.

16 Ch. Grant, Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly in respect to Morals; and on the means of improving it (written chiefly in 1792, first publ. 1797) in: Parliamentary Papers. Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company vol. VIII, 1831-32, Colonies East India, vol. 5. Reprint Shannon 1970, General Appendix, No. I. M. Mann, Sahibs, Sklaven und Soldaten. Geschichte des Menschenhandels rund um den Indischen Ozean, Wiesbaden 2012, pp. 161-9.

17 Cf. M. Mann (ed.), Europäische Aufklärung und protestantische Mission in Indien, Heidelberg 2006 and idem., Aufgeklärter Geist und evangelische Missionen in Indien (see note 10).

18 H. Fischer-Tiné, Low and Licentious Europeans. Race, Class and 'White Subalternity' in Colonial India, New Delhi 2009.

strength.[19] Both mental and physical strength were seen as fundamental for white superiority throughout the world. Therefore, the civilizing mission, coupled with Christian charity, set out to save the world.[20] For colonial South Asia, the following examples illustrate the self-alleged European superiority in the colonial world of the British Empire in India and Indian responses towards such attitudes.

2. The Imagined Indian Village Republic and the Self-Perception of European Modernity

Comments on the Indian village and its seemingly permanent existence throughout history appeared from time to time before the end of the eighteenth century. Yet, with growing territorial-colonial rule in South Asia, the British, in the reports on the country, categorized the Indian village as revenue making and therefore as an administrative unit. To stabilize the colonial regime which was based on agriculture, the British soon started to mold the description of Indian villages into a totalizing, homogenizing and essentializing image. This image became part of what Edward Said has identified as Orientalism.[21] Apart from this "Eurocentric" approach, it is, however, interesting to note how the British, on the one hand, perceived Indian social and economic life and, on the other hand, how Indians adopted that stereotype and used it for their own political ends. "Traditional" India, as will be seen, continues to be connected with the Indian village whilst urban city life is associated with "modernity."

Yet, how did the essence of Indian culture and economy come into existence? As mentioned above, it was the colonial state's administrative needs that produced the idea of a stable village community. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Fifth Report on the Affairs of the EIC, compiled by a parliamentary commission, stated:

> *The country is divided into villages. A village, geographically, is a trade of country comprising some hundreds or thousands of acres of arable and waste land; – a village, politically, is a little republic, or rather a corporation, having with itself, municipal officers and corporate artificers: its boundaries are seldom altered; and though sometimes injured, or even desolated by war, famine, and even families, continue for ages.*[22]

A few decades later, the well-known British administrator of Delhi and its hinterland towards the Panjab, Charles Metcalfe (1785–1846) discussed the Indian village:

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19   Idem, 'Character Building and Manly Games'. Viktorianische Konzepte von Männlichkeit und ihre Aneignung im frühen Hindu Nationalismus." in: Historische Anthropologie, 9 (3), 2001, pp. 432-55.

20   Idem, Reclaiming savages in ‚Darkest England' and ‚Darkest India': The Salvation Army as transnational agent of the civilizing mission' in: Carey A. Watt and Michael Mann (eds), Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia, London 2011, pp. 125-65.

21   E. Said, Orientalism. Western Concepts of the Orient, London 1978.

22   W. K. Firminger (ed.), The Fifth Report on the Affairs of the East India Company of 1812, 3 vols, London 1918, reprint New York 1969. Vol. III, Appendix No. 30: Report of Board of Revenue and Proceedings of Madras, dated 25th April and 25th May 1808, p. 431, para. 6.

> *The Village Communities are little Republics, having nearly everything that they want within themselves, and almost independent from foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Moghal, Mahratta, Sikh, English, are masters in turn; but the Village Communities remain the same…*[23]

As if the contents of the two statements could not be claimed for England or any other village of the world, Karl Marx identified these characteristics as unique to India. In *Das Kapital* (1867) he wrote:

> *Jene uraltertümlichen, kleinen indischen Gemeinwesen, die zum Teil noch fortexistieren, beruhen auf gemeinschaftlichem Besitz des Grund und Bodens, auf der unmittelbaren Verbindung von Agrikultur und Handwerk … Der einfache produktive Organismus dieser selbstgenügsamen Gemeinwesen, die sich beständig in derselben Form reproduzieren und, wenn zufällig zerstört, mit demselben Namen, wieder aufbauen.*[24]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Max Weber was convinced that "Indien ist und war, ganz im Gegensatz zu China, das Land der Dörfer…"[25] At the same time in India, leading politicians also became deeply influenced by this orientalist discourse. Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948), from 1930 onwards also known as Mahatma, condemned urbanization and all forms of urban life as an evil western influence upon India. Big cities in India as elsewhere were not regarded as melting pots of cultures but seen as hot spots of violence, crime, disease and degeneration.[26] It is rather superfluous to mention that the British, too, perceived Indian cities as dirty, filthy and chaotic places. On the other hand, only the planned and clean cantonments, the civil and military stations were regarded as sanitary and therefore civilized places in British India. Superior town planning was set in sharp contrast to overcrowded Indian cities. Yet it must be noted that serious concerns about the negative effects of urbanization in Europe were also formulated by contemporary European critiques. The garden city movement with its attitudes of rustic life was the most prominent outcome of such discontent with urbanization.[27] Romanticized English village life also influenced the construction of the peaceful, paradise-like and eternal Indian village, particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century.[28] For Gandhi the village was the kernel of South Asia's societies, a marker of "India's" national identity as well as the perfect economic unit. According to him the village was able to provide all inhabitants with their daily needs as peasants and artificers

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23   Ch. Metcalfe, Minute dated 7 November 1830, quoted in R. Dutt, The Economic History of India, 2. vols, London 1906, vol. 1, pp. 255-6.
24   K. Marx, Das Kapital, in: K. Marx/F. Engels Werke, Band 23, Das Kapital, Erster Band, Berlin 1962, pp. 378-9.
25   M. Weber, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie. Band II (ed. by Marianne Weber) Hinduismus und Buddhismus. Tübingen 1921, p. 1.
26   M. K. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj (1909), in: Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, vol. X. Allahabad 1983, pp. 1-64, esp. pp 26-60 passim.
27   S. Meacham, Regaining Paradise. Englishness and the Early Garden City Movement, New Haven 1999.
28   C. Dewey, Images of the Village Community: A Study in Anglo-Indian Ideology, in: Modern Asian Studies 6 (1972), pp. 291-328.

constitute one community and work in harmony.[29] On the other hand, many Indians concerned about modernizing India did not rely solely upon the village but on large scale industrialization. As the British had only developed specific industries like cotton weaving in Bombay and Ahmedabad and jute weaving in Calcutta, Indian nationalists regarded full-blown industrialization as the only remedy to cure India's overall poverty. Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) especially argued in favor of India's industrialization after independence by initiating many discussions between himself and Gandhi during the 1930s and 1940s.[30] During the 1950s and early 1960s, Nehru and the Congress Party organized India's modernization by founding industrial plants and "model towns."[31] It is interesting to note that meanwhile Nehru had adopted European views of his own with regards to urban sanitation and civilization to radically solve the problem demonstrated by Delhi's "slums."[32]

As will be seen in the next section of this chapter, most urban Indian dwellers regarded the city as an exciting and promising place. In colonial South Asia, the town and city also represented modernity during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Cities were seen as places of encounter and exchange and set in contrast to backward villages and villagers. In the perception of the Indian educated classes the dichotomy of "urban" and "civilized" and "rural" and "uncivilized" also accounted for South Asia. Yet, the British idea of superiority did not work particularly well in the urban environment as Indians seemingly shared the same or at least similar values. For the British, of course, that perception did not matter at all as they insisted upon their concepts of superior town planning, advanced urban sanitary politics and the creation of a healthy urban environment in an otherwise unhealthy and therefore dangerous sub-continental Indian environment.[33] British civil and military stations were self-constructed islands of an alleged "modernity;" this term was used as a synonym for civilization and superiority. Yet, it was only in the colonial setting that the British could create and demonstrate an image of self-claimed superiority.

3. Brahman and British Images of an Ideal British-Indian Society

According a regionally north-Indian Brahman ideal created some 2000 years ago, the imagined Hindu-society consisted of four *varna*, that is, groups ranked according to their social standing. Actually *varna* means "color," yet it seems unclear whether color

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29   K. Sames, Swadeshi. Der Unabhängigkeitsgedanke in Gandhis Wirtschaftskonzept, Stuttgart 1998.
30   Vide, for example, J. Nehru, A Bunch of Old Letters. Being Mostly Written to Jawaharlal Nehru and Some Written by Him, Bombay 1960, pp. 505-10.
31   Cf. the industrial towns of Bhilai and Roukhela in eastern India, B. R. Tomlinson, The Economy of Modern India, 1860–1970 (The New Cambridge History of India, III,3), Cambridge 1993, pp. 177-213 passim.
32   Slums of Old Delhi. Report of the Socio-Economic Survey of the Slum Dwellers of Old Delhi City. (Conducted by Bharat Sevak Samaj) With a Foreword by Jawaharlal Nehru, Delhi 1958, pp. 1-2.
33   S. Patel, Urban Studies: An Exploration in Theories and Practices, in: S. Patel and K. Deb (eds.) Urban Studies. Oxford etc. 2006, pp. 1-38, esp. pp. 22-5. M. Mann, Delhi's Belly: The Management of Water, Sewerage and Excreta in a Changing Urban Environment during the Nineteenth Century, in: Studies in History 23,1 (2007), pp. 1-31.

refers only to the color of human skin or whether it (also) refers to religious purity and, therefore, this term reflects South Asian ritual practices rather than European racist concepts of the nineteenth century. The four *varna* comprised the *brahman* (commonly translated as "priest"), the *kshatria* (dubbed as "warrior"), the *vaishya* ("merchant" and "trader"), the *shudra* (basically all peasants, artificers and servants) and finally the *panchama*, "untouchables" comprising all persons not belonging to the *varna*-system and therefore termed "outcast" by Europeans. However, the *panchama* were (and still are) by far the most numerous group of the population. Apart from this system, the sub-category *jati* denominated a genealogical as well as occupational order, which, in a very restricted sense, may be compared to European guilds.[34]

At any time, South Asian societies consisted of hundreds of *jati* which the British named "caste." "Caste," however, was a phrase the Portuguese used to depict their Luso-American society. *Castas*, "ranks," described the social order of colonial intermarriages between the Portuguese, Amerindians and Africans and, accordingly, also the lightness (or darkness) of the skin's color. This system placed the "white" Portuguese at the top and the "black" African at the bottom of the social hierarchy. From their American territorial possessions the Portuguese transferred the term and the concept to South Asia to indiscriminately denominate a system which they regarded to be the general order of all Hindu-societies. Yet, when the British were about to politically dominate the South Asian subcontinent from the beginning of the nineteenth century, they had no clear idea of what they, the British, meant by "caste," as "caste" was often synonymously used with "tribe," "family," "clan," "class" or "occupational group."[35]

For administrative reasons the British referred to the term "caste" as a means to classify the society of their Indian empire. The census which took place every decade after 1871 referred to "caste" as the decisive marker of South Asia's societies. During the following decades "caste" became a more and more rigid category culminating in the Census of India in 1901 and 1911 when caste was turned into a rigid unit strictly demarcating South Asia's social groups and societies. In the decades to come, this invented "caste-system" became an unchangeable and impregnable order, a uniform grid indiscriminately placed over all South Asian Hindu-societies. The "caste-system" was a bureaucratic construction of British colonial administrators relying on European Indologists' and British administrators' expertise to systematize, homogenize, and to ultimately police and govern scarcely known South Asian societies. As a modern sociological entity, the "caste-system" tells more about the colonial states' and its bureaucratic representatives' need for governance than it actually reveals about South Asian societies.[36]

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34   H. v. Stietencron, Der Hinduismus, München 2001, pp. 93-101.

35   G. Dharampal-Frick, Shifting Categories in the Discourse on Caste: Some Historical Observations, in: V. Dalmia and H. v. Stietencron (eds), Representing Hinduism. The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks and London 1995, pp. 82-100. R. Inden, Imagining India, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1990, pp. 49-84.

36   N. G. Barrier, The Census in British India. New Perspectives, New Delhi 1981. B. S. Cohn, The Census, Social Struc-

The strength of this orientalist discourse is demonstrated in the convergence of the Brahman and the British perception of the "Indian society" in the environment of urban Calcutta during the second half of the nineteenth century. At that time Calcutta was not only the seat of British power in India, the hub of a distinguished Bengal literary culture and an industrializing city, but it also became the place where indentured laborers, commonly called "coolies,"[37] were concentrated in depots for their shipment to the plantation colonies in the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean. Most kulis originated from the so-called backward regions of mountainous South Asia; they were dispossessed and impoverished members of tribal societies in Chota Nagpur, situated in the present federal states Jharkand and Chattisgarh of the Indian Union.[38] Gangs of recruited kulis were driven through the streets of Calcutta towards the depots. Members of the *bhadralog*, the middling class and *nouveau riches,* as well as the old Bengal *zamindar*-elite (absentee landlords) of the urban society regarded these people as the scum of the Indian populace as well as the society.[39]

Only recently, the *bhadralog* had adopted British perceptions of the "Indian society" in concordance with Brahman ideals of purity as well as British classifications of a likewise idealist "Indian society" merged into a common perception of the lower and lowest stratum of the colonial society. Tribal members in the city of Calcutta disturbed the image of the urban society which was supposed to be rational, organized, and therefore modern. Though Bengalis were not particularly fair skinned people, the dark(er) skinned and, according to their understanding, certainly less civilized tribal members represented the "Other" of Bengal's colonial society. This perception supported the British construction of white dominance as the upper stratum of the Bengal urban population, which aligned itself with the ruling British class for reasons of social acknowledgement and political participation. This did not mean that the *bhadralog* did not possess a distinguished image of itself that in many ways set itself apart from the colonial British society. Yet, adopting and / or integrating images of the British with respect to the latter's perception of the "Indian society" was a means of the former's self-understanding.[40] In the same way, neighboring Orissa urbanites of Puri and Katak (Cuttack) helped to legitimize the colonial regime by supporting its sanitation and health policy with regard to leprosy.

ture and Objectification in South Asia, in: Idem., An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays, Delhi etc. 1987, pp. 224-54.

37   The term "coolie" is derived from the Tamil "kuli" meaning laborer as well as wage laborer, vide H. Yule and A.C. Burnell, Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, And of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical and Discursive (orig. publ. London 1889, new edition ed. by W. Crooke, London 1903, reprint London 1989), pp. 249-50.

38   K. Oraon, Dimension of Religion, Magic, and Festivals of Indian Tribe the Munda, New Delhi 2002; R. Parkin, The Munda of Central India: An Account of their Social Organization, Delhi 1992. P.P. Mohapatra, Coolies and Colliers: A Study of the Agrarian Context of Labour Migration from Chotanagpur, 1880–1920, in: Studies in History 1 (1985), 2, pp. 247-303.

39   P.C. Emmer, The Meek Hindu. The Recruitment of Indian Indentured Labourers for Service Overseas, 1870–1916, in: Idem (ed.), Colonialism and Migration, pp. 187-207.

40   S. Chattopadhyay, Representing Calcutta. Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny, London and New York 2005.

British officials segregated and removed the infected from public spaces particularly in pilgrim centers. Moreover, the isolation of patients in newly constructed leprosy asylums in order to protect the overall population often took place with the approval of the Orissa middling class and elite.[41]

However, sharing common values with "Indians," thus blurring racial differences, was substantially threatening to the British self-understanding of moral and racial superiority. Due to the tropical climate, Bengalis were regarded as effeminate, meaning physically as well as mentally weak people.[42] This contrasted to the notion of South Asia's "martial races," the bellicose Ghurkhas and Sikhs. After the Great Rebellion of 1857–59, when Indian soldiers in the British-Indian army rebelled or mutinied (which is why that war is still called "The Mutiny" in many histories on South Asia) soon to be supported by peasants and merchants throughout large parts of northern India, the British reorganized their Indian-army personnel. Instead of recruiting "sipahis" as Indian soldiers to the British service from Hindustan (the region between Delhi and Patna), who had been disbanded due to their disloyalty, the British now preferred soldiers which they had beaten in their war against Nepal in 1814–16 and the Sikhs in 1846–48.[43] Since the latter helped to suppress the "Mutiny," they were regarded as trustworthy and therefore preferred as recruits until the end of British rule in India.[44] The same counted for the Ghurkhas of southern Nepal who were recruited because of their fierce fighting habits.[45]

Apart from the acknowledged martiality of some "Indian races," the British, of course, insisted upon their superiority with respect to military technology and modern warfare. This superiority was again based upon European civilization and as a significant marker of European "whiteness." However, this concept was challenged when the British encountered Pakhtun tribes during their campaigns in Afghanistan in 1880–82. Some of the "warriors" had red hair, freckles and light colored eyes which made them, according to the then existing western racial concepts, members of the "Caucasian" race.[46] At least in the mountains of the Hindukush, European constructions of races and self-claimed superiority seemed to have come to a preliminary end. Instead, the British turned to an interior civilizing mission. As Bengalis were regarded as effeminate and therefore not worthy of being civilized, attention was drawn to the savage peoples such as the Bhils of Khandesh or other "tribes" which, due to their allegedly most uncivilized way of life, were often regarded as criminals by birth.[47] Here, white superiority was seemingly easier

41   B. Pati and Ch. P. Nanda, 'The Leprosy Patient and Society. Colonial Orissa, 1870–1940s', in B. Pati and M. Harrison (eds.), The Social History of Health and Medicine in Colonial India. London and New York: Routledge 2009, pp. 113-28, esp. p. 119.

42   M. Sinha, Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century, New Delhi 1995.

43   D. Omissi, The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army , 1860–1940, Basingstoke and London, 1994.

44   R. K. Mazumdar, The Indian Army and the Making of the Punjab, Delhi 2003.

45   L. Caplan, Warrior Gentlemen: 'Gurkhas' in the Western Imagination, Providence, RI and Oxford 1995.

46   It may still be noted today that UK and US immigration forms ask about racial categories; "Caucasian" is mentioned on the top of the list.

47   R. Tolen, Colonising and Transforming the Criminal Tribesman: The Salvation Army in British India, in: J. Terry and

to be maintained. With respect to the civilizing efforts of the Salvation Army, the colonial regime could demonstrate its accomplished civilizing mission, since few "uncivilized" people were transformed into "orderly" inhabitants.[48]

More threatening than sharing common perceptions of the colonial society was the fact that quite a number of Europeans did not fit into the overall picture of the superior white ruler. This was particularly true with European prostitutes working in the big port cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi, Rangun and Colombo, yet also in some up-country cantonments like Lahore, Agra and Kanpur. Since the early 1820s, British officers complained about British soldiers' wives drinking too much and pursuing a rather liberal lifestyle which was not regarded as appropriate for a member of the ruling class. After 1869, when the "European Vagrancy Act" had been resolved, the colonial government deported British women from time to time because of their disgraceful life of prostitution and drunkenness. Already in 1865, the Bombay government had established a "saving asylum" to prevent poor British women from prostitution. Three decades later a meeting of the "Calcutta Social Purity Committee" still complained about European prostitutes as disgraceful to civilization and an insult to British manhood.[49]

White women offering their body to men in front of allegedly inferior races or, far worse, selling their bodies to Indian men was unbearable for British men in India and Great Britain. Against the background of the pretended unbridgeable racial gap, European prostitutes were seen as "misfits." Their mere existence seemed to undermine the imperial politics of racial superiority, which rendered segregation of British and Indians necessary. The prostitution of European women challenged, attacked and threatened the very core of colonial legitimacy which was based on the ideology of superiority with respect to race, morals and values, in short: higher civilization. Agitation in Great Britain as well as in India tried to stop human trafficking, yet governments in British India as well as in Ceylon seemed indifferent and ambiguous. Many of the prostitutes' customers had a governmental or military background and especially the upper ranks of the colonial administration visited white prostitutes, mirroring the "double-morale" of the ruling class.

Virtually all prostitutes from Europe originated from the eastern regions, in particular from Poland, eastern Germany, the eastern parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Romania and some from Greece. Many of the young women were Jews, as were the

J. Urla (eds), Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture, Bloomington 1996, pp. 79-107.

48 H. Fischer-Tiné, "Meeting the lowest India on its lowest level". Frederick Booth-Tucker und die Anfänge der Heilsarmee in Britisch-Indien (1882–1919), in: M. Mann (ed.), Aufgeklärter Geist und evangelische Missionen in Indien, Heidelberg 2008, pp. 169-91.

49 This and the following paragraphs are based on H. Fisher-Tiné, "White women degrading themselves to the lowest depths": European Networks of Prostitution and Colonial Anxieties in British India and Ceylon ca. 1880–1914, in: Indian Economic and Social History Review 40,2 (2003), pp. 163-90. A shorter German version has appeared as "The greatest blot on British rule in the East": 'Weißer Sklavenhandel' und die britische Kolonialherrschaft in Indien (ca. 1870–1920), in: Comparativ 13 (2003), 4, pp. 114-37.

pimps organizing human trafficking.[50] They were part of a globally organized prostitution market covering the Atlantic on the one side and the Indian Ocean up to Shanghai on the other side.[51] Peripatetic pimps and prostitutes were part of growing global human migration patterns during the second half of the nineteenth century. Looking at British India, most of the brothels were owned and run by former prostitutes: "mistresses." The distribution of brothels and prostitutes also indicates the customers' social standing since first class brothels were situated in the wealthier parts of a city while second and third class brothels were to be found in the poor quarters. As may be expected, wealthy Indians also used to visit European prostitutes. Seemingly white women had a kind of "exotic attraction" which to "possess" was often seen as some sort of "revenge" or compensation for the British territorial possession of South Asia, including the humiliations South Asians had to endure.[52]

Despite the overall critique, most British (men) thought that white prostitutes may ventilate white men's sexual desires, which is why it would be inappropriate to prohibit white prostitution and deport the prostitutes. This also helps to explain the government's ambiguity. However, to self-justify that opinion, British administrators resorted to the existing inner-European racism with respect to Slaves and Jews. Pimps were regarded as the lowest class of continental Jews, their business being disgraceful to the Anglo-Saxon race. Likewise, prostitutes became "orientalized" when, according to a police officer in Colombo, prostitutes of eastern Europe had nothing in common with British "memsahibs." Though there were never more than 350 white prostitutes in South Asia, some representatives of the British government and particularly non-governmental organizations were still deeply concerned about their presence. In 1913 a British officer in the Panjab stated:

> *The prestige of the ruling race is affected by the degeneration of its members, especially if they are females. It matters not that the Austrians, Poles and Russian Jewesses who are the victims of the trade are wholly alien to the British race. In the eyes of the general population, the distinction is not recognised. These women with their white skins come from the West, whence come the rulers of this country, and the whole European community has to bear the shame of their presence.*[53]

In Ceylon, white prostitution was prohibited in 1912, followed by Burma in 1921. All prostitutes were deported to Europe, yet only after some massive campaigning of purity activists. In British India local authorities canalized the "problem" by segregating and

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50   E. J. Bristow, Prostitution and Prejudice. The Jewish Fight against White Slavery, 1870–1939, Oxford 1982, esp. pp. 85-108.
51   For a brief history of that part of the market vide Th. Fischer, Der Weg nach Buenos Aires – Frauenhandel und Prostitution in den 1920er Jahren, in: Comparativ 13,4 (2003), pp. 138-53.
52   A. Nandy, The Intimate Enemy. Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism, Delhi etc. 2006.
53   Letter No. 44, Lahore 8 January 1913, Government, Punjab to Government of India, as quoted in H. Fischer-Tiné, Flotsam and Jetsam of the Empire? European Seamen and Spaces of Disease and Disorder in Mid-Nineteenth Century Calcutta, in: A. Tambe and idem. (eds), The Limits of Colonial Control in South Asia. Spaces of Disorder in the Indian Ocean Region, London and New York, pp. 121-54, cf. p. 183, fn. 126.

controlling white prostitutes in a limited number of brothels. In Calcutta, for example, the infamous "German barracks" were shifted from a rather central part of town to the southern periphery. Only in 1915 were a great number of European prostitutes deported, yet not because of their profession but because they had either German or Austrian passports and were therefore regarded as "hostile aliens."

Apart from white prostitution, many European, mostly British, sailors and soldiers became part of the Calcutta poor, living as loafers, beggars and drunkards in the city's suburbs. This also happened in other towns of British India, yet the problem was most challenging in Calcutta as it was the seat of British power. The problem of European sailors became prevalent after the Great Rebellion/"Mutiny." Some 2,500 seaman had been recruited to support the regular troops of the British Indian army. During their stay up-country, the maritime troops became infamous for their disorderly behavior. The situation became worse when they were disbanded and sent back to Calcutta in March 1859, where they stayed, unemployed, for months. Additionally, the number of deserters from merchant ships was fairly high, thus aggravating the problem of drunken, violent and begging seamen. Most of the time, however, they were to be found loitering around crowded Bow Bazar area and sleeping on the open ground of centrally situated Maidan, or visiting the city's brothels. The situation only improved when the majority of the seamen could finally find work on merchant ships as trade activities increased enormously after the end of the Rebellion.

The same situation reoccurred after a severe cyclone ravaged the Bay of Bengal in 1864. Thirty six ships were completely destroyed and some one hundred were severely damaged. More than 1,000 seamen sought shelter in Calcutta. By July 1865, still more than 500 seamen were unemployed, which caused the same problems as in 1859. British officials again felt extremely uncomfortable with the situation as the disorderly, and in some instances, criminal seamen undermined the image of British racial superiority. Seamen seemed to be a constant source for annoyance, trouble and shame. Their behavior brought them close to the (maintained) uncivilized state of the lower class Indians regarded as dangerous. More importantly, however, was the fact that the European seamen threatened to blur the otherwise strictly drawn line between the ruling class and the ruled classes. Under such circumstances rule seemed to be not a matter of race but of class. This is emphasized by the fact that the upper classes of Calcutta's Indian urban society were shocked by the public behavior of the seamen and condemned it strongly, again aligning themselves with the British.[54]

However, it was not only the European seamen that caused severe problems, but also the many unemployed Europeans which aggravated the situation of begging, loitering and vagrancy in the major towns of British India. The problem became particularly prominent after immigration laws were dissolved in 1833. As a result of technological constructions such as the railways, the telegraph, and canals, many Europeans found

54   The preceding paragraphs are based on H. Fischer-Tiné as indicated in the previous footnote.

employment in India. Indians were regarded as being unfamiliar with western technology and therefore only engaged in simple earth works. Until the 1870s, thousands of Europeans emigrated to British India, and in 1871 some 80,000 "non-official" Europeans worked on the building sites of the empire. As more and more Indians were employed due to racial categories of salaries, making them comparatively cheaper, many Europeans became unemployed. Like the seamen, they became a public nuisance, living as loafers, begging in the white quarters of South Asian towns.

Additionally, severe sickness and accidents were often other reasons for social deprivation. Many of the unemployed became alcoholics. These Europeans also threatened not only the public order but also the political structure of the colonial edifice as the drunken, begging and roaming seamen had. To prevent it from collapsing, the British government in India passed the "European Vagrancy Act" in 1869. The law, it was argued, was necessary because vagrancy was "a grave political danger through the discredit which it casts upon the entire British race."[55] Apart from two amendments in 1871 and 1874 the law remained on the statute books until the end of British rule in India. According to the Vagrancy Act, any person being found begging or loafing could be arrested by the police, summoned before the magistrate and sent to the workhouse. If such a person failed to find employment within a certain time he could be deported to Europe. Between 1876 and 1895, a total of 5682 people were registered as loafers, just below 300 people on an annual average. Yet, it is very likely that the real number of loafers in British India amounted to some 3,000 annually.

Apparently the colonial administration had difficulties in dealing with European vagrants, seamen and prostitutes. The Vagrancy Act was a weak solution to the grave problem (at least the British ruling elite as well as the Indian elite saw it as a grave problem) because the law was never strictly implemented as the number of "unofficial" vagrants indicates. Deportation was the last resort whilst most people registered under the Vagrancy Act were sought to be "disciplined" and "civilized" through the strict regime of the workhouse for Europeans. However, surveillance, punishment and reform as major components of this disciplining regime were never rigidly enforced. On the contrary, it seems very likely that the colonial regime rather kept and hid European misfits from the Indian public. Apart from the fact that the Indian elite, as has been shown above, found itself seriously disturbed if not threatened by the "uncivilized" behavior of lower class Europeans, it seems that this problem only existed in the mind of the British elite who suspected that the colonial regime lacked any form of hegemony and that the colonial edifice existed exclusively upon the point of the bayonets.[56]

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55   As quoted in H. Fischer-Tiné, Englands innere Zivilisierungsmission. Arbeitshäuser für Europäer im kolonialen Indian (ca. 1860–1914), in: B. Barth and J. Osterhammel (eds), Zivilisierungsmissionen. Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert, Konstanz 2005, pp. 169-200, cf. p. 181, fn. 51.

56   Cf. Ranajit Guha, Dominance without Hegemony. History and Power in Colonial India, Cambridge, Mass. and London 1997.

4. Allopathy versus Ayurveda and Unani Tibb

During the nineteenth century, medicine became a spacious field on which the colonial state challenged Indian medical systems like *Unani tibb* and *ayurveda* as well as its practitioners, hakims and vaidyas. From the beginning of what has been termed the "colonial encounter" in South Asia at the turn of the sixteenth century, western doctors were interested in South Asian medical systems including botanical and geological knowledge. During the following three centuries the initial encounter and mutual interest changed into the rejection of South Asian medical treatment methods.[57] It was only for political reasons that western allopathy was gradually recognized as the sole scientific medical system. And again it was the colonial regimes' claimed superiority, now with respect to science and in particular medicine, which rendered such a political decision necessary. South Asian Unani tibb and ayurveda had to be excluded from the tableau of medical systems for they also threatened British colonial cultural and racial self-understanding. Finally, and after long struggles, this was accomplished in 1912 with the Registration of Medical Practitioners Act, which unilaterally granted the approbation of medical practitioners educated according to western medical "standards."[58]

The Indian Medical Service (IMS) became the most powerful instrument to implement the colonial state's medical policy in the course of the nineteenth century. The IMS owed its origins to the medical requirements of the EIC's mercantile personnel in India. With the territorial expansion of the EIC and the growing permanent civil and military establishment from the middle of the eighteenth century, a permanent medical establishment was required to meet the medical needs of the EIC, in particular that of the army. At the end of the eighteenth century, the IMS comprised 234 surgeons and assistant surgeons. After years of constant warfare and expansion, the number of IMS doctors had risen to roughly 650 by 1824, and thereafter its number of members fluctuated between 650 and 820. From the 1830s onwards, various newly founded medical colleges trained Indians in the science of western medicine in order to enlarge the number of assistant doctors. For racial reasons the IMS remained a "white" organization until the end of the nineteenth century, and it was only British candidates' lack of interest that necessitated the opening of the IMS for Indian candidates.[59]

However, the IMS was never the homogeneous cadre which it was supposed to be. During the first half of the nineteenth century, debates about the values of *Unani tibb* and *ayurveda* were still ongoing. Even at the end of the nineteenth century, European medical practitioners acknowledged the values of South Asian medicine. At the time when allopathy became established as a separate scientific discipline within the universities

57   M. Harrison, Medicine and Orientalism: Perspectives on Europe's Encounter with Indian Medical Systems, in: B. Paty and Idem (eds), Health, Medicine and Empire. Perspectives on Colonial India, Hyderabad 2001, pp. 37-87.

58   M. Ramanna, Perception of Sanitation and Medicine in Bombay, 1900–1914, in: H. Fischer-Tiné and M. Mann (eds), Colonialism as Civilizing Mission. Cultural Ideology in British India, London 2004, pp. 205-25, esp. pp. 219-22.

59   D. Arnold, Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India (=The New Cambridge History of India III, 5) Cambridge 2000, pp. 57-61.

of Europe, allopathy was set in sharp contrast to the existing medical systems of South Asia. *Unani tibb*, it was argued by IMS officials, was still based on ancient Greek medical knowledge and, additionally, was connected with religion (*i.e.,* Islam), which is why *Unani* medicine could no longer be regarded as a scientific medical system. Likewise, *ayurveda* was seen as unscientific for it was linked too closely with the Hindu religion, which is why it too had to be repelled as a non-scientific medical system. Both medical systems, it was maintained, may have had some practical value in the past but presently their degeneration, like the Indian society and culture at large, was undeniable. It was then for purely ideological reasons that *Unani tibb* and *ayurveda* were denied the status of science.[60]

Some examples may illustrate how the British implemented allopathy as an official medical system in British-India. On the one hand, tuberculosis and smallpox were diseases which were not specifically tropical as they also occurred in Europe as in other parts of the world. Western medicine could, therefore, demonstrate its universal validity as a globally applicable medical treatment and successful remedy. On the other hand, malaria and especially cholera were regarded as tropical diseases, the latter occurred endemically in Bengal despite having spread pandemically all over the globe during the 1830s. It was maintained by a British politician however that disease in India was not disease in England (meaning Europe) because cultural habits, personal hygene, living conditions, and religious beliefs were fundamentally different. Despite the latest findings by Robert Koch who had visited Calcutta in 1882 and who recognized the "comma-bacillus" as the transmitter of cholera and water as the method of transmission, the superintendent of the IMS, James Cuningham, opposed any such theory. Since he was a strict adherent of the miasmatic and localized theory, he prevented British doctors in the provinces of British India from publishing their findings that would have confirmed Koch's bacteriological theory.[61] Additionally, officials in British India systematically veiled the problems of cholera.[62]

At the same time, the British imperial government in London was not particularly interested in any bacteriological theory as the agreements of the International Health Conventions would have stipulated the strict implementation of quarantine regulations in the ports of the British Empire. For commerce and security, as well as military reasons, such measures were to be avoided. Indeed, disease in India had to be different from disease in England. Whereas in Europe cholera infections could be controlled by generally applied sanitary measures, cholera in India continued to cause high mortality rates even at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even more significantly, the number of cholera

60   M. Harrison, Medicine and Orientalism, pp. 56-58.

61   M. Harrison, A Question of Locality: The Identity of Cholera in British India, 1860–1890, in: D. Arnold (ed.), Warm Climates and Western Medicine: The Emergence of Tropical Medicine, 1500–1900, Amsterdam etc. 1996, pp. 133-59.

62   Dh. K. Singh, "Clouds of Cholera" and Clouds around Cholera, 1817–70, in: D. Kumar (ed.), Disease and Medicine in India. An Historical Overview. Indian History Congress, Delhi 2001, pp. 144-65.

victims was decreasing in the military cantonments of the British soldiers in India while it increased in the barracks of the Indian soldiers.[63]

Smallpox seems of particular interest as variolation[64] was the generally acknowledged and therefore applied method of prophylaxis by both the south Indian medical practitioners as well as by members of the IMS.[65] Vaccination was introduced to the staff of the IMC in the Madras Presidency at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and serial variolation campaigns started after smallpox appeared on a large scale in 1802. Fierce debates took place between south Indian medical practitioners and British doctors about the appropriate method of variolation, as vaccination was rejected by many upper class Hindus because of the use of cow-lymph. At the same time, British doctors argued that for cultural reasons as well as reasons of political acceptance, variolation should be kept on the list of officially recommended prophylactic methods. For some time the IMC of the Madras Presidency seems to have followed this strategy, stressing however that variolation was only acceptable after British medical practitioners had improved the method according to western scientific standards. Yet, within a few years, the colonial authorities redirected their campaign to promote vaccination with specific reference to the benevolence and humanity of the European medical community.[66]

Given the fact that vaccination, in contradistinction to variolation, was indeed safer because cow-pox material did not cause the outbreak of smallpox as sometimes happened with human material, it can be concluded that it was not for medical but for political reasons that variolation was acknowledged officially, namely to establish the superiority of European civilization. The same arguments were brought forward at the end of the nineteenth century when tuberculoses was diagnosed for the first time in British India. By 1910, when the Madras government dealt with the imminent problem of tuberculosis in many of the Presidency's cities, it had become clear that first, the disease was spreading more rapidly than first thought, second, it affected new regions, and third, more people than ever, particularly in urban settlements, were affected by the new disease. It was this scenario which placed tuberculosis on the agenda of the colonial state, while the likewise expanding imperial sciences of medicine became another tool with which to rule.[67]

The British could hardly control, let alone explain, the prolific disease. Since the disease occurred mostly in growing towns and there in the most congested areas, it was argued that tuberculosis was not necessarily the price of progress but a disease of the improperly

63 M. Mann, Cholera in den Zeiten der Globalisierung. Oder wie die Welt in zwei Teile zerfällt, in. ders. und J. G. Nagel (Hg), Europa jenseits der Grenzen. Heidelberg 2015, pp. 389-431.

64 Variolation means the use of smallpox material from infected humans, whilst vaccination uses lymphe-material from infected cows.

65 For a general background see Arnold, Science, Technology and Medicine, pp. 71-3.

66 Neils Brimnes, "The Sympathizing Heart and the Healing Hand": Smallpox Prevention and Medical Benevolence in Early Colonial South India, in: H. Fischer-Tiné and M. Mann (eds.), Colonialism as Civilizing Mission, (see note 54), pp. 191-204.

67 B. E. Rao, From Rajayak S(h)ma ('Disease of kings') to 'Blackman's Plague': Perceptions on the Prevalence and Aetiology of Tuberulosis in the Madras Presidency, 1882–1947, in: Indian Economic and Social History Review 43 (2006), 4, pp. 457-85.

civilized. Again, while European cities were regarded as places of progress where industry, culture and civilization culminated, the very same phenomenon was turned against the Indian urban inhabitants. Against this background, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Morley, stated in 1909 that the IMS was a wonderful institution and that its members were doing glorious work, yet there were only two things in India which were bad: the climate and the natives. Racism assisted in marking the difference: while the white European race was strong and healthy and could, therefore, efficiently deal with diseases like tuberculosis, it was the degenerated Indian who made the attempted treatments and remedies come to naught.[68]

Indian medical practitioners reacted strongly against the general onslaught of Indian culture and civilization. During the Swadeshi Movement (1905-8, *swadeshi*: *swa*: self; *desh*: country, meaning economic production for ones' own country), there were efforts to revitalize Ayurvedic medicine, following an agenda to systematize knowledge, establish training institutions and standardize a medical system. Indian medical practitioners founded medical schools and dispensaries. They also produced a counter-aetiology stressing that western medicine originated and was developed in an alien culture and environment and was, therefore, not suitable for the body and mind of South Asians. Stressing the holistic arguments of *Unani tibb* and *ayurveda* according to which the whole human body had to be considered when diagnosing, treating and curing its ailments, the revivalist movements brought physiological and moral elements into the medical discourse. Looking closely at the arguments, it seems that promoters and protagonists used British-European aspects of a degenerated Indian race now, *vice versa*, maintaining that it was the British who had thrown the Indian society into a crisis, destroying moral values and, in the long run, the physical and psychical health of its members.[69]

Critique and protest against western medicine was uttered in many Indian newspapers. Most of which were published in English (yet owned by Indians). However, vernacular newspaper articles also dealt with *Unani* medicine. Particularly in the big metropolises of British India where the problems of sanitation and medical care became most salient, the press published the opinions of medical practitioners and politicians.[70] Almost all Indian doctors trained according to western allopathy echoed the "standards" of western medicine with respect to sanitation and public health. Yet there existed many dissenting voices. Essentially, Indian critique complained about the insufficient financial support from the government. With respect to preventive measures, critics opposed any form of forced inoculation campaigns by the IMS. Yet, *hakims* and *vaidyas* vehemently protested against the Registration of Medical Practitioners Act of 1912. They argued that most Indians had unshaken confidence in the healing power of that medicine. At least, *hakims*

68   Ibid., pp. 478-80.
69   Ibid., pp. 472-4.
70   S. Alavi, Unani Medicine in the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere: Urdu Texts in the Oudh Akhbar, in: Indian Economic and Social History Review 42 (2005), 1, pp. 101-29. M. Ramanna, Perception of Sanitation and Medicine in Bombay (see note 54), passim.

and *vaidyas* wanted recognition of the death certificates they issued and the right to sue patients for failure to pay their bills, which was never granted.[71]

Even the otherwise generally accepted European surgery was opposed with severe critique. According to one opinion, most Indians go to the hospital only to die where British doctors mercilessly hack and hew instead of treating the body as the native doctors do with drugs and balsams. Indigenous medicine was regarded as best suited to the Indian climate and constitution.[72] Moreover, *doctory ilaj*, which was the Urdu-term for western medical treatment, was criticized for its only scientific methods, ignoring other methods of medicine. Among the *Unani tibb* and some *ayurveda* medical practitioners, four positions of how to react to the colonial state's challenge became prominent. First, the modernists unanimously and uncritically favored western medicine. Second, the purists simply rejected all forms and knowledge of western allopathy. Third, the reformists who sought to reform the existing medical systems thereby included the best from the west. And finally the synthetists, who favored a general merger of all existing medical systems.[73]

In any case, it must be noted that in the urban environment of the big cities where doctors who practiced allopathy were available, only ten percent of the population visited such doctors whereas the "rest" preferred Indian *hakims* and *vaidyas*. Almost all people living in the countryside had no access to *doctory* and had to rely on *Unani tibb* and *ayurveda*. In some ways the history of medicine in British India, the story about *Unani tibb* and *ayurveda* versus allopathy, reflects a purely colonial discourse. Part of this colonial discourse and public critique was the invention of ayurveda as a national Indian health system which systematized and homogenized local and regional variants with the emergent national movement between 1880 and 1930.[74] Even today most Indians prefer or have to, for pecuniary reasons, consult *hakims* and *vaidyas*. Only surgery has been accepted by most people in South Asia as a beneficial medical treatment.

5. Summary: On the Creation of a Modern Myth

At the same time the English started to colonize countries and societies across the sea, they created an ideology of having a superior civilization. Colonial rule was for the benefit of the subdued people, whether they were Irish, Amerindians or, later, Indians. Initially claimed cultural superiority was, from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, "strengthened" by racial ideology, marking the difference between white superiority and "colored" inferiority. Within the European context it seemed rather easy to maintain this alleged superiority of the *Homo Europaeus*, for non-European people were depicted as

71   Ibid., p. 221.
72   Ibid.
73   N. Quaiser, Politics, Culture and Colonialism: Unani's Debate with Doctory, in: B. Paty and M. Harrison (eds), Health, Medicine and Empire. Perspectives on Colonial India. Hyderabad 2001, pp. 317-55, part. pp. 320-22, 335-39.
74   H. Fischer-Tiné, „Pidgin-Knowledge": Kolonialismus und Wissenszirkulation. Berlin, 2013, pp. 45-7.

savages, their manners and morals un-developed, and their societies rude; in short, they were uncivilized. However, within the colonial setting, that superiority was often difficult to maintain. At least the Indian case demonstrates that creating the modern myth of cultural and racial superiority only partially worked, as could be exemplified with Gandhi's and Nehru's inversion of the discourse on modernization.

Generally seen, the claimed superiority was permanently challenged by Indian middle and upper classes. According to their manners and morals (be they of "Indian" origin or developed in the colonial urban context), they aligned themselves with the British ruling elite. This was, on the one hand, regarded as a positive effect as it helped to stabilize the colonial regime. On the other hand, such an "alliance" blurred the claimed cultural and racial superiority. For the British, however, it was difficult to create the *Homo Europaeus* image within South Asian societies – which they probably did not aim to do. Hegemony was never on the agenda of the British colonial regime.[75] This is in sharp contrast to the image the British ruling class in India had of itself. Many administrative, legal, and social efforts were undertaken to uphold that myth. Nevertheless, it worked in one respect, namely that of a strong people commanding a seemingly invincible army. Yet, the carnage of European armies in the trenches of Flanders during World War I terminated the ideology of the civilizing mission in British India as well as the myth of a superior civilization represented by the *Homo Europaeus*.

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75   Guha, Dominance without Hegemony (see note 56)