

Indian and British Cultural Response to Colonialism: Nandy's Analysis in *The Intimate Enemy*

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Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* is a modest attempt of an understanding the cultural response of both the Indians and British to colonialism. In this book while exploring the loss and recovery self under colonialism Nandy has analysed how both the British as well as the Indians have responded colonialism from the cultural point of view. Colonialism, according to Nandy does not end with the political withdrawal of the colonial rulers from the colonies but it continuous in the form of cultural and psychological and ideological forms. It is also not just concerned with the colonized but of the colonizers too. For him, both the colonizer and the colonized respond to it according to their cultural and ideological bases and formations. So, his work focuses on the loss and recovery of self during the British rule in India and its continuous cultural baggage after the end of British Raj in India and his analysis of the cultural responses to colonialism.

For Nandy colonialism has a close connection with the conscious and unconscious mind on which Sigmund Freud has based his psychoanalytic theory of mind. Colonialism and its policies constantly attempt to capture the mind of the colonized systematically from the cultural and ideological perspectives. Though it tries to capture the mind of the colonized but simultaneously it does not leave the colonizers too. It affects more severely on the psyche of the colonizer than the colonized.

And accordingly, both have responded to colonialism and its ideology during the colonial rule in India. So, in order to restructure Indian culture and ideology he analyses the cultural response to colonialism while selecting those figures, intellectuals from India and the British in the nineteenth century. His purpose is as it is obviously mentioned is just to restructure the culture and ideology of India.

Nandy, in order to analyse the cultural response to colonialism, selects those writers from Bengal who have “revalued the traditional Hindu orientations to the male and the female, and coped with the modern concepts of mature, adult normality as opposed to abnormal, immature, infantile primitivism” (IE 18). On the one side, he analyses the writers, intellectuals like Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar as well as Vinayak D. Savarkar and Subhash Chandra Bose who were attempted to restructure the Indian culture through their works and thoughts. And, on the other side, he selects the writers like Rudyard Kipling, George Orwell, E. M. Forster and Charles Freer Andrews to analyse the British cultural response to the perversion of colonialism.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt, though born as an Indian but he was completely Westernized in life style and ideologically. He had even, as Nandy says “embraced the Church of England’s version of Christianity and declared that he cared only ‘a pin’s head for Hinduism’ – first wanted to make his mark in English literature. But he returned to his mother tongue within a decade to write brilliant interpretations of some of the Puranic epics” (19). His greatest work *Meghnadbadh* is the retelling of Ramayana. It is not being told and rewritten in an earlier tradition such as from the Rama and Laxmana’s point of view but of from Ravana’s point of view. In it the figures of Rama and Laksmana were depicted as “weak-kneed, passive-aggressive, feminine villains and the demons Ravan and his son Meghnad

into majestic, masculine, modern heroes" (19). He further says that "it interprets the encounter between Rama and Ravana as a political battle, with morality on the side of the demons. The epic ends with the venal gods defeating and killing the courageous, proud, achievement-oriented, competitive, efficient, technologically superior, 'sporting' demons symbolized by Meghnad" (19). This type of retelling of the *Ramayana* in his Meghnadvadh reveals that how deeply he was under the influence of Western ideology and lifestyle. Therefore, Nandy rightly states:

Madhusudan Dutt... was in the living tradition of dissent in India ... Madhusudan's criterion for reversing the roles of Rama and Ravana, as expresses in their characters, was a direct response to the colonial situation. He admired Ravana for his masculine vigour, accomplished warrior hood, and his sense of realpolitik and history; he accepted Ravana's 'adult' and 'normal' commitments to secular, possessive this worldliness and his consumer's lust for life. On the other hand, he despised 'Rama and his rabble'-the expression was his because they were effeminate, ineffective pseudo-ascetics, who were austere not by choice but because they were weak.(IE 19-20)

For Nandy, Dutt in his Meghnadvad has admired the masculine vigour of Ravana, his accomplished warrior hood and his sense of realpolitik and history. So, he says that he has "accepted Ravana's 'adult' and 'normal' commitments to secular, possessive this-worldliness and his consumer's lust for life. On the other hand, he despised 'Rama and his rabble' – the expression was his – because they were effeminate, in effective pseudo – ascetics, who were austere not by choice but because they were weak" (20). This reflects that Dutt has shown that this was his cultural response of Indians to the western perversion of colonialism because he has accepted the patriarchal position of the characters as masculine and the colonized as feminine and weak in character. He has seen Ravana at the place of the colonizers and Rama at the place of the colonized Indians.

Bankimchandra Chatterjee's cultural response to colonialism is also one of creative one. Like Dutt, he has expressed his cultural response to colonialism through his innovative novels and essays in the nineteenth century British India. For Nandy, in his works he "attempts to marginalize the earlier model of critical Hinduism and suggest a new framework of political culture which projected into the Hindu past, into a lost golden age of Hinduism, the qualities of Christianity which seemingly gave Christians their strength" (IE 23). Similar to Dutt, his works reflects the reinterpretations of the Hindu culture from the point of view of Western traditions and culture. He has set his stories in his novels and essays in a reverse order of the earlier descriptions in the history of Hindu epic. According to Nandy, "What Madhusudna sought to do in the context of the *Ramayana*, Bankimchandra sought to do in the context of the *Mahabharata* and five Puranas dealing with Krishna" (IE 23). Furthermore, Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83) and Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) such as Nandy says "tried to Christianize Hinduism, particularly the dominant Hindu concept of the desirable person" (IE 25). These two persons had internalized the widespread culture of the West while identifying, accepting the superiority of western civilization, power and hegemony. For them the Indian culture becomes one of complex and open-ended system which support the value system of the West.

Another cultural response to colonialism has come from Ishwarchand Vidyasagar. His works reflect a new kind of political awareness and the resistance which combined a critical awareness of Hinduism and colonialism with cultural and individual authenticity. His model of response to British ideology was not based on the interpretation of previous Indian intellectuals. He fought against the institutionalized violence and oppression against Indian women while giving importance to social reforms than that of the politics. Besides, his conceptions were emerged from the internal discrepancies of Hinduism and

not from the feelings of cultural inferiority. According to Nandy, “even when he fought for Indian women, he did not operate on the basis of Westernized ideals of masculinity and femininity or on the basis of a theory of cultural progress. He refused to Semiticize Hinduism and adopts the result as ready-made theory of state. As a result, his society could neither ignore nor forgive him” (IE 27). His Hinduism was not based on the western cultural ideologies and his cultural criticism was also fundamental. Because, he has not used the imagery from the golden age of Hindus and unwilling to accept other things which were related with the history of others and rejected the western ideology of masculinity and adulthood. It is thus his response and cultural resistance was not based on the colonial concept of nationalism, but of from “the popular Bengali *bhadralok* stereotypes” (28) in India.

In order to understand and analyse the British cultural response to colonialism in the 19th century British India, Nandy selects the writers like Rudyard Kipling, George Orwell, and others such as Oscar Wilde, G.E. Moore, John Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, Somerset Maugham, E.M. Forster and W.H. Auden who represents a different type of response to colonialism. For him, Rudyard Kipling was the first pathetic figure in the British colonial period whose response is notable one because he was one of the stringent supporters of colonialism among Anglo-Indians. About colonial rule he used to say that it was the duty of the British to rule in India. However, it is also reflected that his development of personality was split between his self-hatred of image as well as self-identity with the colonizers. He was in reality a by-product of the 19th century British and Indian culture. He is, as for Nagraj “created by both the victorious West and the defeated India” (Nandy xvi). His childhood and adulthood life reveals that his formation of personality is the pathological figure of colonial identity in the West and in India. According to Nandy, he was “the most creative builder of the political myth, which a colonial power

needs to sustain its self-esteem" (IE 37) in India. Moreover, he states that "the psychological co-ordinates of his imperialist ideology have often been the co-ordinates of the West's image of the non-West in our times" (IE 37). His personal life was filled with painful experiences that were descended from his parents in England. Therefore, Nandy says, "Kipling reproduced in his personal life both the painful cultural changes that had taken place in his society and the history of British colonialism in India from Robert Clive to Winston Churchill" (IE 37). It is his experience at England when he was young was one of harrowing and painful. He was one of the bicultural men of England and India. His experience at England was one of oppressive, was a part of his real life and he was also avoided with the oppressive culture of Indians. In short, Nandy argues that "Kipling himself had been effeminate, weak, individualistic, rebellious and unwilling to see the meaning of life only in work or useful activity" (IE 68).

George Orwell is another writer whose cultural response to colonialism is different from Rudyard Kipling because it was one of exactly in opposite him. Nandy states that, he has "worked with creative myths that were direct attempts to reassert some of the values which colonialism forced one to disown. He clearly sensed that British colonialism had created the demand for a 'mother culture' – and a production line for colonial rulers – which alienated the colonizers not only from their political subjects but also from their own selves" (IE 39). He was well aware that the reduction of the colonized also involves the rulers too because in the colonized countries both the colonizer and colonized in a sense controls each other. He was also known that "the control of the colonized is more difficult to defy because it was covert, subtle and involved within-person repression" (IE 39-40) and the colonizers "was overt and involved two cultures" (IE 40). Moreover, though he was a critic of totalitarianism which reflects from his works but if one reads his *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty Four* understands that "he was also a critic of the

oppression which grows out of ideologies of egalitarianism and progress" (40), informs Nandy. Besides, he as a critic of both the totalitarianism and oppression has also experienced, like Kipling, an oppressive childhood. He was like Kipling, a sensitive boy and against the patriarchal view of the society which shaped him in maleness in his early environment deterred him from opting for the reigning his early life in the school. He was further a tragic figure whose "ambivalence towards culture of hyper masculinity" (IE 41). It is thus his earlier experiences in his life made Orwell a stringent "critic of the dominant, middle class culture of modern Britain which had found in imperialism its final fulfillment" (IE 42).

The next type of internal British cultural response to colonialism as Nandy states, "protected the more feminine aspects of the British self through 'psychopathological' – and 'criminal' – modes of self-expression in a few confined geographical and psychological spaces such as Oxbridge and Bloomsbury and in persons in conflict about their sexual identities and seeking to make an indirect ideological issue out of the conflicts" (IE 42). The person's names as Nandy mentions in his book were all from the non-political background and were not vigilant about their personal lives and interpersonal relationships during colonial regime in India. This name as it is obviously mentioned such as Oscar Wilde, G.E. Moore, John Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, Somerset Maugham, E.M. Forster and W.H. Auden.

In conclusion, it is said that the cultural response to colonialism as Nandy has analysed resulted from the experience of colonialism from the Indians and British are so deep and adversely affected on the culture of both the colonizer and the colonized. So, for an analysis of the cultural response of the perversion of colonialism from the Indians and the British, Nandy has selected those intellectual from the 19th century British India to support his propositions. He depicts while

analysing the personal lives and works these writers from both sides and how they have responded the ideology of colonialism and the differences in their responses in his *The Intimate Enemy*.

WORKS CITED

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